



## AMCA EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

*"Having fun with old motorcycles"*

Hello AMCA Europe Members,

This time we have a Christmas bonus edition on four cylinder motorcycles, with particular reference to the first one, the Holden, made in London between 1895 and 1903.

### Victorian Two-Wheelers

First we need to remind ourselves of the predecessor bikes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, inspired by railway engine technology and steam power. Around 1869, inventor Sylvester H. Roper produced a steam velocipede in the USA, at the same time as Michaux-Perraux built a similar machine in France. These were rigid frame 'hobby horse' type bicycles with a small steam engine between the wheels. A Roper machine is in the Smithsonian museum in Washington DC.

In 1881, Lucius Copeland mounted a steam engine in a back-to-front 'penny farthing' bicycle, then tried again with a conventional safety bicycle in 1884, and demonstrated a steam powered tricycle in 1888. A replica of the early Copeland design was built for one-time AMCA President Pete Gagan, exhibited at the Art of the Motorcycle exhibitions, and can now be seen at the Motorcyclepedia Museum in Newburgh NY.



These early efforts were all steam powered, with the honours for the first two wheeler powered by an internal combustion engine going to the Reitwagen or Einspur built by Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach in Germany in 1885.



The 264 cc engine developed 0.5 hp at 600 rpm, giving the vehicle a top speed of about 7 mph. The wooden framed machine with training wheels was not a production motorcycle, but looks more like a test bed or feasibility test for the four wheeled vehicles that were to come. The original bike was destroyed in a 1903 fire, but several replicas exist in museums around the world.

The first series produced motorcycle was the Hildebrand and Wolfmüller, from Munich in Germany, with 1500-2000 said to have been produced between 1894-97.



The Hildebrands were steam engineers and Wolfmüller an internal combustion pioneer, so we see a 1489 cc side by side flat twin engine developing 2.5 hp at 240 rpm, with direct drive, to give a top speed around 28 mph. We cannot finish the background without mentioning E J Pennington, inventor, promoter and

huckster, who demonstrated a motorcycle in Milwaukee in 1895 which might just have inspired teenage William Harley and Arthur Davidson towards their subsequent efforts. Pennington patented a machine in 1896 with a direct drive engine mounted behind the rear wheel and braced forwards to the frame. He also claimed to have patented the word 'motorcycle'. This was sufficient deterrent to Hendee and Hedstrom that their 1901 and later bikes were called the Indian Motorcycle.

### 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.

For my Raalte presentation in May, 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, Henderson, ACE, Indian, Nimbus, Cleveland, Windhoff, Matchless, Ariel and Zündapp.

These were times when individual engineers with strong ideas could design particular models. We see Belgian engineer Paul Kelekom responsible for the pioneering fore-and-aft FN straight four of 1904, having already designed the Sarolea, Kerry and Minerva. William Henderson brought out the bike bearing his name in 1912 followed by the ACE in 1921, while Arthur Lemon was involved with Henderson, ACE and then Indian four cylinder motorcycle design.

### Holden

Of the fourteen series produced makes listed above, I had seen thirteen but the Holden was new to me. I found out it was built in Kennington, London, between 1895 and 1903, and designed by Colonel Henry Holden, who subsequently designed the Brooklands race track in 1905. This makes it the first four cylinder machine in the world. Here is an early air cooled model from about 1897:



The bike is an 800 cc flat four, with a double acting cylinder either side and direct drive to the small rear wheel. It developed around 3 hp at 300 rpm, giving a top speed of about 17 mph. There are no fins on the cylinders and the early versions suffered from seizures, so later machines were water cooled. Here is such a machine in 1901, with the smartly dressed gent enjoying a ride in the towed wicker sidecar:



HOLDEN 1901 1hp 3 HP a quatre cylindres refroidissement d'air

Further research showed just three machines are known to survive, one each incomplete and not on display in the Science Museum, London and the National Museum of Scotland, with the third one being complete and in the Whitewebbs Museum in Enfield, North London, a little under 100 miles from me. The museum is open each Tuesday and the last Sunday in the month, so 24 November being such a Sunday I drove up to see the machine. The museum is in an 1898 pumping station in substantial grounds, built to pump well water to the New River and so to London. The New River is an another engineering feat, a canal dug by hand and opened in 1613 to bring fresh water to London. It drops just 14 feet in 20 miles and is still in operation. The water from the

spring tapped by the Whitewebbs pumping station had a high iron content, so the station was not used after 1917. It lay derelict until 1985, when four members of a local restoration club saved the site from demolition by the property developers and installed their 'stuff' in the four floor building and adjacent garages and yard. The museum is certainly eclectic, with the inevitable red double decker Routemaster bus parked outside, two fire engines, a railway carriage with model train display, period shops, stationary engines, cars, vans, bicycles, old typewriters, cameras and sewing machines, model cars and planes, spare parts and as found projects all on display.

The second floor is for motor cycles, mostly on loan from the estate of Rex Judd, a one time London motorcycle dealer. There are no Brouchs or Vincents, but mostly utilitarian British machines from my youth which have had a very low survival rate. I found the Holden straight away, racked up close to other bikes, behind ropes, and partly obscured by a sign. I asked if I could move it out for photos and was told OK.



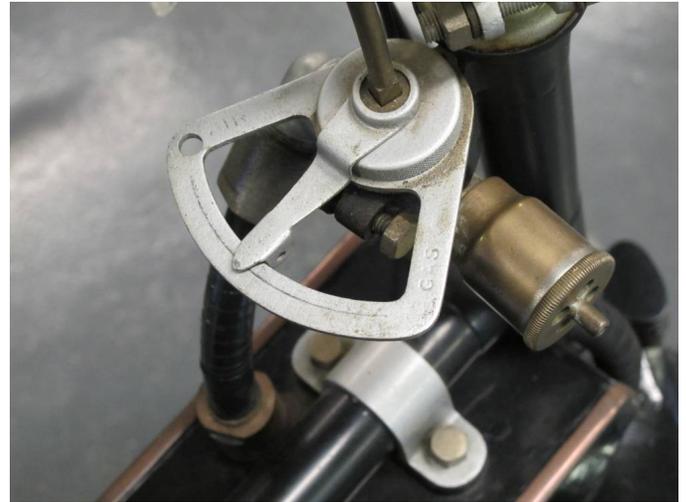
The hand lettered writing on the side of the tank says 'The Motor Traction Company Limited Kennington, London S.E. (Holden's Patents)'.

As I lifted up the front of the bike to pull it out of the display, the rear wheel turned and the pistons went backwards and forwards – oh yes! The lettered tank is for fuel and the copper tank for water. There is a front stirrup bicycle brake but no rear. This machine has solid tyres, while the 1901 picture shows a pneumatic rear tyre, so we can see that some technical development

took place over the production run. Here is the distributor on the front of the engine, and the inlet valve for the left front cylinder. Spark plug leads have been removed:



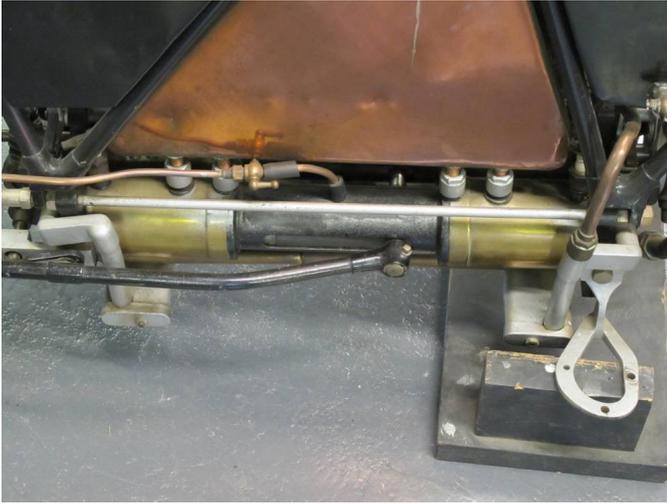
That looks like the world's longest inlet manifold, as we can see this at the other end under the handlebars:



The quadrant reads 'Air' on the left hand side and 'Gas' on the right, but I can't believe the engine responded quickly to throttle adjustments.



Here is the action at the left rear, where we can see the long connecting rod to the direct drive rear wheel, plus the connection to the oil pump drive and the inlet valve to the left rear cylinder.



And here are the double acting cylinders on the right hand side, showing the water jackets at each end and the connecting rod connected to a crank pin running in a slot between the pistons.

A general view from above left shows:



The not very pretty saddle was part of an earlier restoration, which also used silver paint over many metal parts probably nickel plated originally.

The early model pictures shows fixed pedals on the front wheel, but I would not like these whizzing round my knees when riding, so this later machine is pure push-and-go. I chanced my luck and asked for a picture sitting on the bike, and received this from the helpful volunteer:



The point of the picture is to show my feet on the ground, unlike my 1902 Kerry which was so tall in the saddle as to be practically unrideable.

Direct drive motorcycles hark back to nineteenth century steam engine technology and would surely have been obsolete shortly after they were built. De Dion Bouton tricycles with chain drive from an engine mounted between the rear wheels were available in the late 1890s, and small strap-on motors on bicycles were to be seen around the same time. All credit to Colonel Holden for the design of this exotic and pioneering four cylinder machine, but it must have been expensive and the early versions unreliable. Production must have been under one hundred examples, more likely under fifty given so few survivors.

The sign on the exhibit said that Rex Judd had ridden the bike on the 50 mile London to Brighton run in 1938 and received a Finisher's Medal. Of course I offered to help get the bike running for a future UK Pioneer Run, so I live in hope... What an interesting motorcycle!

### More Stuff

I nagged everybody last time about our **next Raalte Meet** 22/23 May 2020. The hotels are nearly full already but don't be put off. The theme is Century bikes, so all 1920 and earlier machines will be eligible for a Century Medallion from our Club. Members are already out there finding fresh project bikes to restore for the event, so no pressure there then. While I'm here, how about Competition Bikes as our theme for 2021?

As a piece of housekeeping, please **renew your memberships for the AMCA** at [www.antiquemotorcycle.org](http://www.antiquemotorcycle.org). I have just lashed out \$165 for a three year membership, which is about the same as a modestly priced swap meet part. You know it makes sense, so do it now. The magazine is easily worth that, plus you get all the contacts and technical advice from our members. I still have some members on this newsletter circulation list who have not renewed, so please fix this now as I'll be cleansing the circulation list over the holidays. Likewise, if you are receiving two copies of the newsletter then please let me know so that I can tidy up the list.

### 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, Rüdeshheim, [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

June 21 (provisional) Banbury Run, Gaydon, 450 pre-1931 bikes [www.vmcc.net](http://www.vmcc.net)

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 March, 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

