



AMCA EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

"Having fun with old motorcycles"

Hello AMCA Europe Members,

Who would have thought just a few weeks ago that we would now be living in such extraordinary times? I have been reminded that family and friends are even more important than old bikes, and perhaps you have too. I have also discovered that social distancing is more or less my normal way of working; that my crossword skills are improving; my garden is looking a little neater; and that quiet roads are a big help to us hand shift riders.

We have had our motorcycle meets, rightly, cancelled until at least the second half of the year, so this time we have news on earlier events this year, plus musings from me on a variety of subjects.

Pub Quiz

We all need cheering up, so here are a couple of questions which might win you a beer with your old bike friends one day. Answers at the end.

1. What year was the first series produced electric start Harley-Davidson?
2. And what year for their first series produced foot shift bike?

Las Vegas Auctions

I've been slogging through the 2000 results from the Mecum and Bonhams auctions at Vegas in late January and, apart from a few vanity items, saw signs that the market is softening. Our magazine showed the high dollar items, but what about the regular old bikes that most of us own? There were a lot of estate sales in there and really quite a lot of unsold bikes. The pretend early race bikes are going for close to the cost of building them from scraps, and two over-reserved Detroit Hendersons were unsold when I looked. How about a nice restored 1932 Harley single for \$10,000, or a British twin at the end of the auction for \$1900? With the Mecum auction lasting so long, it depended on the day and who was in the room, as I can see no logic in the very different prices for similar bikes. Next time if buying I'd go Thursday and Sunday, or if selling make sure my machine goes through Friday or Saturday.

April 2020

Winter Classics

Claudia Krause reports from Germany:

Last Sunday (January 19) we had the "Winter Classics" at the Opel production plant in Rüsselsheim again. This small but exclusive exhibition showed beautiful bikes from Germany, UK, Japan and the USA; for example BMW, Harley-Davidson, Heinkel, Horex, Indian, Vespa...

Our German member Michael Schneider brought some of his beautifully restored Indians....



while Christian Schwarz brought this 1921 Henderson:



Florida Meets

Pete and Tina Reeves made it over to the Florida Meets in early March, where Pete reported good weather, judging at New Smyrna Beach, and catching the last Virgin Atlantic flight out of Orlando before the lockdown, bringing a frame for his 1949 Panhead as luggage.

Pete notes two attempts to revive Indian after the firm collapsed in 1953. Here is a 1950s Brockhouse Indian:



and here is a 1968 Indian Super Scout, one of fifty put together under different new owners of the name:



Years ago Pete told me he would quit our Club when the Harley Evo became an antique, and sure enough a first year 1985 model was in for judging. You don't get much in 35 years these days, and Pete is still with us.

UK Pioneer Run

This is the largest run of really old motorcycles in the world, with 300+ pre-1915 bikes running about 50 miles London to Brighton. The guys are pretty hard core, with no 1915 models allowed with those new fangled gearboxes, even if they were built in 1914. All the bikes are older than every rider, which is a sobering thought. I

always enjoy this meet and thought it would be held on the planned date of March 22nd, but it was an early victim of the Covid-19 lockdown. Here is a picture from last year to give the flavour:



Fitting a Tachometer

Who would want a rev counter on an old bike? Well, my 1929 Henderson KJ is my first four cylinder bike, and I thought it was undergeared when breaking in the motor after rebuild, although hard to tell by engine sound after riding V-twin Harleys. With 36 bhp at 4000 rpm it is supposed to be the first 100 mph production bike, so should pull 50 mph at 2000 rpm, right? First thing was to check the Corbin speedometer was accurate, using the radar warning sign in the next village which is set spot on 40 mph, as I have found by driving a car through it at 41 mph before.

After a few trials, and a change to a 26 tooth fiber gear to mesh with the old school split ring gear drive screwed to the rear spokes, the Corbin was right there. Next I mail ordered the least expensive tacho I could find, a KOSO electronic unit at about \$100/euros with a 2 inch/50 mm dial going up to 15,000 rpm, yikes!

The tacho is meant to work off 12 volt electrics, but ran off a 9 volt smoke alarm battery taped to the handlebars. It is also meant for battery/coil systems (and set up in 5 minutes on a handy VL), so was challenged by the magneto on the Henderson. However, about 20 turns of the sensor lead taped round a spark plug wire gave enough inductance to find a count, so we were away. As a final wheeze, I programmed the tacho for a single cylinder four stroke, so it multiplied the revs by four and gave a meaningful reading on the dial mounted on the handlebars. Off we went with the stock 16 tooth drive sprocket and yup, the bike was undergeared.

On the Hen, the primary drive is all gears inside the crankcases, so all you have to work with is the two rear sprockets. The rear wheel sprocket was already a couple of teeth under factory spec, so I worked only with the gearbox output sprocket. A new 17 tooth sprocket from the US still wasn't enough so I took a totally worn out sprocket to my local old bike shop. They detempered it in the fire, machined off the teeth, welded on a donor 18 tooth outer ring and re-tempered it. With an extra link in the rear chain I finally got 50 mph at 8000 rpm, actually 2000 of course, and job done.

The engine feels like it wants to go, so first we try 100 mph on the rear stand, and then look for an open day at an airfield to try again IRL (In Real Life). More later.

1930 VL Bobber

You may remember me rebuilding this from a dismantled pile of parts, and now I'm breaking it in after getting UK registration papers and a period number plate. Here it is after about 100 km:



The open pipes were too loud, so I found a pair of 2003 old stock Harley mufflers and put one on. It has a catalytic converter, giving exciting flames out of the back in the early days with a rich mixture.

You can feel those knobby tyres when riding a hard tail machine, but the bike goes straight down the road, and the brakes pass UK technical inspection even if exempt as a historic vehicle.

The battery bicycle horn on the handlebars, and the cut down rear VL mudguard used backwards as a front, are gestures towards the UK Construction and Use regulations. The second bike in the pile, a UL bobber, is coming along and will my be first belt drive primary. More later.

Raalte Meet

This is of course cancelled, but maybe we can have some kind of Virtual Meet? My social media skills are not good, but I could post pictures of the pre-1920 bikes you would have been bringing in our next newsletter. Email them to me with any old bike stories, as we are surely going to be short of newsletter material next time.

As a technical point, we hold our annual Chapter Meeting at Raalte. I can give the President's Report by Email, and deal with Date of Next Meeting and Any Other Business, but we also elect Directors for another one year term at the meeting. We can finesse this by extending the term of service to two years, and Directors have so far said they will stand for another year, but if anyone else would like to join us then please let me know. We received our AMCA Charter in 2001, so our next Meet will celebrate 20 years as the European Chapter. We have had few changes in recent years, and I was not expecting to be President-for-life, so new blood and fresh approaches are always welcome.

Our Deputy Chief Judge Pete Reeves has recently been in discussion with Don Dzurick about **Virtual Judging** for Raalte, which may be trialled at the cancelled Oley Meet. With our glacial progress through the Club judging system, this would give some chances to keep making progress. The idea at present is for bikes that have previously been judged to advance to Junior First or Senior. There is reluctance to award Winners Circle on video inspection alone. The conditions are likely to include familiarity with Skype, pre-registration, and possible pre-judging using digital photos of areas where points deductions had been made earlier. It sounds promising to me. Any questions to Pete please, his Email address is given later.

Eye Candy

Thomas Roop and Lars Nielsen sent me this picture



It's a 1300cc Indian on the Bonneville Salt Flats, which surely can give us dreams for the future when the current unpleasantness is over.

Harley-Davidson Gearboxes

With time on my hands I was musing over gearboxes I have built and counted around 80 build sheets. There are 55 VL and late JD 1926-36 three speeds, ten VL 1931-36 reverse boxes, ten 1936 VL four speeds, a 1941 Big Twin four speed, a couple of 1930 single three speeds, and a couple of late WL three speeds with the latest being a 1944 WLA box. We can see from the 1938 Factory Tour brochure that Harley made their own gearboxes in-house, and I can see three families in there:

The 3 speed crash box that ran 1915-1936. This is a well designed box that lasts a long time. There are a couple of early changes, but the slider gear lasted all 21 years. Main gear bearings were lengthened in 1925 as the engines became more powerful, the stepped mainshaft with soldered bronze main gear bushings lasted until 1930, countershaft bearings were beefed up in 1932, but many parts can be retrofitted. The 1931-36 reverse box uses the same case, mainshaft and countershaft with two slider gears and a reverse idler. The 1936 VL four speed is also squeezed into the same case, and is the first constant mesh box for the Big Twin.

The 1926-73 single/WL three speed. This started as a little crash box for the 350 cc singles, which was overwhelmed by the 500 cc and 750 cc engines fitted to it in 1929 with the first C and D models. After a couple of years of tinkering, the box was redesigned as a constant mesh for 1933, retaining the basic idea of a side cover over a two shaft set-up and introducing the first drum shift mechanism. More new parts came in for 1941, with a third mounting stud added, and this box went through until 1973 on the last WLs and then the Servicars, with the cluster gear being modified for electric starting. The 1944 box I recently finished was very labour intensive, as you have to keep assembling the box, measuring clearances, then disassembling. On the other hand, new parts are not that expensive because of the large volume of repro parts made. You still see 1926 and 1933 part numbers, showing that the family owned company did not like too much change.

The 1936-84 Big Twin gearbox is an exception, as Harley started with a clean sheet and a roomier case than the VL four speed. Only the drain plug and the main gear bushing are the same as the earlier box. They got it right, because very few changes were made, except extra case mounts and a longer mainshaft for electric start, and some adaptations for foot shift. Nearly all parts

for all the variations are being reproduced, including the reverse boxes.

OK I haven't mentioned the 1952 and up KH/Sportster gearbox which finally became integral with the engine, but this is fairly late for me and I've only rebuilt one. I am a distributor for Eastern Parts, Andrews Products, Colony and Samwel Supplies so I can help with many of your rebuilds.

Another Good Book

I have just finished 'Velocette – Passion of a Lifetime' by Ivan Rhodes, one time VMCC President and acknowledged Velo expert. This is an expanded edition of a book from about 25 years ago, with no ISBN which I guess means it is privately published. Ivan is now in his late 80s and knew many of the movers and shakers in this family-owned company, as well as the engineers, racers, owners and enthusiasts along the way. He is clearly a fan of the 1930s KTT 350 cc overhead cam bikes, and has obviously had a lot of parts through his hands. This is not a coffee table book but has a lot of detail for us fans of technical literature. Ivan has little time for the innovative LE model which made up about a third of say the 110,000 bikes produced over the lifetime of the company. This 200 cc water cooled flat twin was yet another post WW2 attempt at an Everyman machine, but produced in reasonable numbers and just starting to be collected.

Pub Quiz Answers

1. The 1964 Servicar was Harley's first electric start bike, with the Big Twins following the next year.
2. The 1942 XA was Harley's first footshift bike, being a frank copy of a BMW.

2020 Events

Below is our latest timetable for the year. The AMCA events are firm, but some of the others may be provisional. Please advise me of any corrections, or additional events you would like to see included.

Many events have now been cancelled or postponed, and are marked with an asterisk (*). Please advise any other changes, and check with the organisers before embarking on any travel.

2020 AMCA National Meets

February 28-29, Omaha Chapter, Fremont, NE

March 06-07, Sunshine Meet, New Smyrna Beach, FL

April 24-25, Perkiomen Chapter, Oley, PA *

May 15-17, Southern Meet, Denton, NC *

May 22-23, European Meet, Raalte, NL *

May 29-31, Empire Chapter, Trumansburg, NY

June 12-13, Viking Chapter, St Paul, MN

June 19-20, Fort Sutter Chapter, Dixon, CA

June 26-27, Colonial Chapter, Harmony, NJ

July 17-19, Wauseon Meet, Wauseon, OH

July 31- August 01, Yankee Chapter, Terryville, CT

August 29-30, Australian Chapter, Sydney, AUS

October 02-03, Chesapeake Chapter, Jefferson, PA

2020 AMCA National Road Runs

June 02-04, Phoenix Chapter, Zion National Park, UT

July 21-24, Yellowstone Chapter, Billings, MT

August 12-14, Badger Chapter, East Troy, WI

September 08-10, Roosevelt Chapter, Detroit Lakes, MN

October 26-28, Los Angeles Chapter, Fallbrook, CA

Other 2020 Events

Austria

September 08-13 European Bike Week, Faaker See
www.europeanbikeweek.com

Belgium

Feb 22 Ruilbeurs Oude Motoren, www.earlyriders.be
(provisional)

Aug 14-17 Where is Anna? 85 km run near Newport for pre-1931 bikes. whereisanna1418@gmail.com
(provisional)

Denmark

May 20-22, 21st Skagen Run, this time Skagen to Copenhagen, for pre-1935 bikes. *

July 17-19 Windmill Rally, Hasbro for pre-1940 bikes.
www.windmillrally.eu

Aug 30 Laholm Beach Jutland, pre-1947 beach racing and partying www.romomotorfestival.dk (provisional)

Finland

Jan 11 Rompe swap meet in Jyväskylä at the Paviljonki hotel. Mostly mopeds, Japanese, Eastern |European and British bikes. 250 km from Helsinki.

Croatia/Slovenia/Italy

to be announced FIVA World Motorcycle Run,
www.fiva.org

Germany

Dec 06-08 2019 Custom Bike Show, Bad Salzflun
www.custombike-show.de

Jan 19 Winter Classic Bike Show, Im Alten Opel-Werk, 65428 Rüsselheim

Jan 24-26 Motorrad Bodensee www.motorradwelt-bodensee.de

Feb 27- Mar 01 Retro Classics Stuttgart www.retro-classics.de

Apr 03-05 Veterama, Hockenheim www.veterama.de *

May 02-03 Technorama Kassel www.technorama.de

May 22-23 Kustom Kulture, Zeche Ewald, Herten
www.kustom-kulture-forever.com

June 11-14 Magic Bike, Rüdesheim, www.magic-bike-ruedesheim.com

July 17-19 Rust'n Dust Teterow, vintage dirt track,
www.rustndustjalopy.de

August (date to follow) 10th Kaiserzeitausfahrt, 85410 Haag an der Amper (Munich area).
www.kaiserzeitausfahrt.de

Sep 11-12, vintage dirt track racing Hindenberg,
www.hindenberg-dirt-track.com

Oct 09-11 Veterama, Mannheim. Biggest European swap meet. www.veterama.de. Our AMCA stand is open to all members who want to sell their own parts.

Italy

Jan 16-19 Motorbike Expo Verona
www.motorbikeexpo.it

Mar 13-15 Harley and Snow Hillclimb, Rio Pusteria-Alto Adige www.harley.bz.it/de/harley-snow

May 9-11 ASI Moto Show, Parma race track
www.asifed.it *

Sep 05-06 Roll'n Flat Beach Race, Caorle
www.venicebeachrace.com *provisional*

Netherlands

Jan 11-12 Oldtimerbeurs Autotron, Rosmalen
www.oldtimerbeurs.net

Feb 15 Oldtimer+Tweewielerbeurs Eurohal Zuidbroek,
www.1up25.nl

Feb 16. Swap Meet, Hengelo, www.alemite-motoren.nl

June 12-14 Silent Gray Fellows Meet, Oosterhout. 17th meet for pre-1966 Americanbikes
www.silentgrayfellows.nl

July 24-26 International Indian Rally, Nijverdal,
www.indian.nl/iir-2020

Aug 08-10, Old Timers Run, Den Haag. Pre-1966 American bikes for the 42nd time. www.hdctheoldtimers.nl

Sep 04-06, Alemite Run, Twente. www.alemite-motoren.nl.

November 01, Silent Gray Fellows swap meet, Chaam.
www.silentgrayfellows.nl

Poland

June 17-21. 4th Nostalgia Endurance Rally for pre-1949 motorcycles. About 1000 km through NE Poland. *
www.oldtimerclub.com.pl

June 28-29 Antique motorcycle swap meet, Lodz
www.motoweteranbazar.com (*to be confirmed*)

Sweden

Feb 08 Eskilstuna swap meet, Harleys/bobbers 1940s up

Feb 08 Enköping Indianmarknaden. Indian/early Harley

May 27-31 Harley-Davidson Super Rally, Öland
www.superrally.com *

Switzerland

Feb 20-23 Swiss Moto/Custom Zürich www.swiss-moto.ch

March 21-22 Swap Meet Fribourg www.oldtimer-teilemarkt.ch

April 25-26 Historic vehicle days www.shvf.ch *

April 26 GP Mutschellen www.gpmutschellen.ch *

May 2-3 Arbon Classics www.arbon-classics.ch *

May 15-16 Art and Wheels Pratteln
www.artandwheelsbasel.com

May 22-23 Rock this Town, Solothurn
www.rockthistownsolothurn.com/oldtimer

May 23-24 Swiss Classic World, Luzern *
www.swissclassicworld.ch

June 05-07 Lenzerheide Motor Classics
www.lenzerheide-motorclassics.ch

July 03-05 Swiss Harley Days, Lugano

United Kingdom

March 22. Pioneer Run, 350 pre-1915 bikes, Epsom Downs to Brighton.*

April 25/26 Stafford classic bike show and auction*

May 09/10 Race the Waves, beach racing at Bridlington, Yorkshire.*

May 31 Banbury Run, Gaydon, 450 pre-1931 bikes
www.vmcc.net *

July 30-Aug 03, International West Kent Run, 310 runners at The Friars Aylesford, ME20 7BX

Aug 07-09 46th Scottish Classic and Vintage Motorcycle Rally, Pitcrocknie Restaurant, Alyth, PH11 8JJ. Contact arthur.vintagat@gmail.com

Aug 15. First Classic and Vintage Motorcycle Show, Hedingham Castle, Essex CO9 3DJ.

September 4-6 Beaulieu International Autojumble and auction/Netley Marsh motorcycle jumble

Oct 10-11 Stafford classic bike show and auction

European Chapter Directors 2020

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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, elleham07@gmail.com

Finland. Fiskis Ekman, fiskis@kolumbus.fi

France. Stuart Graham, harleyman3@wanadoo.fr

Latvia. Juris Ramba, ramoto1992@gmail.com

Norway. Sverre Gerber, sveger@online.no

Poland. Krzysztof Pedryc, indian56@wp.pl

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Sweden. Stefan Olovsson, stefan.indian@telia.com

Switzerland. Sandra Froehlich, sandra@mcsands.ch

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 June/July, so please keep sending me articles and photos on bike related items, and stay safe until then.

Wishing you safe and happy riding, and best regards,

Steve Slocombe,
President AMCA European Chapter

