

Editorial:
a
Working
Diagram

Luke
Wood

Jonty
Valentine



1. Apart from the fact we didn't get the money we thought we would from CNZ last year, this is also a large part of the reason we didn't get an issue out. This is a 1974 Norton Commando. I moved to Auckland to work more seriously on TNG. But I bought this bike on the way there. I rode it to Auckland.

3. This is the clutch basket with the plates removed. I hadn't really done anything mechanical before in my life, and so it was quite nerve-racking the first time I pulled something like this apart.

I was going to say I didn't think about graphic design at all last year, but actually I did.

5. Graphic design has never really felt like this to me. They are two very different types of activity, designing and fixing motorcycles.

When I put the gearbox back together I made a mistake and found out later that it could have seized and caused an accident that, if at speed, could have been very serious.

7. Replacing the clutch cable means removing the petrol tank. This is an easy job, and quite a rewarding one as you get to see the skeleton of your bike. Seeing it like this all sorts of possibilities come to mind about the way the bike could look.

9. This year I moved house and bought another bike. It doesn't have the dark magic of the Norton, but it's reliable. I also quit teaching and went to work for a studio. Having thought that if I could find a problem in graphic design it might be more engaging, I was surprised to find that there was now a big problem—the client didn't like what I was doing.

2. For quite a while it went really well. But then, due to its age and the long trips I was doing on it, it began to break down. I couldn't find anyone willing to fix it, and so had to start fixing it myself.

This (above) is the primary chain case, where the clutch lives. I had a lot of clutch trouble, and it took me a long time to resolve.

4. What I thought about was how redundant the term 'problem-solving' seemed to graphic design. Pulling apart my clutch and gearbox (above) every step presented me with some sort of real problem—stuck or corroded parts, not having the right tools, that sort of thing. I would often get quite frustrated and angry.

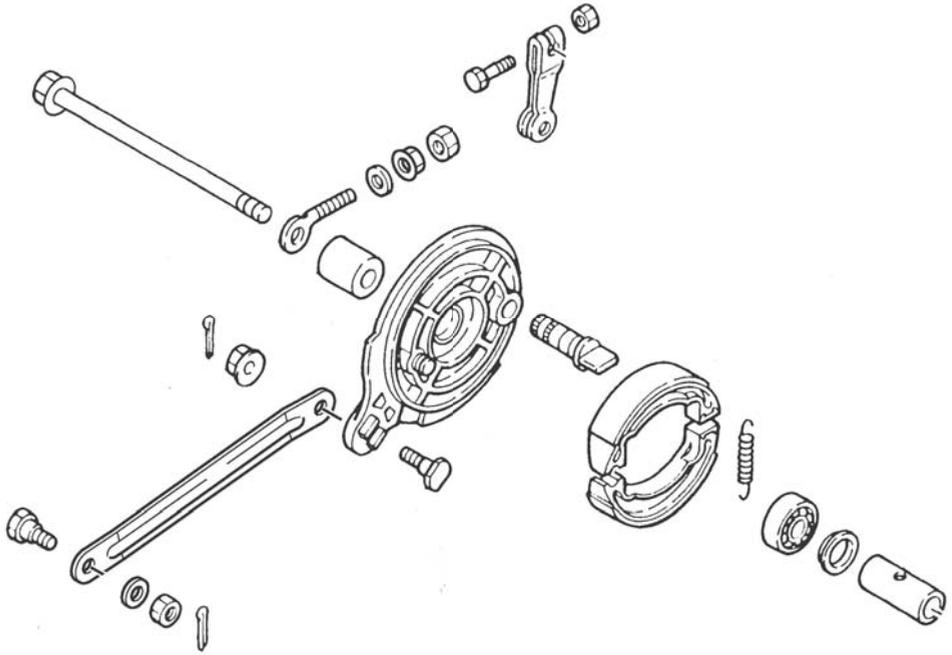
6. I've never scared myself like that doing graphic design—by getting something wrong. Your life isn't on the line, and really nothing's that difficult. At least that's what I was thinking last year.

I was teaching graphic design at the time but it was difficult to feel motivated because I was quite bored with graphic design, and all I thought about was bikes.

8. For example the tank could be put back on a bit higher making the bike seem bigger and more aggressive. In the end I put it back the way it was, and I was just happy to have got it going again. From the start I thought I'd work on the way the bike looked, but all I've done is spend all my time and money keeping it going. I kept the Norton in the house.

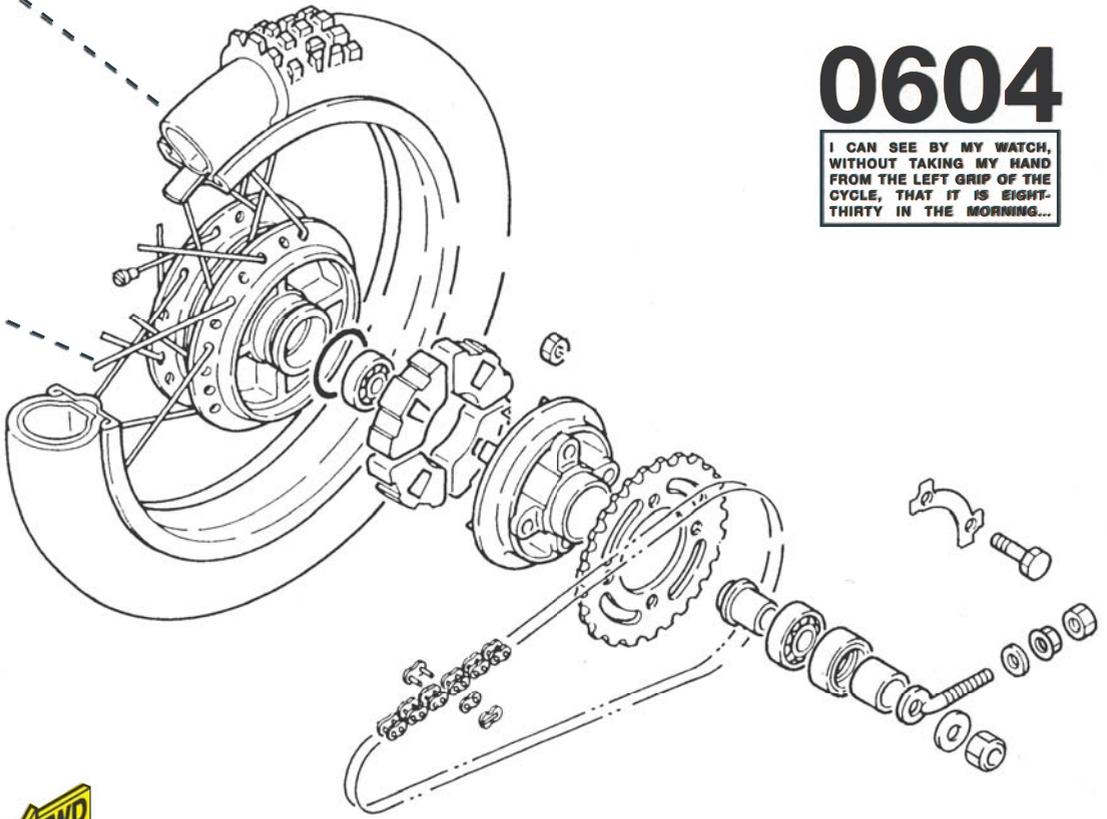
In the library to be exact.

10. Daniel van der Velden has proposed that the problem for graphic design might be that there is no problem. He also describes a shift in what he calls "important" design, away from client-based commissions toward self-initiated projects. Now, more than ever, I like the sound of this. But is it avoiding the problem?

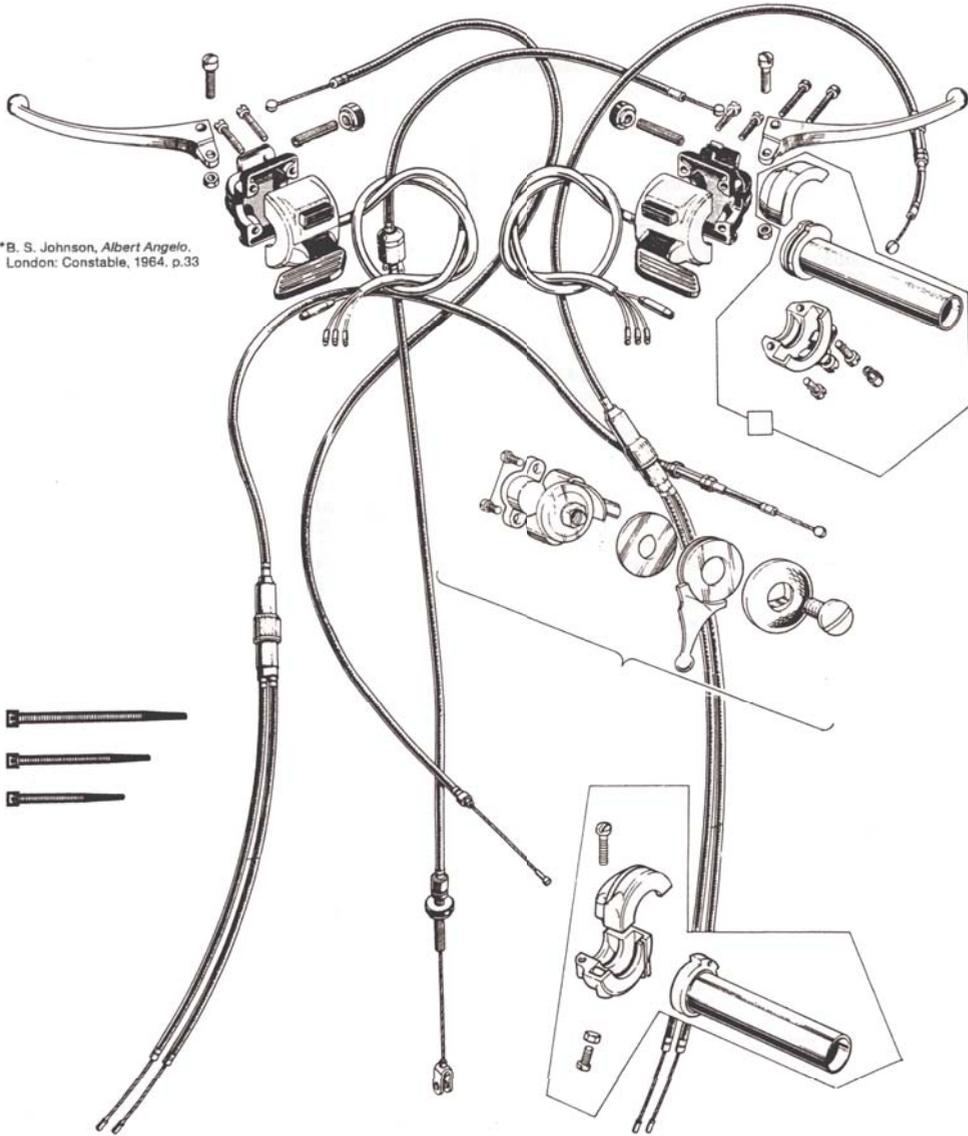


0604

I CAN SEE BY MY WATCH,
WITHOUT TAKING MY HAND
FROM THE LEFT GRIP OF THE
CYCLE, THAT IT IS EIGHT-
THIRTY IN THE MORNING...



*B. S. Johnson, *Albert Angelo*.
London: Constable, 1964. p.33



Albert thought: a block of wood, a plank of wood. When does a block become a plank? When does a plank become a block? At what point do you see that a block has become a plank, at what stage a plank a block? Plank. Block. He thought about then until the words became meaningless to him, then ludicrous to him, then nothing to him. And he was left with wood. Wood is wood is wood, he said to himself, pleased.

"If we go on half-educating these kids any more," he said suddenly to Terry, "then the violence will out. I'm sure they know they're being cheated, that they're being treated as subhuman beings. And the school is a microcosm of society as a whole."

1. General Description

If there was a class that made immediate sense to me at high school it was Technical Drawing. The subject simply required being initiated into the beautiful abstracted visual vernacular of orthographic projection, isometric, oblique, sometimes perspective and exploded drawings and cut-away sections. I think part of why I liked it was that it was a drawing discipline that could be relatively objectively assessed and it had conventions that had to be learned/taught—and I just got it.... (hmm, that might be a contradiction?).

However, my brother and I were probably rightly advised that it wasn't worth doing after the fifth form, and that we should concentrate on more

worthy subjects like Physics and English. But, James did become an Architect and I became a Designer... (actually, I'm not really sure whether I'm suggesting that this curricular re-alignment should be seen as being at-odds-with or, on the contrary, foreshadowing our future occupations?).

2. Method of Removal

Anyway, oddly in the mid 1990s the New Zealand education czars decided that Technical Drawing had to be made more attractive so they decided to call it 'Graphic Design'. What this meant was that all of the mostly wood-work and metal-work teachers who taught Technical Drawing were forced to make their classes do marketing nonsense like

designing logos and campaigns for social causes, and doing packaging for organic shampoos. And they started to introduce spooky words like 'technology' and 'innovation' as if they were commonplace. And make students formulate (and be assessed against) pseudo-scientific 'briefs' to 'solve problems' for fictitious 'target markets'. All nonsense really.

3. Examination & Renovation

I want to forward the suggestion that schools should go back to teaching Technical Drawing. I don't really care that few teachers are actually qualified to teach Graphic Design at high school; it's more that I am suspicious of high schools peddling subjects that aspire to sound or look like such real-

world-y professions. It just seems disingenuous, like child beauty pageants somehow.

Granted, the extension of my argument may lead to the conclusion that Technical Drawing is itself too specialised and has no place in a high school curriculum—as opposed to just a course in 'Drawing' say. But that's another story. Still, I am pretty sure that Graphic Design at least does not have a legitimate place at school. Perhaps this all merely makes me sound like one of those people who mourn that Latin or even Scripture is not taught anymore: it's true, Tech-Drawing was my visual Latin.