



AMCA EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

January 2018

Hello AMCA Europe Members,

Happy New Year to all our members, and we're getting ready for another packed programme of having fun with old motorcycles. This time we have a report on the Mannheim show in Germany and the first Australian Chapter Meet. I've put together a short history of the European Chapter while I can still remember it, there is news on my Henderson restoration, and a full listing of bike-related events for us to choose from.

Mannheim Veterama

This long established show remains the largest in Europe, though with fewer visitors than back in the day. I drove down about 450 miles south east from home to arrive on the evening of Thursday 10 October in good time to set up the next morning. Weather was average for the time of year, with breezes, showers, cloud and sunshine. Many of our European members were at the 1000+ stands, and Saturday morning we had a brief get together of members from all over Europe united by our interest in old bikes.

I was not actively looking for fresh parts or projects, but found these two American bikes a short distance away.



This is a small Indian fore-and-aft flat twin from the teens, probably influenced by the British 350 cc Douglas that saw service as a dispatch rider bike 1914-18. Harley's response was the 1919-23 Sport model of about

600 cc, an early attempt at a lightweight entry level model:



Despite US record-setting events, domestic riders preferred the big V-twins, and surviving examples seem mostly to be export models.

That was my 26th appearance at Veterama, and this year I'll probably be back as a visitor, so if anyone wants Stand 6/402 next time then please get in touch.

First Australian Chapter Meet

Rob Veitch, who I had previously judged with at Wauseon, traveled a couple of thousand miles from Western Australia to Sydney to give us this report:

“The new AMCA Chapter in Australia held its inaugural meet (25-27 August 2017) in Bulli New South Wales which is about 70 kms (45 miles) south of Sydney. A small group of us flew in from Perth (on the west coast) and one friend drove across from Perth with his wife in their caravan, to Sydney on the east coast for the event. Tony Blain and a tireless band of eight fellow enthusiasts (and AMCA members) have worked on the planning of this for the last 18 months.

The meet included the usual swap meet, technical seminars, judging and an auction. The AMCA Chief Judge Don Dzurick flew in from the US to lead the judging and impart his knowledge, and was well received. The event attracted a lot of attendees over the three days and saw a lot of interesting and rare bikes on display.

One of the highlights was seeing and hearing David Reidie's three Harley DAH factory racers and an eight valve Indian. Loud but a chance in a lifetime which was enjoyed by every single enthusiast there. Another was a locally built 1904 Minerva which included a photo of the original owner on the bike in 1904.

The auction included some high quality machines including two fresh restorations by Eldon Brown from Canada (a JDH Two cam and an Indian four), a Manx Norton and Excelsior Manxman and a replica Matchless G80. Top price of the show was AUD\$102,000

(US\$76,500) for the Eldon Brown restored Indian four, while a barn find 1930 VL managed a healthy AUD\$38,000 (US\$28,500).



Here's the eight valve Indian:



And the DAH Harley racers:



While there were a predominance of American machinery in attendance, much effort went into trying to make sure all makes,

brands and models are felt welcome. Hopefully this will expand in future years to include more British, European and Japanese machines.

[Weather was good, here are a couple of Indian Chiefs outside]



The car park also included an interesting array of bikes over the weekend including Vincents, Norton Commandos, HD Servicars, Rudge Racer and Indians and Harleys (both modern and older). There was even a replica of a 1972 Kawasaki (with flashy painted fairing) used by the bikie gang in a 1970s Australian movie called Stone – we all thought it was good back then.

There was some quality among the Swap Meet offerings including a range of NOS WLA parts, a 1914 Indian (partly dismantled but 95% complete, acetylene lamps, Corbin speedometers, and a variety of bikes, some running and some not. A nice 1945 U model with sidecar was a good buy at AUD\$30,000 (US\$22,500), as was a fully restored Harley WLA in correct army trim for AUD\$20,000 (US\$15,000).

Congratulations to Tony Blain and his dedicated crew for putting on a fantastic motorcycle event which was a chance to meet fellow enthusiasts, renew old friendships and share our love of old bikes. As a measure of the team's confidence, they have booked the venue for the next five years – I'm sure it will go from strength to strength. ”

European Chapter History

Pete Reeves and I had both been AMCA judges since the mid-1990s, and were wondering how to get bikes judged in Europe. We proposed video judging 15 years too early, and Pete even shipped his 1942 Harley ELC military knucklehead to Florida in order to have it judged by Bruce Lindsay and Bruce Palmer. Peter Heinz, the AMCA Chief Judge, then proposed we form a Chapter and judge at our own National meet, and that's what we did.

We needed eight founder members, and found nine, with the others being Ulf Böhme, Günter Russek and Fritz Simmerlein from Germany, Jan Van der Werff from the Netherlands, Kevin Hellowell from the UK, Poul Jors from Denmark, and Eric Bourrague from France. Preliminary approval was given at the Florida Spring AMCA Board meeting, with our Charter granted on 30 August 2001 at the Davenport Board. Our first Meet was

held in Den Haag in October 2001, with then AMCA President Bob McClean and archivist Bruce Lindsay coming over to support us.

Our first three National Meets were then held in Dessau, Germany, starting in 2002, where Günter allowed us free use of the hotel grounds where he was manager. Fritz then took over for the next three Meets in the historic German town of Dinkelsbühl, after which we moved to Den Haag in the Netherlands for three years, Geldrop Netherlands for three more years, and then to the American Motorcycle Museum in Raalte NL where we have been since 2015 and plan to remain.

We were the first AMCA Chapter to have an Email newsletter, and the first to embed a Meet video in that newsletter. We have never charged Chapter dues, and always count all AMCA members in Europe as belonging to the Chapter. We started with 110 members, and doubled and then tripled this number to reach the 320 members we have today. These bikes and people were here all the time, showing how new Chapters and a few enthusiasts can bring fresh blood into our great Club.

Henderson KJ Restoration

My plan to ride the bike this season was confounded by the six months spent at the engine shop having the crankshaft crack tested and reground, then every bearing freshly white metaled. I then completed the reassembly with new pistons to fit the re-bored cylinders, and installed the motor into the restored cycle parts. As with the pocket valve Harleys, the fit of the valve pockets is critical on these inlet-over-exhaust models. I carefully shimmed the cylinders to get them all level, then ran over them collectively with belt sander material glued to the bottom of an old wood plane sole plate to flatten off the last few thousandths. With modern exhaust pipe crush rings then fitted instead of the original solid copper head gaskets, the whole assembly sealed up tight and the bike fired up first time on Christmas Eve, phew! Here's a picture taken New Years Eve in the shop:



There is still wiring to finish, but I'm looking forward to taking the bike out when we get a dry day. It has the 1931 headlamp, wrong carburettor, unpainted spokes, mostly stainless fixings from a 1978 restoration, accessory grips and foot-boards, way too much plating, and cut down exhaust, but is still a matching numbers machine that I'm hoping to ride in to our Raalte Meet.

2017 Review

The new low growth world rumbled along with various near disasters, but we've made it through and still had fun. The euro strengthened against the dollar, so the Europeans are the ones to blame for those crazy US swap meet prices. The UK pound weakened against both major currencies, so our manufacturing industry is working flat out on export orders. Auction prices showed high prices for favoured marques such as Brough and Vincent, but these trophy bikes will surely not turn a wheel again. Prices on eBay seemed to stabilise, with occasional bargains to be found. I attended two AMCA Meets at Oley and Raalte and judged at both of them. The AMCA Board seems to have had a quiet year, which counts as a good result.

Several friends and long time AMCA members died during the year, but that can't take away the memories of the fun we had in the past.

Pete Reeves and I continued to provide **dating certificates** for imported American bikes for our UK vehicle authority, and we fixed the pricing so that half a dozen UK new members joined for the discounted Club rate. UK registration goes with the frame not the engine, so we spent a lot of time agonizing over Harley steering head forging die numbers and other details.

On the AMCA, I renewed my **membership** in December, and was struck by the much clearer reminder in my magazine. Let's hope this keeps up Club retention rates. Keith Kizer tells me has signed up or renewed 1000 memberships this year, just by turning up at Meets and bike events and sitting at a pitch.

The National is now following our 15 year lead on Country Representatives, and ours have now been rebadged as **AMCA Ambassadors** in line with our US friends. We have enough members in **Poland** and the **Czech Republic** to require Ambassadors, so would volunteers please make themselves known.

2018 Look Ahead

We have a packed programme of fun with old bikes ahead, and I'm already booked for Oley and Raalte. For our own Raalte Meet, details are on our Website at www.amca-europe.eu. This time we'll have an even nicer package of goodies to support our Chapter, and we'll try to make sure all our visitors have the chance to

buy it. The Royal Wedding has been arranged for the week before our Meet, so our North American visitors can conveniently attend both!

I've just received my **2018 AMCA Calendar**, and it has a 1932 VL on the cover so must be good. I didn't see any pictures from our Chapter this year, so let's make more of an effort for next time. Pictures with people tend to go in the smaller pictures, and larger professional pictures with a story as the main photos. I'll be asking for contributions around mid-year.

Bike Wanted

A UK member is looking for a decent 1948-55 Harley Panhead, so please contact me if you have one for sale and I'll put you in touch.

2018 AMCA National Meets

February 23-24, Omaha Chapter, Fremont, NE
March 09-10, Sunshine Meet, New Smyrna Beach, FL
April 27-28, Perkiomen Chapter, Oley, PA
May 18-20 Southern Meet, Denton, NC
May 25-26 European Meet, Raalte, NL
June 15-16, Viking Chapter, St. Paul, MN
June 15-16, Fort Sutter Chapter, Dixon, CA
July 20-22, Wauseon Meet, Wauseon, OH
August 03-04, Yankee Chapter, Terryville, CT
August 24-26, Australian Chapter, Sydney, AUS
September 28-29, Chesapeake, Jefferson, PA

2018 AMCA National Road Runs

March 05-07, Sunshine, DeLand, FL
June 10-13, Hudson Valley, Round Top, NY
July 26-28, Oregon Trail, Cottage Grove, OR
September 04-06, Driftless, Onalaska, WI
September 12-14, Black Hills, Deadwood, SD

Other 2018 Events

Finland

Jan 6 Jyväskylä swap meet

Germany

Jan 21 Winter Classic Bike Show, Im Alten Opel-Werk, 65428 Rüsselheim

Jan 26-28 Motorrad Bodensee www.motorradwelt-bodensee.de

Mar 22-25 Retro Classics Stuttgart www.retro-classics.de

Apr 06-08, Veterama, Hockenheim www.veterama.de

Sep 08, Board Track racing at Bielefeld. Contact motoholic@web.de

Oct 12-14, Veterama, Mannheim. Biggest European swap meet. www.veterama.de.

Hungary

June 21-24 FIVA World Motorcycle Run, Budapest www.mavamsz.hu

Italy

Jan 18-21 Motorbike Expo Verona www.motorbikeexpo.it

Mar 09-11 Harley and Snow Hillclimb, Ridnaun www.harley.bz.it/de/harley-snow

Sep 08 Roll'n Flat Beach Race, Caorle www.venicebeachrace.com

Latvia

July 12-15, Kurland Rally. A 60 bike limit this year, so book early at www.kurlandround.lv.

Netherlands

Feb 18. Swap Meet, Hengelo, www.alemite-motoren.nl

June 10-12, Silent Gray Fellows Meet, Ulicoten.

Aug 12-14, Old Timers Run, Den Haag. Pre-1966 bikes for the 52st time. www.hdctheoldtimers.nl

Sep 07-09, Alemite Run, Beuningen. www.alemite-motoren.nl.

Sweden

Jan 27 Eskiltuna swap meet, Harleys/bobbers 1940s up

Feb 10 Enköping Indianmarknaden. Indian/early Harley

Switzerland

Feb 22-25 Swiss Moto/Custom Zürich www.swiss-moto.ch

May 26-27 Swiss Classic World, Luzern
www.swissclassicworld.ch

June 23-24 Oldtimermesse, Uster
Aug 26 Gran Prix Suisse Berne Memorial, Bern

Oct 28 Oldtimermesse, St. Gallen

United Kingdom

March 18. Pioneer Run, 350 pre-1915 bikes, Epsom Downs to Brighton.

June 17 Banbury Run, Gaydon, 600 pre-1931 bikes

Oct 15-16. Stafford show and auction

European Chapter Directors 2017

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Country Ambassadors

In addition to those Directors marked with asterisks (*) above, we also have the following country ambassadors:

Denmark. Michael Pedersen,
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Finland. Fiskis Ekman, fiskis@kolumbus.fi

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Bobbers. Paul Jung, pjung@wwag.com

Please volunteer if you would like to be representative for a country not mentioned. You just need to know what bike-related events take place in your country, and answer occasional Email questions.

Don't forget to renew your subscriptions at
www.antiquemotorcycle.org

And keep me up to date if you change Email address.

The next newsletter will probably be in April, so please keep sending me articles and photos on bike related items.

Wishing you safe and happy riding, and best regards,

Steve Slocombe,
President AMCA European Chapter

