



## AMCA EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

*"Having fun with old motorcycles"*

Hello AMCA Europe Members,

This time we review the past year and look ahead to the one just started. There have been no shows or museum visits since last time, so I then present a lightly revised version of my Raalte talk last May on four cylinder motorcycles. I have topped and tailed this with the nineteenth century history and the Holden report from last time and sent it to the Antique Motorcycle editor, so maybe we shall see a magazine article later this year. If any of you have a technical article or a trip report to tell, please let me know and we shall try to get it published.

### Backwards/forwards

2019 saw signs of advancing years, with my Henderson turning 90 years old in April according to the crankcase casting dates, and my Volkswagen T4 van hitting 21 in the same month. On the business side, my sheet metal man died, plus the guy who bored my cylinders and the one who supplied my drive chains. In the Club you will have read Kevin Valentine's obituary in the last magazine, and he and I spent a lot of time together on the judging field over the years. For myself, I was told after a motorcycle crash at college that my left knee might give me trouble in later life, and I guess later life has now arrived. But I had a blast at the last Oley Meet, and our own Raalte Meet was surely one for the record books.

This year I'll be at the UK Pioneer Run again in March, then Oley again in April, hoping to take my 1933 Harley VL down the Reading Motorcycle Club drag strip if the weather is kinder this time. Our May International Meet will again be at Raalte, featuring 100 year old bikes this time, and our Dutch directors have already met with the museum management to make sure everything will be OK. If any of you younger Chapter members would like to volunteer for hard work for no reward, then please let me know.

### Four Cylinder Production Motorcycles

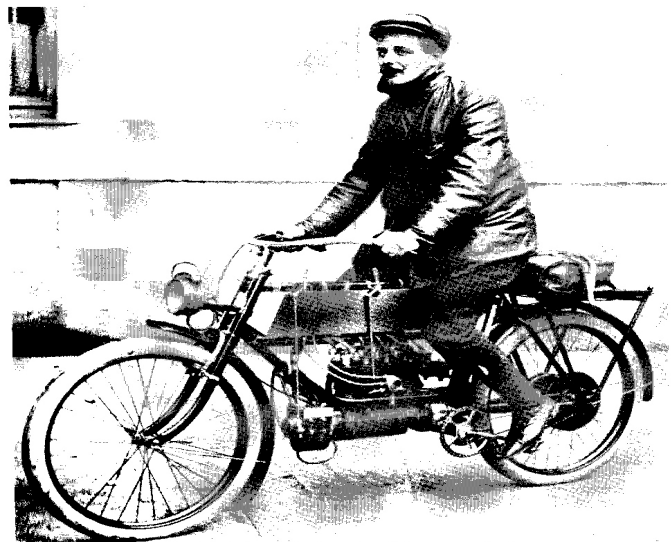
Before Honda and others dominated the world market for four cylinder motorcycles, many companies prior to 1960 had a go at a four cylinder machine. Prototypes, one-offs, or a few machines were built by Brough, Dresch, Douglas, Fowler, Gerhart, Hess, Laurin & Klement, McEvoy, Motobecane, Royal Enfield, Torque, Vauxhall and Wooler, with a few exotic multicylinder

racers in there too. Check out AMCA member Ing. Stefano Milani's privately published book 'Pluricylindriche' if you would like more history on these exotic machines. Club co-founder Ted Hodgdon's book 'Golden Age of the Fours' is also a key reference.

For my Raalte presentation at our European Chapter Meet in May 2019, I found that just fourteen makes of series produced four cylinder motorcycles were made prior to 1960. The presentation was much helped by most of these makes being represented at our Meet. In chronological order they are Holden, FN, Pierce, Wilkinson, Militaire/Militor, Henderson, ACE, Indian, Nimbus, Cleveland, Windhoff, Matchless, Ariel and Zündapp. These are briefly reviewed below, with the Holden treated last time.

### FN 1904-26

Paul Kelekom from Antwerp Belgium designed the first fore-and-aft four cylinder motorcycle in 1904, having already designed the Sarolea, Kerry and Minerva.



F.N. 1904, Osmond sul prototipo della quattro cilindri

FN is the Belgian armaments company, one of the few able to make precision engineered components at the time. The first FN machines were 363 cc, and built like sewing machines, with atmospheric inlet valves, cast iron crankcases, and shaft drive. By 1913 they had

grown to 500 cc, then 750 cc from 1914-23 and with a three speed gearbox:



The final version of the FN four was a more conventional chain driven 750 cc, three speed which had clearly put on weight and was bought in modest numbers by the military:



Total FN four production is estimated at 10,000 units, mostly before 1920 when they pretty much had the field to themselves.

#### **Pierce 1909-1913**

George Pierce returned from a 1908 European trip with a FN four, so we can say his machine was heavily influenced by this model. The bike was pitched at the luxury end of the market, with fuel and oil carried in the oversize frame tubes:



Probably fewer than 500 of these side valve, shaft drive, bikes were built, in Buffalo NY, with subsequent efforts concentrated on the Pierce-Arrow car before succumbing to the Wall Street Crash in 1930.

#### **Wilkinson 1909-1914**

Yes, it was the sword and razor blade company who had Percy Tacchi design this luxury product:



Early versions were 676 cc, then 848 cc, with a three speed transmission, worm drive, a sprung frame and a water-cooled engine. Probably fewer than a hundred were made.

#### **Militaire 1910-1917/Militor 1917-1923**

These heavy fore-and-aft straight fours were advertised as 'a two wheeled motor car' at just the time when the cost of a Model T Ford had been reduced through mass production to about the cost of a Harley sidecar rig.



They had a reverse gear and idler wheels, and were presumably designed for specialist use by a non-cost conscious military. The Militaire was designed by W G Moore and the Militor by N R Sinclair, with various re-organisations and changes of factory location over the years. A couple of hundred were probably built.

### Henderson 1912-31

William Henderson was a big influence on US motorcycle design, bringing out his straight four in 1912:



This 965 cc inlet-over-exhaust bike was built in Detroit, with a short wheelbase option in 1915 then becoming standard until the end of the run.



Financial problems meant the company was sold to bicycle entrepreneur Ignaz Schwinn in 1917, with production moved to Chicago to join Excelsior, and Henderson briefly employed at the new location as Chief Engineer. Production numbers for all American fours are hard to establish, with much exaggeration, boasting, obfuscation, and big gaps in engine numbers. However, maybe 6000 Detroit Hendersons were built, as there were few competitors and cars were more expensive to buy.

The Chicago machines had more or less one year models around 1918/19, after which Henderson quit to

design the ACE. The Chicago Hendersons then settled down as a 1301 cc side valve touring machine until 1928:



Arthur Lemon was involved in the design effort, having previously assisted Henderson himself. We estimate about 6000 De Luxe models were built. Following the success of the Super-X in 1925, the same formula of inlet-over-exhaust engine with big inlet valves was used for the 1301 cc 'Streamline' KJ Henderson 1929-31, with Arthur Constantine brought in from Harley-Davidson to help finalise the design. With aluminium pistons this was probably the first 36 bhp production bike and the first 100 mph production motorcycle:



Pulling the tanks out from the frame gave a modern look, and the cast aluminium tanks were a useful but short-lived innovation. The Highway Patrol took a lot of 1929 bikes, but production took a nose dive for 1930 after the Wall Street Crash, and early in 1931 Schwinn stopped all motorcycle production and retrenched to his bicycle business. An estimated 3000 KJ and KL models were made.

### ACE 1921-26

William Henderson quit as Schwinn's Chief Engineer after about a year, and found funding for ACE as a manufacturer of lighter weight sporting fours. The bike was a 1265 cc side valve, with much setting of speed records and significant sales in 1921/23. Henderson was killed in December 1922 riding one of his own machines, in a classic motorcycle versus car encounter, to be succeeded by Arthur Lemon as Chief Engineer.



The company seems to have lost its way after that, with prices cut below the cost of production, the inevitable financial problems, changes in venue from Pennsylvania to New York and then Michigan, culminating in a sale to Indian in 1926. The bike had its day in the sun though, and looks to have sold 6200 units based on surviving engine numbers.

#### **Indian 1927-42**

For the 1927 model year, the four was sold as the Indian-ACE, after which it was redesigned and sold as the Indian. Arthur Lemon moved from ACE to Indian with the marque, with various designers involved subsequently.



Early versions continued with the tank in the frame, with the tanks brought out in 1932. A 1936/7 redesign after Lemon had left the company gave us the 'upside down four':



This may have made engineering sense but was not a marketing success, so for the remainder of production a conventional layout was retained, with skirted fenders introduced in 1940:



This is now clearly a heavier and more expensive motorcycle, at a time when cars were used for everyday transport. However, a 15 year run of a few hundred a year probably meant about 6500 Indian Fours were built. The entry to World War 2 meant the end of four cylinder motorcycle production in the USA, which was never resumed in our time period of interest.

#### **Nimbus 1919-59**

Father and son engineers Peder and Anders Fisker built these 750 cc straight fours in Copenhagen, Denmark for nearly forty years. First came the 1920-28 'stovepipe' model:



Followed by the son's 'bumblebee' model, named after the sound it makes when running:



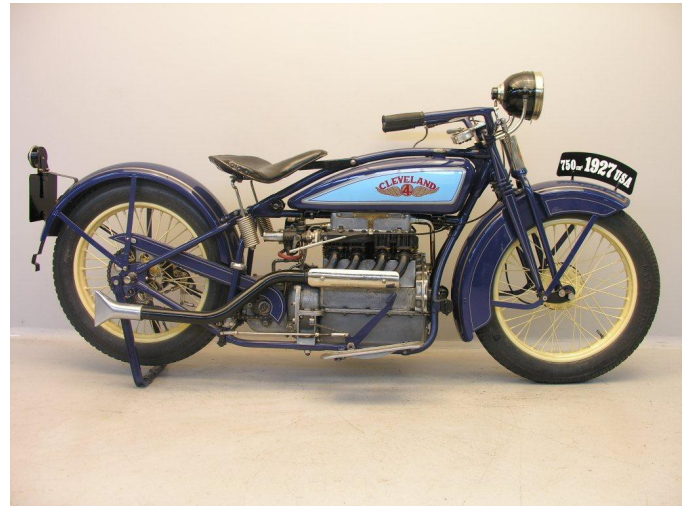
This was an advanced design for 1934, with an overhead cam engine, albeit with exposed valve springs, shaft drive, and perhaps the first production motorcycle with hydraulic front forks. The strap frame was said to be light, but may also be a consequence of lack of forging capacity in this small country. The company made their own carburetors and magnetos, with production finishing as the design became obsolete and demand for their Nilfisk industrial pumps grew. Production was reported as 12,715 examples, as the only vehicle manufacturer in the country – protected by 200% import duties – had no need to cheat on serial numbers.

#### Cleveland 1926-29

Cleveland, based in the Ohio city of the same name, had been selling small utility and two stroke motorcycles since the early 1900s, but decided they needed something more exotic in the mid-1920s, so several engineers were brought in to design short-lived models. First was Fowler's 600 cc side valve straight four of 1926:



This was lacking in performance, so the 750 cc 4-45 model came out the following year:



Once again the customers wanted more performance, so Everett DeLong designed the 4-61 for 1928:



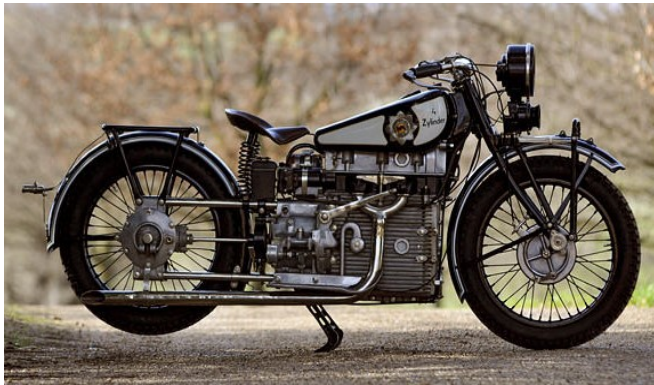
A 1929 version was called the Tornado, with a tuned version called the Century, said to be capable of 100 mph:



Cleveland went bust in 1929 after producing perhaps 1500 four cylinder bikes, but not before they were looked over by Harley-Davidson as a possible acquisition to match Indian's purchase of ACE. Harley passed after taking a big cash hit that year for infringing the Eclipse clutch patents, and perhaps because the sporty lightweight Clevelands would need a lot of beefing-up to match the rest of the H-D range.

### Windhoff 1927-31

Berlin, Germany, saw Hans Windhoff design this straight four overhead cam machine with the rear end attached to a structural motor.



Most machines were of 750 cc, with some of 1000 cc in the final year. About 1500 were made.

### Matchless 1931-35

This London-built Silver Hawk model was designed by Bert Collier as a 600 cc 18 degree narrow-angle V4:



The machine looks a little complicated, and must have been expensive, and became another victim of the Great Depression. About 500 were made.

### Ariel 1931-58

This Birmingham, England, model was called the Square Four and designed by Edward Turner. For 1931/2 it was a 500 cc overhead cam machine, then 600 cc ohc for 1933-36, then redesigned as a 1000 cc overhead valve machine:



The Mark 2 'four pipe' configuration ran from 1954 to the final year of 1958:



Production would have been just a few hundred a year, but the long run means that 16,000 were produced according to Hodgdon.

### Zündapp 1933-39

Nürnberg, Germany, was the birthplace of this final new design, with Richard Küchen being the designer. The first year bike was the 600 cc K600, with subsequent models K800 800 cc side valve flat fours with a pressed steel frame and shaft drive.



The machine was part of an effort to showcase German engineering at the time, but wartime needs stopped production of this interesting item after about 6500 were built.

### Summary

Below are summarised the names of our fourteen makes of early four cylinder motorcycles, the dates they were produced, design engineers, and a best guess at production numbers from the literature:

Name	Dates	Engineer	Prod'n
Holden	1895-1903	Holden	100
FN	1904-1926	Kelekom	10000
Pierce	1909-1913	Pierce	500
Wilkinson	1909-1914	Tacchi	100
Militaire/Militor	1910-1923	Moore/Sinclair	200
Henderson Detroit	1912-1917	Henderson	6000
Henderson Chicago	1918-1928	Lemon	6000
Henderson KJ	1929-1931	Constantine	3000
ACE	1920-1926	Henderson	6200
Indian	1927-1942	Lemon+	6500
Nimbus	1919-1959	Fiskers	12715
Cleveland	1926-1929	Fowler/DeLong	1500
Windhoff	1927-1931	Windhoff	1500
Matchless	1931-1935	Collier	500
Ariel	1931-1958	Turner	16000
Zündapp	1933-1939	Küchen	6500

This was an age when individual engineers with strong views could get their own designs built, and we see William Henderson's name against both his own machine and the ACE, while his protégé Arthur Lemon worked on both those makes and the earlier Indian fours.

The most produced of these machines appear to be the Ariel Square Four and the Nimbus, perhaps because of their long production runs. Both these makes still offer a relatively inexpensive route into the rarefied air of four cylinder bike ownership. FN had the early market to themselves before the Model T Ford removed the utility value of two wheelers around 1920-25. After this time, fours were luxury items for the discerning rider, but the Wall Street Crash, the later Great Depression and wartime came close to knocking them on the head.

There are no doubt some questionable production numbers in there, but a total of 78,000 would represent a few percent of world motorcycle production before 1960, and perhaps a half of a tenth of a percent of all vehicles built over that period. But don't we have fun with them!

### More Stuff

For stands at our **Raalte Meet**, or other information, please contact Martin van Kuijk on [amcaeuropa@gmail.com](mailto:amcaeuropa@gmail.com). For judging entries, please book through the National Website at [www.antiquemotorcycle.org](http://www.antiquemotorcycle.org). We can take late entries at the Meet if you are in any doubt. General judging questions to Peter Reeves or myself please.

Has everyone got to grips with the **new Club Website** yet? The change in membership administration contractor should bring better service after a short handover period. I'm now getting an Email every time someone renews their membership, and you know how much I like ticking names off lists.

We have **new member Enrico** in Italy, with one of the first membership numbers over 40,000. Welcome to our great Club! Enrico wants me to show you a picture of his original paint 1975 FLH, nice piece!



## 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.

### 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](http://www.europeanbikeweek.com)

### Belgium

Feb 22 Ruilbeurs Oude Motoren, [www.earlyriders.be](http://www.earlyriders.be)  
(provisional)

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

### Denmark

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

July 17-19 Windmill Rally, Hasbro for pre-1940 bikes.  
[www.windmillrally.eu](http://www.windmillrally.eu)

Aug 30 Laholm Beach Jutland, pre-1947 beach racing and partying [www.romomotorfestival.dk](http://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](http://www.fiva.org)

### Germany

Dec 06-08 2019 Custom Bike Show, Bad Salzuflen  
[www.custombike-show.de](http://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](http://www.motorradwelt-bodensee.de)



Feb 27- Mar 01 Retro Classics Stuttgart [www.retro-classics.de](http://www.retro-classics.de)

Apr 03-05 Veterama, Hockenheim [www.veterama.de](http://www.veterama.de)

May 02-03 Technorama Kassel [www.technorama.de](http://www.technorama.de)

May 22-23 Kustom Kulture, Zeche Ewald, Herten  
[www.kustom-kulture-forever.com](http://www.kustom-kulture-forever.com)

June 11-14 Magic Bike, Rüdesheim, [www.magic-bike-ruedesheim.com](http://www.magic-bike-ruedesheim.com)

July 17-19 Rust'n Dust Teterow, vintage dirt track,  
[www.rustndustjalopy.de](http://www.rustndustjalopy.de)

August (date to follow) 10<sup>th</sup> Kaiserzeitausfahrt, 85410  
Haag an der Amper (Munich area).  
[www.kaiserzeitausfahrt.de](http://www.kaiserzeitausfahrt.de)

Sep 11-12, vintage dirt track racing Hindenberg,  
[www.hindenberg-dirt-track.com](http://www.hindenberg-dirt-track.com)

Oct 09-11 Veterama, Mannheim. Biggest European  
swap meet. [www.veterama.de](http://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](http://www.motorbikeexpo.it)

Mar 13-15 Harley and Snow Hillclimb, Rio Pusteria-Alto  
Adige [www.harley.bz.it/de/harley-snow](http://www.harley.bz.it/de/harley-snow)

May 9-11 ASI Moto Show, Parma race track  
[www.asifed.it](http://www.asifed.it) *provisional*

Sep 05-06 Roll'n Flat Beach Race, Caorle  
[www.venicebeachrace.com](http://www.venicebeachrace.com) *provisional*

## Netherlands

Jan 11-12 Oldtimerbeurs Autotron, Rosmalen  
[www.oldtimerbeurs.net](http://www.oldtimerbeurs.net)

Feb 15 Oldtimer+Tweewielerbeurs Eurohal Zuidbroek,  
[www.1up25.nl](http://www.1up25.nl)

Feb 16. Swap Meet, Hengelo, [www.alemite-motoren.nl](http://www.alemite-motoren.nl)

June 12-14 Silent Gray Fellows Meet, Oosterhout. 17<sup>th</sup>  
meet for pre-1966 Americanbikes  
[www.silentgrayfellows.nl](http://www.silentgrayfellows.nl)

July 24-26 International Indian Rally, Nijverdal,  
[www.indian.nl/iir-2020](http://www.indian.nl/iir-2020)

Aug 08-10, Old Timers Run, Den Haag. Pre-1966  
American bikes for the 42nd time. [www.hdctheoldtimers.nl](http://www.hdctheoldtimers.nl)

Sep 04-06, Alemite Run, Twente. [www.alemite-motoren.nl](http://www.alemite-motoren.nl).

November 01, Silent Gray Fellows swap meet, Chaam.  
[www.silentgrayfellows.nl](http://www.silentgrayfellows.nl)

## Poland

June 12-15 Old Timer Club summer rally,  
[www.oldtimerclub.com.pl](http://www.oldtimerclub.com.pl) *(to be confirmed)*

June 18-21. 4th Nostalgia Endurance Rally for pre-1949  
motorcycles

June 28-29 Antique motorcycle swap meet, Lodz  
[www.motoweteranbazar.com](http://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](http://www.superrally.com)

## Switzerland

Feb 20-23 Swiss Moto/Custom Zürich [www.swiss-moto.ch](http://www.swiss-moto.ch)

March 21-22 Swap Meet Fribourg [www.oldtimer-teilemarkt.ch](http://www.oldtimer-teilemarkt.ch)

April 25-26 Historic vehicle days [www.shvf.ch](http://www.shvf.ch)

April 26 GP Mutschellen [www.gpmutschellen.ch](http://www.gpmutschellen.ch)

May 2-3 Arbon Classics [www.arbon-classics.ch](http://www.arbon-classics.ch)

May 15-16 Art and Wheels Pratteln  
[www.artandwheelsbasel.com](http://www.artandwheelsbasel.com)

May 22-23 Rock this Town, Solothurn  
[www.rockthistownsolothurn.com/oldtimer](http://www.rockthistownsolothurn.com/oldtimer)

May 23-24 Swiss Classic World, Luzern  
[www.swissclassicworld.ch](http://www.swissclassicworld.ch)

June 05-07 Lenzerheide Motor Classics  
[www.lenzerheide-motorclassics.ch](http://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](http://www.vmcc.net)

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

Aug 07-09 46<sup>th</sup> Scottish Classic and Vintage Motorcycle Rally, Pitcrocknie Restaurant, Alyth, PH11 8JJ. Contact [arthur.vintagent@gmail.com](mailto:arthur.vintagent@gmail.com)

September 4-6 Beaulieu International Autojumble/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:

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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](http://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, and seasonal greetings until then.

Wishing you safe and happy riding, and best regards,

Steve Slocombe,  
President AMCA European Chapter

