

Late in 1977 came a link between two of motorcycling's most famous names....a link that surprised both press and enthusiasts but one that is entirely logical and desirable from several viewpoints.

The long-established British firm of Norton is still in existence but England's poor economical situation and unpredictable trade union climate had forced a halt to the actual manufacture of motorcycles. The parent company, NVT Motorcycles Ltd., however, faced the unique dilemma of having the chance to continue servicing a section of the motorcycle market with a very lucrative potential without actually being able to provide a motorcycle! For years the Norton Interpol had been a very successful seller and performer as a "fleet" machine for Britain's police. The Interpols were wearing out, however, and NVT, thanks to their good relations with the British police, had the chance to provide replacements....but had no replacements to provide.

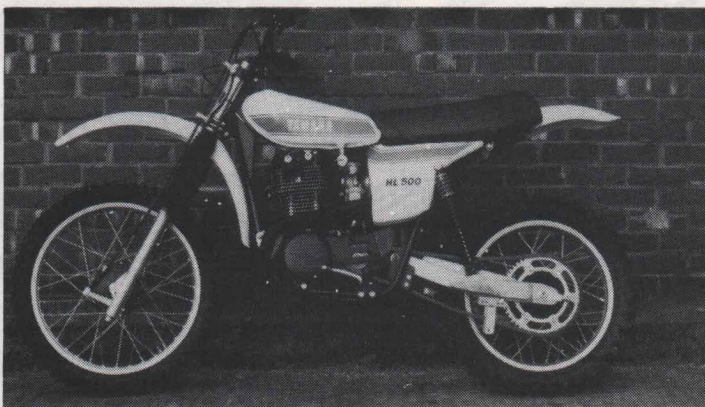
Enter Yamaha! NVT considered the possibility of purchasing machines from another manufacturer and then making all of the modifications that had made their old Interpol such a successful police machine.

After considering the various options, the NVT management decided that the Yamaha XS750, with its shaft drive, cast wheels, electric starter and powerful three-cylinder engine, was the perfect machine for the job. Realising that NVT had great experience in the police bike field, as well as long-established contacts, Yamaha came to an agreement with NVT and the Norton-Yamaha police bike was the result.

On to the basic XS750, Norton fit a weather-protective fairing complete with high-intensity quartz-halogen headlamp and spare wiring harness, alternating-tone wind horns, a special single seat and rear radio carrier plus a pannier set and flashing red warning light.

Within days of the announcement of the new machine, many of Britain's police forces were in touch with NVT regarding supply of the Norton-Yamaha and the bikes should soon be a familiar sight on Britain's roads.

# Norton YAMAHA



Yamaha HL500

There is no actual commercial link between NVT and Yamaha except for the fact that NVT purchase the machines for this police-bike conversion.

However, during the course of negotiations for this contract, Yamaha executives saw the small, but functional NVT operation at Shenstone in England and realised that possibilities existed for links in other areas. Particularly, NVT had the capacity for "small run" assembly work of machines that are too specialised to mass produce.

A case in point soon arose...the Yamaha HL500 motocrosser, which is a replica of the XT-based four-stroke motocross Grand Prix racer campaigned by Bengt Aberg this year.

The HL500 will be produced in limited quantity, with just 200 of them being sold through European Yamaha dealers in 1978.

NVT were ideally equipped to handle this type of assembly contract and were appointed to the task by Yamaha.

The bike has a 1396mm wheelbase and is 2115mm in total length. Seat height is 940mm with 295mm of ground clearance and 260mm of rear wheel travel. The complete front end is from the Yamaha YZ400 two-stroke moto-crosser, giving 250mm of fork travel.

It weighs in at 252lbs dry and Aberg's efforts indicate that it is totally competitive even in today's two-stroke world.

Next time, therefore, that you see a British policeman flash by on his Yamaha triple or watch some motocross racer take the checkered flag on his HL500, remember that you are seeing the result of a unique link between the old and the new.....between Norton and Yamaha, two of the most respected names in motorcycling.