



AMCA EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

“Having fun with old motorcycles”

November 2020

Hello AMCA Europe Members,

This time we have a report on three Meets in Germany and the Netherlands, plus the first part of Swedish member Thorbjörn Sandkvist's report on a five year 1919 Excelsior twin restoration project.

Nürnberg Run

First let's recall how many Meets were cancelled this year. We lost the biggest European get-together at Mannheim, the big UK Beaulieu/Netley Marsh swap meet, and numerous US Meets we like to attend. But our German members have managed some low profile events, and a number had a two day run in Bavaria 24/26 July. Paul Jung sent the following report:

B-Bombers rideout July 24-26.

Flight #2, 28 classic Bikes, 26 Harley-Davidsons (Flathead, Panhead, Knucklehead, Shovelhead, Sportster), 2 Indians (Chief and Four), 7 nationalities

Due to Corona restrictions most motorcycle events were canceled for 2020 so Norbert Mattis and Paul Jung were glad that regulations in Germany were eased just in time to allow private gatherings up to 50 people.

The meet near Lohr am Main in northern Bavaria was long planned but to see it actually happen in these pandemic times doubled the joy of all participants.

Thursday night the meet started off with a small party at Norbert's workshop where AMCA member Fritz Martin showed his original paint 1936 Knucklehead for the first time. The bike, which came new to Germany, had been carefully put back into service by Norbert and of course it started first kick. A perfect reason to open and down a few cold ones. More information on this highly interesting machine will be provided by the owner at a later date.

The meet's base camp was at Hotel Buchenmühle, a romantic location deep in the woods near the city of Lohr, which was completely booked for the event.

Friday afternoon all early arrivers straddled their two wheelers for a two hour rideout along the Main river to Homburg, a small medieval town amidst vineyards with an outside restaurant at the square where a late lunch was served with Bratwurst and Obatzter (cheese and onion specialty).



The weather was perfect throughout the weekend so even in the evening everybody could sit outside until late. OK, not so late on Friday evening, when the landlord closed the bar at 10:30 so the die-hards resorted to Olivier Blainville's private stock of French wine. But maybe that early end on Friday was good, because on Saturday morning everybody was fresh for a longer 4.5 hour trip that led towards Miltenberg, first along the Main River again and then all the way back to the base camp across the Spessart forest. Lunch break happened in a remote valley with a small creek along which a row of old mills are located, one of them with a rustic restaurant, which served typical Franconian food. Back at the hotel the evening started with a huge BBQ followed by cold drinks, this time with an open bar. Sunday morning it was “farewell, friends“.

You can't have more fun on one weekend and we look forward to organizing a 2022 edition.

260 photos are posted at

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yBUAgyic9eGQUR_kbxUzDqRNIA1QkV7?usp=sharing

Restoring a 1919 Excelsior twin

Thorbjörn Sandkvist sent me a 28 page report on his five year restoration project. I've edited it down, but it will still take more than one newsletter episode. There is a lot of technical interest, and many places where I smiled and nodded, because most of us have been in that same situation with a project bike:

The motorcycle brand Excelsior belonged to the "Big 3 in the United States": after Harley-Davidson and Indian. The factory driver Lee Humiston was the first in the world to drive at a speed of 100 miles with a motorcycle in 1912. Hill Climbing and Boardtrack racing with drivers "without fear" were other crowd-pleasing racing activities. This story is about how a pile of parts could become a finished motorcycle, during a renovation of five years and ten months.

In November 2013, we visited Lennart Olofsson in Pengsjö about a "very difficult object" it turned out that this was really a pile of parts. Frame, rear fender, half an engine, a gearbox, a front fork, half a sidecar frame and some wheels.



Our computer has been the salvation of this project because I have probably spent more than 1000 hours a year in research. But now began a search for documentation such as manuals, drawings and people who had or knew about Excelsior parts to sell / exchange. I had read that an Excelsior would have a Schebler H carburettor and a used one in good condition was bought from a guy in Småland in the south of Sweden. I posted several ads of my own in various online forums where parts are sought and sold. It turned out to work well to create a network. I got answers from several people who, in the future, had parts for sale and that they would then contact me again. In December and January, much of the engine and frame were cleaned in our cold garage, which was heated with

a heating fan. At my friend Per's, the engine and gearbox were taken apart and photographed. The entire project was documented in just over 1000 photos at different angles. And having taken the gearbox to pieces we found that the gearbox with gears missed three teeth and the only thing to do was to renovate the gearbox bearing and look for another gearbox.



When the engine was split, what was hidden in the crankcase? Well a rusty crank section of eight kilos with an iron piston that weighed 700 grams. All bearings and crank pins had to be newly made, the connecting rods must be aligned and new pistons had to be procured. The engine was sent to "Indian Parts Europe" in Denmark. Everything had to be manufactured according to my parts and it was not cheap but this is the heart of the engine and it was a very nice job I got back.





To shorten waiting times, I decided to learn nickel-plating. It turned out to be a profit to be able to do minor jobs to get a reduced cost and gain time. The difficulty is to be very careful and use protective clothing and rubber gloves. But it is the preliminary work that gives results. I sent the cylinders down to Dalakrom, a company in Dalarna in the middle of Sweden. They have better equipment and experience of such large parts as cylinders and a process of nickel-plating which works on old castings. The result was incredibly nice on these 100-year old cylinders.

Work began on renovating the carburettor and Kushion sprocket, as the name suggests, the sprocket is cushion formed. The gear is built as a free-standing rear-wheel drive with punched holes that contain springs between two large discs with cushion-like elevations. It gives a smoother ride because it acts as a shock equalizer. The carburettor needed parts, which Antiquebike, a firm in Sweden, specialised on old motorcycles arranged, a contact that was then used a lot during project.

In February 2014, things started to happen with my previous advertising for parts. An earlier contact from Spekeröd in the middle of Sweden got in touch and had two cylinders and various clutch parts and other engine parts for sale. I got a photo and I bought the parts, for something I have learned in this project is BUY! - while there is time. If the parts disappear, it can be disturbingly impossible to find new parts. Most things can actually be repaired. He said that the parts were used and not in a very good condition but they proved to be to be a great joy for me. Now there were cylinders with broken fins, and a lot of brackets that needed to be overhauled, but several kilos of parts. Another important experience I learned during my renovations is, - SELL! - while there is time. All parts that were purchased during the project and were not needed or did not fit have therefore been resold to others who are renovating.

A lot of vital parts were still missing, which was discovered against acquired documentation: the rear wheel with brake, front fork and front wheel that came with the purchase were from an early Indian Powerplus motorcycle! Admittedly, the parts were equal in age but no Indian motorcycle was to be renovated. At the moment the only purchased original Excelsior parts were now a frame, a rear fender, a gearbox, half an engine and a Kushion sprocket!

Again, what to do? Just to continue searching for parts and through an Excelsior online forum I got hold of a frame with front fork, leaf springs, seat, handlebars etc. in Kansas, USA. The seller was contacted and the frame was purchased. It then took 6 months to get the frame to my home, but now I finally had a real front fork with leaf spring, I thought.



Again, after a while it turned out that the leaf spring came from a T-Ford !! The front fork tubes needed to be replaced but, luckily, today's hydraulic pipes have the same inch dimension which facilitated welding and direction. But the handlebar spirals of about 25 cm in length were too rusty and had to do as a template, the handlebar it self was in a good condition, the seat was repairable and the entire inner spring mechanism in the seat post was intact.

Excelsior motorcycles 1916 to 1924 had no wires from the handlebar to the clutch and the carburettor. For some reason Arnold Schwinn, who owned Excelsior, did not want to use Bowden's patented wires, but instead put his trust to link arms, joints, struts and tie rod ends. This

means that the handlebar ends on the left and right side of the handlebar manage the clutch and throttle, respectively, by being directly linked with struts inwards to the middle of the handlebar to rotatable brackets on the inside of the handlebar. On the outside of the handlebars, struts go down to frame change points and further from there, struts go to either clutch or carburettor. Now began the work to make new handle sleeves, the old handlebar ends were cut loose and could be reused.

Newly manufactured exhaust manifolds were ordered from Dennis Corso in the USA and to my surprise they were delivered within 10 days.

One of my previous contacts called in the spring of 2014 and said that he had a restorable engine with cylinders, a gearbox and some magnetos to sell. The problem was that he lived in Olofström, which was a drive 1160 km one way. But when my wife was abroad with a friend, I drove alone on the afternoon of Walpurgis Night down to him and slept in the car by the road. When I arrived in the morning, he had several old motorcycles that he was working on. We talked for a good while about the motorcycles before I bought the engine, the gearbox, a number of Berling magnetos etc. The car was loaded and the journey continued a few miles to the same guy in Småland who had sold the carburettor to me and now I got hold of an oil pump and a leather saddle. Now it was finally off on the way home again at a leisurely pace with precious cargo and I could be very satisfied with the trip the day after parking at home.

Now the renovation could take off. The gearbox could be assembled and set aside until the kick mechanism was prepared. A very peculiar solution with a gear that throws in a small ring gear that drives the motor shaft around one turn and then releases the grip and returns to a rest position. It consists of several inner teeth, springs and a washer. The kick starter has an automatic function, with the exhaust valves exposed during the first quarter turn of the motor shaft, in this way a higher speed is achieved on the engine. The engine can thus be said to be started on a kind of half-compression.

Out of four Berling magnetos that were examined, a complete magneto could be built together. Now it was time to start welding cast iron and aluminum. There were some small cracks inside a cylinder and down at a bracket on the crankcase and at a bracket on a gearbox. I contacted IB Welding in Umeå, which builds aluminum bridges and works daily with welding aluminum. Now these are 100-year-old castings, which

made me nervous but it went well, IB Welding knew what they were doing with old cast iron and aluminum. I then went to Motorslip, an engine renovator firm in Umeå, which measured the parts fit for bearings and crank section after welding, and they were in order. In August 2014, a previous contact from Molkom in the south of Sweden heard about pictures of a tank that was for sale, and we agreed on price and shipping.



In November, Antiquebike had received two used iron pistons and two new Beaded edge rims 28 x 3 and Clincher tires, which I bought. Now I could finally hand in pistons and cylinders to Motorslip in Umeå for cylinder building, insertion of new valves and seats and weight balancing of pistons, which ended up at 630 grams per piece. An order for piston rings in iron was sent to Nornda Automotive in Australia. As for the tires, I had read that Motocross inner tubes should be used as they can withstand more load, the pressure in the tires, would according to Excelsior's instruction manual, be 45 PSI i.e. 3.1 kilos per tire. A high air pressure is needed as the tube presses the tire against the rim and you do not want it to come loose while driving.

In December, Antiquebike called again and now had a front fender, link arms, lower link arms, an oil tank and some thin leaf springs, which were delivered home with DB Schenker Logistics on December 23, what a "Christmas present"! Now about 85% of needed parts were collected in just over a year, but the rest turned out to take four years to collect and repair.

[to be continued...]

Vogelsburg Meet

Claudia Krause sent me this report on a small one-day German Meet:

Last weekend (Sep. 13) we had a "Pre-Evo Sunday" at the Oldtimer Café in the Vogelsberg region again. The weather was perfect for riding and we summed up to about 25 old bikes. Also a lot of visitors came to take a look at the beautiful old Indians and Harleys.

Here is a beautiful 1958 Panhead in original paint:



Raalte Swap Meet

Claudia Krause sent me this report on a one day Meet I was not able to attend because of international travel restrictions:

Last Sunday, September 20, we were at the "Kofferbakverkoop" Swap Meet at Max Middelbosch's American Motorcycle Museum in Raalte, NL. With that great weather, up to 25 Degrees, we really had a lot of fun. Many vendors offered their goodies, I counted 32 stands with mostly Harley and Indian parts. I guess good deals

were made, because I saw lucky faces on both sides of the tables, vendors and buyers.

We met people from all over Germany, from Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and of course from the Netherlands. Sunday afternoon many visitors came with their old bikes so the area was filled up very well. Max and his daughter with the Tivoli Restaurant even had a band playing live music so I guess everybody had a good time



New Members

Welcome to new member Ingo Gernath from Ulm in South Germany. Here he is with his 1945 Harley knucklehead:



New Directors

Yes, we have found two more volunteers to help us with the work of the Chapter:

Dave van der Linden is 29 years old and had his first Harley: a 1943 WLC when he was 17 years old. He restored it himself in the 1936 Venetian Blue and Croydon Cream with the help of the knowledge of his grandfather. When Dave got his driver's license, he happily drove around with the WLC. During the course of a few years, he collected as many machines, tools and parts as he could fit inside his tiny little workshop. For him, the assembling and building of antique American motorcycles is the most important part of our special hobby. Helping others with the production of hard to get parts is one of the challenges he likes the most. Dave has completed a technical education. His daily work is the design and construction of attractions and models in the Madurodam theme park in The Hague.



He has got a 1925 Indian Prince in his collection and also a running 1934 Harley Davidson VFD but that will get a full restoration when all the parts are collected, he says. Now he is working on the restoration of a 1922 Harley Davidson F model. That bike will stay in its original paint Brewster green style. In the family there also is an older restoration 1928 Harley Davidson model J. A great running bike, he loves to ride it. .

Dave is a member of the judging committee for the AMCA and has been a member of the AMCA for 5 years now.

Cees Visser, nationality Dutch, is age 63 and his profession is as an aeronautical engineer. Cees has been a member of the AMCA for 6 years now and is a fan of American oldtimers. His first motorcycle was a 1926 JD which he had completely restored himself at his age of 20. Because of his profession Cees has lived abroad for 17 years in many countries including Ireland and the Philippines, where he bought and restored his 1942 WLC. He was also a member of the Harley club in the Philippines.



Cees has a Power Plus from 1920 and a 1922 Harley J model, which he has now completely restored himself with know how and spares assistance from fellow members.

Both these nominations will need to be confirmed at our Raalte Annual Meeting next May but they have my vote. For anyone who thinks our geographic mix of Directors is becoming unbalanced, it's the Dutch guys who do all the work for Raalte. If members from other countries want to help, then please let me know.

More Stuff

British member Greg Nutkins missed out on judging at Raalte this year, so here's a picture of his tasty 1948 Harley Panhead to keep us going:



2021 Events

Below is our latest timetable for the year. The AMCA events are firm, but many of the others are provisional, and will be updated as more information is received. Please advise me of any corrections, or additional events you would like to see included. Any events cancelled or postponed are marked with an asterisk (*). Please check with the organisers before travelling any distance.

2021 AMCA National Meets

February 26-27, Omaha Chapter, Fremont, NE
March 04-06, Sunshine Meet, New Smyrna Beach, FL
April 23-24, Perkiomen Chapter, Oley, PA
May 07-08, European Meet, Raalte, NL
May 14-16, Southern Meet, Denton, NC
May 28-30, Empire Chapter, Trumansburg, NY
June 11-12, Viking Chapter, St Paul, MN
June 18-19, Fort Sutter Chapter, Dixon, CA
June 25-26, Colonial Chapter, Harmony, NJ
July 16-18, Wauseon Meet, Wauseon, OH
August 06-07, Yankee Chapter, Terryville, CT
August 28-29, Australian Chapter, Sydney, AUS
October 02-03, Chesapeake Chapter, Upperco, MD

2021 AMCA National Road Runs

June 01-03, Phoenix Chapter, Zion National Park, UT
June 21-23, Rocky Mountain, Crested Butte, CO

July 21-23, Yellowstone Chapter, Billings, MT

September 07-09, Roosevelt Chapter, Detroit Lakes, MN

Other 2021 Events

Austria

September 07-12 European Bike Week, Faaker See
www.europeanbikeweek.com (provisional)

Belgium

Feb 21 Ruilbeurs Oude Motoren, www.earlyriders.be
(provisional)

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

Denmark

May 21-23, 21st Skagen Run, this time Skagen to Copenhagen, for pre-1935 bikes. (provisional)

July 16-18 Windmill Rally, Hasbro for pre-1940 bikes.
www.windmillrally.eu (provisional)

Aug 29 Laholm Beach Jutland, pre-1947 beach racing and partying www.romomotorfestival.dk (provisional)

Finland

Jan 10 Jyväskylä swap meet at the Pavlijonki hotel. Mostly mopeds, Japanese, Eastern European and British bikes. About 250 km from Helsinki. (provisional)

France

24-26 September, beach racing pre-1947 cars and bikes in Ouistreham, Normandy
www.normandybeachrace.com (provisional)

Croatia/Slovenia/Italy

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

Germany

Jan 17 Winter Classic Bike Show, Im Alten Opel-Werk, 65428 Rüsselheim

Jan 22-24 Motorrad Bodensee www.motorradwelt-bodensee.de (provisional)

Feb 25-27 Retro Classics Stuttgart www.retro-classics.de (provisional)

Apr 23-25 Veterama, Hockenheim www.veterama.de

May 01-02 Technorama Kassel www.technorama.de (provisional)

June 11-13 Oldgeraffeltreffen, Vogelsberg.

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

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

Oct 08-10 Veterama, Mannheim. Biggest European swap meet. www.veterama.de. Our AMCA stand is open to all members who want to sell their own parts.

Greece

May 20-24 Harley Super Rally, Igoumenitsa
<https://superrally.com/>

Italy

Jan 16-18 Motorbike Expo Verona
www.motorbikeexpo.it (provisional)

Mar 14-16 Harley and Snow Hillclimb, Rio Pusteria-Alto Adige www.harley.bz.it/de/harley-snow (provisional)

May 7-9 ASI Moto Show, Parma race track
www.asifed.it (provisional)

Sep 04-05 Roll'n Flat Beach Race, Caorle
www.venicebeachrace.com provisional

Netherlands

Jan 09-10 Oldtimerbeurs Autotron, Rosmalen
www.oldtimerbeurs.net (provisional)

Feb 14 Oldtimer+Tweewielerbeurs Eurohal Zuidbroek,
www.1up25.nl (provisional)

Feb 14. Swap Meet, Hengelo, www.alemite-motoren.nl (provisional)

June 19-20 Silent Gray Fellows Meet, Oosterhout. 16th meet for pre-1966 American bikes (provisional),
www.silentgrayfellows.nl

Aug 06-08, Old Timers Run, Den Haag. Pre-1966 American bikes for the 42nd time.
www.hdctheoldtimers.nl (provisional)

Sep 04-05, Alemite Run, Twente. www.alemite-motoren.nl. (provisional)

October 31. Silent Gray Fellows swap meet, Chaam.
www.silentgrayfellows.nl (provisional)

Norway

August 06-08 Indian International Rally
www.indianmotorcycle.co.uk/events.html

Poland

June 11-13 Old Timer Club summer rally,
www.oldtimerclub.com.pl (provisional)

June 27-28 Antique motorcycle swap meet, Lodz*
www.motoweteranbazar.com (provisional)

Slovenia

June 10-13, HOG International Rally, Portoroz
www.harley-davidson.com/.../european-hog-rally.html

Sweden

Jan 24 Eskiltuna swap meet, Harleys/bobbers 1940s up
provisional

Feb 07 Enköping Indianmarknaden. Indian/early Harley
provisional

Switzerland

Feb 19-21 Swiss Moto/Custom Zürich www.swiss-moto.ch (provisional)

March 20-21 Swap Meet Fribourg www.oldtimer-teilemarkt.ch (provisional)

April 24-25 Historic vehicle days www.shvf.ch (provisional)

April 25 GP Mutschellen www.gpmutschellen.ch (provisional)

May 1-2 Arbon Classics www.arbon-classics.ch
(provisional)

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

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

May 23-24 Swiss Classic World, Luzern (provisional)
www.swissclassicworld.ch

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

July 03-05 Swiss Harley Days, Lugano (provisional)

United Kingdom

April 24/5 Stafford classic bike show and auction
(provisional)

June 01 Banbury Run, Gaydon, 450 pre-1931 bikes
www.vmcc.net (provisional)

July 29-Aug 01 International West Kent Run, 310
runners at The Friars, Aylesford, ME20 7BX
(provisional)

September 3-5 Beaulieu International Autojumble/Netley
Marsh motorcycle jumble

Oct 03. Pioneer Run, 350 pre-1915 bikes, Epsom Downs
to Brighton.

Oct 09-10 Stafford classic bike show and auction
(provisional)

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

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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

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

The next newsletter will probably be in March, so please
keep sending me articles and photos on bike related
items, and safe riding until then.

Seasonal greetings, wishing you safe and happy riding,
and best regards,

Steve Slocombe,
President AMCA European Chapter

