



AMCA EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER
"Having fun with old motorcycles"

January 2021

November Visit

Hello AMCA Europe Members,

Happy New Year everybody, and I'm pretty sure it's going to be better than 2020. But first our Dutch Directors say their current lock-down and government restrictions mean that we cannot be certain about our May Meet in Raalte. We are therefore describing it as 'postponed' so that our US friends do not make expensive travel arrangements which may have to be altered. We shall review the situation in our various countries around March/April, and hope to come back then with our original May date or another firm date later in the season.

My previous newsletters have run into problems with spam controls in France and the Netherlands, so this time it is being sent out by Keith Kizer our Executive Director. It is going to all paid-up AMCA members in Europe, so if you are not receiving it you need to renew your membership! That three year membership option has cost savings, and saves you missing magazines, so please check it out.

Calendars+

With US postal rates being so high, Paul Jung has brought a batch of the 2021 AMCA Club calendars into Germany. Please purchase one from him, his Email address is at the back. And did you see Paul's great write-up of the B-Bombers ride in the last AMCA magazine? I'm hopeful we shall see another European article next time

Now we continue with a brief visit report, the next installment of Swedish member Thorbjörn Sandkvist's report on a five year 1919 Excelsior twin restoration project, check out what's new in the garage, and welcome some new members..

04 November 2020 was the day before our second UK Covid lock-down, and beautiful weather for a ride. Danny Ruta came down from London to show me his 1942 Harley WLC:



That's the cliffs along the English Channel in the background. Our Chapter provided the Dating Certificate to get this bike registered/titled, and other UK members might have bikes we can help with. We have also provided occasional help to other European countries, so contact me if you wish. The fee revenue goes back into the Chapter, and provides the coffee mugs and penlights for our Meet.

Restoring a 1919 Excelsior twin

Thorbjörn Sandkvist sent me a long report on his five year restoration project which I've edited down. We left the story last time at end-2014, with 85% of the parts for the bike collected.

The following year meant a huge job of grinding, threading, welding and nickel-plating a lot of parts. Wheel spindles were renovated, ball bearings were ordered and replaced, link arms, frame, oil tank and fenders were the most difficult job. To align its old parts with all angles, corners and stays takes its time. Since I had not got hold

of the right kind of leaf spring, the wrong T-Ford spring had to act as an extra. It turned out that Excelsior had a frame where the engine was an active part of a load-bearing structure. Another fact was that the frame tube above the engine could be loosened so that the cylinders could be dismantled in the frame, without having to remove the engine. The oil tank was the hub in the whole with several attached parts such as chain guard, rear fender, frame and it also supported the gearbox. The first thing to be mounted in the frame was the oil tank otherwise mounting problems arose!

I got the brake mechanism with wheel and hub from an Australian member of the Excelsior online forum, but later, to pick up a 12 kilos parcel for USD 200 in shipping at the local post office in a grocery shop was a strange feeling. It was exciting to open the package and see that it contained most of the rear wheel and brake. But again, the rim was 26 inches because apparently in Australia you could order an Excelsior with 26 or 28 inches of tire size, but the rest of the parts came to be reused. The hub was loosened and new spokes were ordered from Central Wheel in England as they had to be special butted-head spokes.

Once these had been delivered and the rims had been painted and striped, wheel building took place. Working with spokes is an exciting exercise and takes time. After wheel building I had to put on Clincher tires for the first time, which was food for thought. How do you ever take off a tire which is tightly pinched under an inward-curved rim edge without damaging the painted rim!

On November 9, 2015, after two years of renovation, the Excelsior was able to stand on its own two wheels again, but now the work remained to search for the last 15% of the parts and complete the renovation.



When the parts returned from Denmark, the adventure began with assembling the crank section. A huge amount of work went into standing at a lathe trying to adjust eight kilos of iron mass with the help of several measuring clocks, but after several attempts we finally managed to get a minimal deviation of 0.3 mm. But one cannot help wondering how careful they actually were in 1919? Again, the problem with the crank portion was that it worked very well in each crankcase half but not in an assembled condition. Again, off with everything to Motorslip in Umeå, where they measured a linear deviation of a few hundredths of a mm. for the mounted crank section. It was so small that it was hardly noticeable, but now Motorslip in Umeå had to scrape bearings and bushings in the manner of the early 1910s, based on experience and feeling to make the crank section movable in all positions. They did a fantastic job and the engine could then be mounted pre-assembled in the frame without pistons. Now, the direction and measurement of the frame with mounted engine began! This was done with the motorcycle strapped to a garage post and adjustment with various "powerful tools" such as skewers and jacks. When the frame was finally straight and fine, almost a whole year of work remained with disassembly and assembly of all parts of the motorcycle about fifteen times. Yes, I'm probably overly careful, but if a 100-year-old is to be assembled lacquered and ready, you do not want to risk paint or crush damage. Now a famous curved and ornate front fender should be put in place. For those who have not seen an Excelsior front fender, it can be explained in the following words: in the upper part of the fender a leaf spring must be mounted with space for movable link arms and various struts.

Here we really needed to try out all the angles and corners, so we welded up part of an elevation on the fender and sharpened the welds. Again, during test mounting, it turned out that we had welded completely wrong, the fender did not go free from the front fork and therefore could not be mounted, so we had to adjust the welding until it fit. It turned out to be important that there was an elevation with a certain dimension for the front fender to fit into the front fork, as the other struts were only there to brace the fender.

Something I had been looking for for several years was the lower cans for the saddle. Excelsior had a patented solution with two smaller cylinder cans mounted under the saddle. Today, modern saddles have a pair of large springs that take care of the entire cushioning function. But the intention with the cans at that time became synonymous with Excelsior's marketing. At the backs of the cans you could mount stickers, which meant that those

who ended up behind the motorcycle could read that it was an Excelsior which was in front. The cylinder cans had a bicycle pump-like function with a rod and a clamped leather disc between two metal washers. When depressing the mechanism in the cans, air was pumped in a kind of counteracting function to absorb small shocks in the road surface, which when driving made a small farting sound! I searched for several years for whole cans like this before I managed, via a Norwegian, to get hold of two complete non-rusty cans. When the cylinders had finally been delivered, the valve housings on the top of the cylinder head with their mounting nuts were test mounted. Again, something must happen! The threads were damaged and therefore did not really get stuck in the cylinder head. What do you do now?

Test mounting of exhaust manifolds was done and here the same phenomenon arose, the whole thing was a bit too worn to get a proper tightening torque. How could this go so far before it was discovered? Well, it was all because no gaskets had been used in previous assembly, only tightening by hand, as I tried to disassemble and assemble so many times. What I have learned is that proper tightening torques are needed during testing and that no deviation is allowed.

Contact was made with a retired lathe operator well known in vintage vehicles circles in Skellefteå 120 km north of Umeå, who made new nuts for the manifolds and a scraping tool for the correct approach angle to the gaskets. An acquaintance in Umeå who has a CNC, took it upon himself to mill out and thread up the cylinder head. In return I renovated his youth moped to a driveable condition. He bought taps and dies with oversized threads, which took several months to find. Then tightening 100-year-old cylinders and daring to start the CNC was tough. When everything was finished with moped renovation and machining of the cylinders, the cylinders were handed in to Motorslip in Umeå to complete installation of new valve seats. Finally the cylinders were finished....

Now we could finally start priming and wet sanding fenders, oil tank, fuel tank and frame, which was done in four rounds. All sandings were done with inspection under lamps to discover deviations and any streaks in the sanded surface. When we knew that pre-sanded surfaces could be mounted without damage, they were painted in gray colour used by Excelsior from 1916 to 1920. It should be pointed out that in 1917 most of Excelsior's motorcycles were painted military green due to a stance on the First World War. In 1920, the colour scheme was changed to blue for Excelsior 1000 cc until the model ended in 1924. The successor 750 cc Super-X came in

1925 with yellow rims and clear dark green color on the motorcycle and a combined engine and gearbox. Previously, a question was asked if there was someone who could handle a striping brush. Now it turned out that my friend Micael Lund in Umeå had as a hobby to paint motif paint on vehicles and he took it upon himself to do striping with a brush. A huge work with all these stripes in parallel shapes. Here, the task was to stripe and motif paint in several shades, but the result was a success! I had previously done stripe painting on wheels with painting tools, which was a shaky experience. By me, as an ignorant stripe painter, the painting tool is called a paint capsule with a roller that is pressed down against a spinning rim.

Now when everything was striped, the step of attaching decals remained, I had searched for a long time and found expensive decals that would finally be attached. Again, it turned out that the expensive old decals were for green Excelsiors and not for gray ones, so I had to start all over again. I managed to find some old decals in the US that were ordered and the following month they would be pasted on to the bike. But, when the decals were stuffed into the water bath, they suddenly burst and floated out to the edges of the water bath in smaller particles !! The decals were too old. I contacted Auto Arkiv in Sunne in the middle of Sweden, who sent newly made decals. When researching on some online forums, I read that old decals can be coated with Shellac in a thin layer and then placed in a water bath. At least now there were newly made water decals on hand, but how do you mount the large decal 200 mm x 120 mm with a hole for the gear shaft? Here we needed to measure and grind a punch. In a hydraulic press, we pushed the punch through the decal against a rubber base, without cracking the decal. With four hands trying to handle a wet decal in a water bath, the decal was lifted up and pulled down over the tank's gear mount and could be smoothed out. EVERYTHING WORKED, what a great feeling!

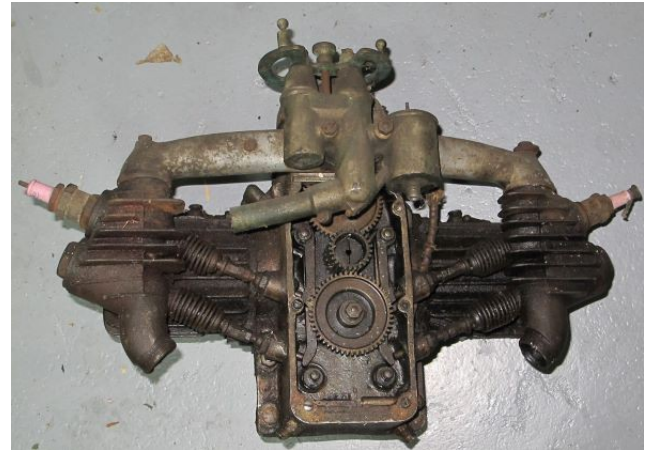


Through contact with a precision mechanic in Dalarna, I got hold of the drive spindle and gear for the speedometer. The speedometer on our Excelsior is a contemporary J.M - Stewart Warner. The letters J.M stand for Jones Manville, which was later acquired by Stewart Warner. This speedometer had been mounted on a 1920s Harley Davidson, which had been scrapped, and my friend Per had secretly renovated the speedometer for me as a surprise, talk about a friend. The drive of the speedometer was calculated based on the tire's external dimension, 28 x 3 and the drive spindle. Everything was fine, I thought until the gear was mounted. Since there is a fiber gear on top of the metal gear, the fibre gear does not tolerate any incorrect assembly and is then quickly worn down. To solve this, a stud was made out of some glued pieces of wood to center the gear. Now the rear wheel could be fitted into the frame in order to find a solution for the speedometer drive that would also be mounted. Ignition setting and magneto were adjusted according to the instruction manual. Gears and cam in the register side, and the clutch could be mounted. Here we had to work for quite some time to find an adjustment for the spring pressure of the clutch plates. The handle on the left side of the handlebar, is connected to the left foot pedal which is depressed and through linkage the handle follows to an end position. In this end position, the inner rear brake in the rear wheel is activated and locks the rear wheel, which means that the motorcycle is stationary and the rider can put his feet down on the ground with a fully engaged clutch. There were a lot of adjustments to secure that clutch or brake was not misaligned.

[to be continued...]

What's in the Garage?

I've had five restored bikes go out in recent weeks so finally had some space, I tidied up, put another coat of concrete paint on the floor, and found four of those little 1297-26 ball bearings that had escaped from Linkert carburettor choke levers over recent years – result! I now also have a 1912 Douglas in bits that I am helping restore. Here's a 1914 radio generator engine to be used for parts:



And here is the 1912 engine as found from the cam side:



New Members

The machine is a 340 cc fore-and-aft flat twin, with 1912 being the first year for mechanical inlet valves, and also the first year the marque won an Isle of Man TT. The Bosch magneto sits on a plinth on top of the engine, with the pinion gear driving the upper idler gear and the lower cam gear. The valve lifters are angled upwards, and that's the cable operated decompression mechanism at the bottom. A single brass carburettor feeds the cylinders through long inlet pipes, liable to icing, and a cylindrical muffler can sit under the motor joined to pipes from the two exhausts.

The Douglas company started in Bristol in 1882, as a casting and general engineering company. The Fairy motorcycle, designed by Joseph Barter, was produced in Bristol from about 1903 until going broke in 1907. The machine was a typical light bicycle type with a high mounted small capacity strap-on fore and-aft twin cylinder engine. Barter then joined Douglas to head up their new motorcycle division, lowered the engine and increased its capacity, and a few hundred were sold in 1908/9. Business took off in 1910 with an optional two speed gearbox and 3000 machines were sold in 1912. This one has a frame and engine number in the 4000s and is one of 29 1912 bikes listed in the Douglas Club machine register.

This bike and the contemporary Triumph were much used in World War 1, with most factory capacity devoted to military production and frame numbers getting up to 40,000 by 1918. This bike is the basic Model G at £40, with single speed belt drive. The two speed gearbox model would set you back £47, and with a clutch as well £50. The belt drive models continued through 1927 as a utility vehicle. New designs brought more Isle of Man TT success in the early 1920s, with speedway, dirt track and race models then produced in the late 1920s. The family sold out in 1932, and the company did war work 1939-45, then launched a new side-to-side flat twin model in 1947. 1954 saw the Earles fork Dragonfly model, before motorcycle production finished in 1957 after 50 years. A distribution agreement for Vespa scooters, and later Gilera, meant that the factory doors did not finally close until 1972.

Here is new UK member Todd Duff, who joined the Club when we helped him get this 350 cc Harley Aermacchi imported:



And here is Jean Paul Defay from France with his Harley 1971 FLH:



Welcome to our great Club guys, and hope to see you on the road soon!

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 - postponed
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. (cancelled)

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 (cancelled)

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

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

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

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

June 11-13 Oldgeraffeltreffen, D-36355 Grebenhain.

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 (cancelled)

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

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

June 04-06 Silent Gray Fellows Meet, Oosterhout. 16th meet for pre-1966 American bikes.
www.silentgrayfellows.nl

Aug 06-08, Old Timers Run, Den Haag. Pre-1966 American bikes for the 42nd time.
www.hdtheoldtimers.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 2021

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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 April, 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

