

The Alton Commando Electric Starter

Many of you may be aware of the new(ish) French-made Alton electric-starter kit for Commandos. The system for chain-drive primaries has been available for some time as a self-fit kit and is well proven. The promised system for belt-drive primaries has been delayed and is now available but with limitations. The belt-drive system was intended to be a 'universal' kit suitable for all types of belt drives but experience has shown that it is likely that each belt-drive system will need a specific kit. My 920 Mk.IIA is fitted with an RGM 32mm belt-

The bike the Motorcycle Company in Saffron 542323) as they are Alton distributor. the parts needed fitment of the starter found that modifications were the installation. appear that different required for specific belt drive systems.



drive primary. was sent to Restoration Walden, UK (01799 an experienced Alton sent them (supposedly) for system but it was numerous needed to complete As such it would starter kits will be

I have just received the bike back and can report that the starter system is well up to the job. It spins the engine effortlessly and starting is instantaneous. The battery fitted is a Varta YTX20L 20Ah unit which is physically a very tight fit in a Mk.IIA (it should be easier on earlier Commando models). The Mk.IIA was originally fitted with the plastic



air filter assembly which necessitated the re-positioning of the battery (the battery was thus fitted across the frame rather than lengthways as on earlier models.) The battery tray therefore required considerable modification to enable fitment of the battery. Battery dimensions are 177 x 88 x 156mm (including terminals). The cold cranking current is 260A. The 20Ah battery may well be rather 'over the top' in terms of capacity but the 150w Alton alternator has no trouble keeping it charged.

Physically smaller batteries are available (e.g. Shorai) but at a price!. The starter solenoid is activated via the spare (unused) push-button on the Lucas handlebar cluster (in my case on the left handlebar) - the spare wire to this button should be found lying under the fuel tank. You should find that when the button is pressed the wire should go to -12v (which is perfect to operate the solenoid).

Although the system is designed for belt primary drives; the drive from the starter motor to the engine crank shaft is via a simplex chain (as per the chain-drive version). There is no provision for lubrication of this chain (the chain is only operational when the starter motor is cranking) - an occasional sparing application of commercial chain wax should suffice. The system sprag clutch is a sealed unit. Note that the inner primary chaincase is 'dull matt' - not highly polished as per the original. I can see no reason why the system (both chain and belt drive) could not be deployed on any bike that utilises the Commando primary drive system (I've seen many 'specials' fitted with such primary drives). The system can be readily removed from the bike which can then be returned

to 'standard' (thus ensure that you keep the 'old' parts) - this will enable re-fitment to any future Commando(s) that may be aquired. There are a number of authorised Alton distributors in the UK, some of who can supply the starter kits but if you have a belt-drive Commando I'd check with them for availability etc.

The chaps at the Motorcycle Restoration Company are very helpful and knowledgeable.

A full list of distributors is shown below:

Alton Distributors:

United Kingdom:

Andover Norton: <http://www.andover-norton.co.uk>

Hawkshaw Motorcycles Ltd: <http://www.btinternet.com/~hawkshaw.motorcycles>

Lochness Restorations: <http://lochnessrestorations.com>

Motorcycle Restoration Company: <http://www.motorcyclere restorationcompany.com>

Norvil: <http://www.norvilmotorcycle.co.uk>

SRM: <http://www.srmclassiccycles.com>

Germany:

Norton Motors GmbH: <http://www.nortonmotors.de>

Holland and Belgium Flamande:

Holland Norton Works: <http://www.hollandnortonworks.eu>

Spain:

Legendary Bikes, Ernesto Pujol Vidal, Paisos Catalans 41, 17161 Osor Girona, Spain:
email legendarybikes@gmail.com

eKit *Motorcycle Restoration Company*
Professional Motorcycle Engineers

eKit

Norton
eKit

ALTON

Norton
eKit

ELECTRIC START CONVERSION

Motorcycle Restoration Company
Unit 3 Wenden Court
Station Road
Wendens Ambo
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 4LB
01799 542323

The advertisement features a central graphic with the Alton logo (a diamond shape with 'ALTON' inside) and a small figure of a person climbing a ladder. To the left is a collection of various motorcycle parts including a battery, a stator, and various bolts and nuts. To the right is a detailed view of a motorcycle engine with an electric start conversion kit installed.

