Interceptor, Benzingeruch

Complaints about petrol fumes finding their way inside Interceptors and FFs were fairly common throughout the whole production period, and several service bulletins were isued right up until Jan 1976 - Bulletin J213.

The most common situation is when driving with a window open, particularly after brimming the tank, and this is always a sign of a leak in the breeather pipe circuit or the filler cap and bowl area. As has been covered before, a really thorough check of all breather pipes needs to be made, particularly where these pass through sections of the bodywork where kinks in the pipes can occur. Also, the seal between the filler bowl and the wing joint needs to be checked together with the drain hole and the breather hole above the filler flap hinge, which must be clear.

In many cases it was found that the filler cap was the problem, a seemingly tight fit may not be so good if the seal is worn or distorted,, and this happened to me on one occasion. Another possible cause is where oversize jubilee clips have been used; while these can be tightened so that a pull on the pipe shows that the clip has gripped, it could be that the clip is distorted and given rise to leaks of fumes.
All the above relates to the open window situation. If fumes are entering through the dash air vents, then look to the engine bay.

In case anybody wonders where this sudden burst of tech knowledge comes from, I am reading the salient points in the service bulletins!

Interceptor, Coach Lines

Coach Lines (stripes) were a factory option but not, as far as I remember, until Motor Show time in 1973. So there was a build spec for them...

I think Steve's 3/6 mm sounds about right, and they became very popular option.

Interceptor MkII, Steuerrad

This problem occurred with early MK11 cars, when it was found possible to pull the wheel off when trying to adjust the column length, as Ken says. This could be interesting if on the move, a stupid thing to do, as one customer found out. No accident, just more grey hairs. The cause was one of two possibilities, either no retaining circlip had been fitted or, much more likely, the one fitted was not strong enough.

The cure was to fit a modified steering wheel boss and larger diameter circlip, detailed on Service Bulletin dated 28 November 1969.

2501, 3152, 3142, 3139

Chassis numbers 2501 and 3152 were sold before Edgar was appointed the official importer at the Geneva Show in March 1969. Edgar's first car was chassis 3142, the actual 1969 show car. 3139 was my car, used as the Press and demonstrator during the Geneva show and later sold as a used car to Edgar, in April 1969 I

think. Chassis 3150 was also my car, which replaced 3139, and was sold as a used car to Edgar. All the other Swiss MK1 cars were imported by Edgar, and all were collected by him or his customers, or delivered by me under the export home delivery scheme. So 16 is the correct number imported by Edgar.

Edgar came over to the factory once to collect two cars, bringing with him tow potential customers to look round the factory. So impressed were these two gentlemen that they each bought a car on the spot, from stock, and they were all driven back in convoy. I led this convoy in my car out of Birmingham to put them on the right road, pausing on the way for tea at my house in Selly Park. Imagine 5 brand new Interceptors in convoy in those days! The two customers, by he way, were Mr Jacomeli and Mr Pedersoli, both hoteliers in Crans Montana. Jacomeli at that time had just broken the speed record on a Ski-Bob, something in excess of 100mph if I remember rightly.

...This was my first demonstration car (117/3139) as Export Sales Manager. I drove it to Geneva with Gethin Bradley of Good Relations Ltd, Jensen PR agents. It was sold to Edgar Schwyn later in the year as a used car, after I had used it on various visits to European dealers. This was later than the date shown in Calver's book, but I cannot remember the exact date. During my second visit to Switzerland in April 1969, I was taken by Edgar and his wife Elsy to the top of the Rigi mountain above Lake Lucerne. I slipped in the snow and when we returned to the car park at the bottom I found that I had lost the car keys! Fortunately, early Mk 1 Interceptors had an emergency release for the boot, and I was able to enter the car through the boot and get the spare keys from the locker! Edgar and Elsy were most impressed; I was most relieved! Maybe the other keys are still there? During that trip I took a lot of photos of the car attempting to pass through the Grimsel Pass, impossible in April of course, but my camera was stolen on my return home, sorry to say.

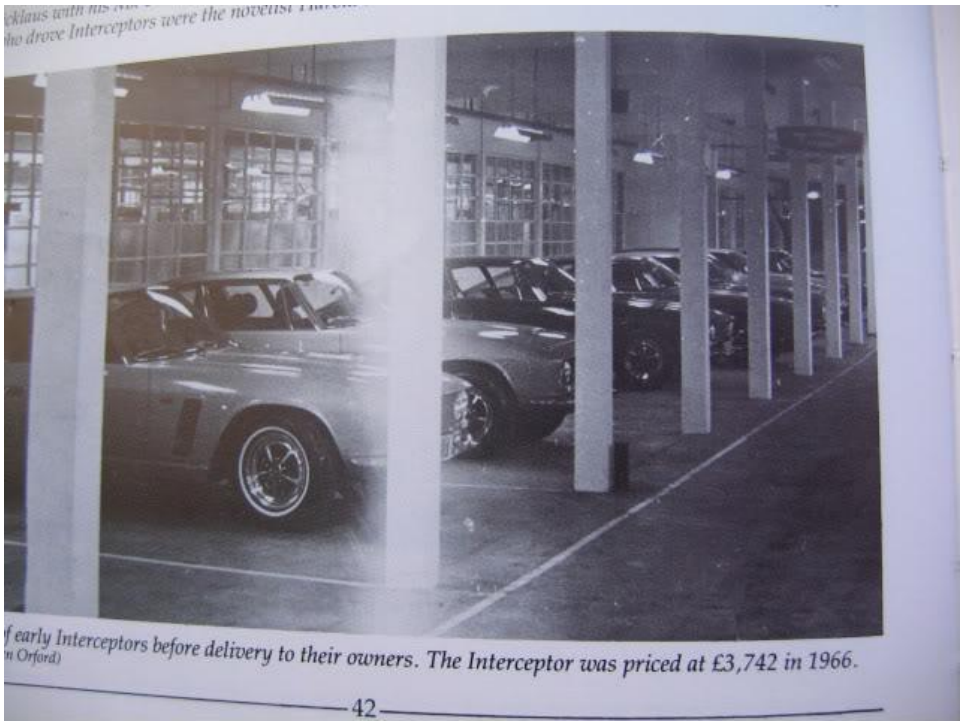
The actual show car was white, chassis 3142, and was sold to Edgar Schwyn as his first car after the show finished. The sale date was in March, not in February as shown in Calver. But note that both dates in his book were correctly taken from the car files, but they are the factory completion dates.

Interceptor MkI

These cars were the remainder of LHD stock, built up while I was setting up dealers throughout Europe. All of these cars were sold to Edgar Schwyn shortly before the arrival of the MK11s. In fact, the final 'deal' was done at about one o'clock in the morning in the Dolce Vita nightclub in Birmingham, with Edgar, one of his reps and three of his Swiss dealers, drinking terrible, warm champagne, while the singer, Vince Hill if I remember correctly, was belting out his cabaret programme and not a bit impressed because we were not taking much notice of him!

Photograph is courtesy of Mike Taylor, from his book Jensen Interceptor,
ISBN 0-85429-612-3

Oh, Happy Days!



...Jensen operated a similar system to that used by all manufacturers in that distributors and dealers were allocated cars based on sales forecasts against production schedules. Each chassis laid down would be allocated to a dealer or earmarked for factory use as demo. press or show cars etc and the spec issued by Sales. The only difference in fairly early days was that I would build LHD cars for stock in order to supply newly appointed o'seas dealers quickly as they were appointed. As a matter of interest, in one of the Jensen books there is a picture of 'cars awaiting delivery to customers', whereas in fact they were my LHD MK 1 stock. In actual fact they were almost the last of the Mk 1s, and I have a clear memory of an intense meeting with Edgar Schwyn and his Swiss dealers, held in the Dolce Vita Club in Birmingham very late one night, when I managed to sell the lot! Have a look at LHD Mark 1 sales in Calver and you will see them.

As demand exceeded supply from the beginning of Int and FF production there were very few cars built other than to customers specs or dealer demonstrators, and showroom stocks were virtually non existent until late 1972 on, and even then they were few. As a result, the gap betwen the the production date, and that is the date the car was released to sales for delivery to dealers, and date of first registration was very short. As a result, a March car would be most unlikely to have been completed in the previous year. However, a January registered car could easily have been finished in the previous December.

Interceptor MkI HEA 1D

HEA 1D was the pre-production prototype, in other words the first car down the production line after all the basic prototype work had been completed using BEA 693C, the rebodied CV8.

HEA 1D was used for a certain amount of early Press work in conjunction with HEA 2D, one of the two 1966

Earls Court show cars. HEA 2D was sold in 1968, but HEA 1D was kept in use by the factory because of its early production status and, as Steve pointed out, there were one or two unique features which could cause problems in its future life in terms of spares and repairs. My memory tells me that it was sold to a Peter Heald who had badgered Dick Graves for many months to let him buy it for the registration number. Calver says it was sold to Bernie Winters, but I do not remember this.

As far as it being in completely original and unrestored state is soncerned I am rather doubtful, but there are several JOC members who know its recent history and I would expect that you will receive several pms on this subject. BEA 693C still exists, in Big Bertha form and the prototype for the suspension system proposed foir Interceptor replacement, Concorde, and it is owned by ex deputy chief engineer Brian Spicer who owns a Subaru dealership in Ayrshire. HEA 1D has to be the the classic Interceptor of all to own.

Interceptor MkI von Vignale

As far as I can remember the chrome fittings on the wheel arches were only on Vignale built cars, but if your car has/had them then we may have made a few early West Bromwich cars with them. I think we regarded them as one more rust trap and therefore did not continue with them. I don't think they were ever offered as an option. I think at the time there were several Italian cars with the same wheel arch trims, including Alfa.

The early steering wheels I am not sure about, except that I would have thought they were Italian initially. Certainly not Les Leston.
Jensen's use of prefabricated items only involved items of hardware, like door handles, switches etc, as far as body panels and finishers were concerned we either made them ourselves or had them made specifically for us.

I remember a meeting with Carl Duerr and the union shop stewards during which Duerr was determined to get the unions to agree to having the Interceptor sills made elsewhere, because for some reason they were difficult to make. He achieved his objective by slipping in the subject during a complicated discussion on labour rates; excellent management technique, the result being sensible and no conflict involved.

Interceptor

All cars had electrically operated windows, originally with Italian motors and emergency winding handle, later with American motors more reliable and not requiring emergency handles. West Bromwich built cars with the same Italian motors for a while until the American ones started to be used, and that is why you have the provision for the emergency handles in your car.

PW means Painted Wheels.
All cars had leather seats and backrests, the parts that you sit on and rest your back on, but vinyl was used for the other parts. Some customers wanted the whole seats covered in leather.
Follett may have agreed not to charge for some items in the deal with the customer.
I cannot see any reason why your car was held back for any reason, but the best way for you to get this informtion is to write to or ring Martin Robey and see if you can buy a copy of the original build card. This is a record of the car's progress right from the beginning to the final road test and handing over to the Sales

Department.

On occasions the Engineering Department would take a car off the production line for checking purposes, which would onviously delay its progress, but usually this only took a matter of a few days. In a period when production was still in early days and cars did not come off the line in prefect order, your car does not appear to be too far from normal.

... We were prepared to accept some slight modifications to the standard spec, but these were usually confined to exterior and interior colours and choice of radio. Anything else, such as towbars, could be arranged but fitted by the service department after the car had been passed off from production.

Heck Öffnungs-Mechanismus

Well, ladies and gentlemen, it is time the whole story was told. Mike has, of course, put his finger right on the spot by bringing the NASA connection into the discussion. In adopting their highly secret material in order to solve the "˜string closing mechanism" problem, JML were sworn to secrecy under NASA's thirty-five year non-disclosure rules, which, briefly, states that you cannot divulge any information shared between us but we can if we want to. So, thirty-seven years on and protected by heavy security in the form of a pretty active seventeen-year-old black cat, I will tell it as it happened.

After trials with the twin-string MK1b proved incapable of solving the problem, we decided to recruit an expert from outside the motor industry; hopefully by doing so we would find someone with a completely clear approach to the matter. In due course we were fortunate in finding and employing a splendid young engineer, fresh from the camping and leisure industry. Guy Roper had spent some years studying the characteristics of ropes, cords and strings. Here I must explain why the word "string" stuck with us despite all attempts to choose another name. Rope was favoured by some, but was felt to sound too "heavy"; cord was another choice but the USA Auto Industry refused to allow a British car maker to infringe on one of their copyright names; many other names were considered but, after numerous committee and sub-committee meetings and some six months had passed, it was decided to stick to string, wrap the subject up and get on with the job in hand.

Guy Roper had brought with him three colleagues and they quickly established themselves in a corner of the engineering development department. Affectionately referred to as The String Quartet, they set to work and produced prototypes c, d, e, f and, finally g. It was the MK1g that used the launch pin removing operating material provided by NASA, and it was a proud team that stood on the Jensen stand at the Motor Show in Earls Court where two MK1g cars were displayed.

Unfortunately, despite all their R & D, The String Quartet had not subjected the material they were using to the rigours of Motor Show atmosphere. After all, where else could one find such a heady mixture of heat, humidity, alcohol, petrol, oil and anti-deodorant fumes and even some noxious ones as well, but in Earls Court at Motor Show time? The result was dramatic. Just as the collection of scantily clad beauties had disported themselves in various attitudes on and around the two Jensen-Healeys for the benefit of the Press, the tension proved too much for Guy Roper's devices, and there was the sudden sound of cracking as the strings snapped and the boot lids sprang into the upright position. The ensuing consternation can only be

imagined, but eventually order was restored, the photographers got some very lucky pictures and the lanyards of the two Commissionaires were pressed into service as boot closure devices, rather too decorative but a talking point for the rest of the show.

Regrettably the incident led to the disbanding of The String Quartet who were despatched to pursue careers elsewhere, and the problem of how to secure the boot lids remained a top priority.

Now, there was at the factory an employee called Horace. Nobody really ever knew what Horace's real job was, other than the fact that he was under the control of the Works Manager and spent most of his time as a general factotum, fetching and carrying, sweeping floors etc and as such he was an all round good fellow. It was often thought that Horace was one bale short of a full load, but that was far from the truth. Any time any celebrity visited the factory, or there was some filming going on or whatever, Horace was always there, and usually in shot. Somewhere there is a picture of Miss World, Penny Plummer, when she visited the factory in 1969, and beside her stands Horace. To this day nobody knows how he got there. Well, Horace was well aware of the problems with the Jensen-Healey and it was Horace who eventually found the key to the problem. In fact he found boxes and boxes of keys that had been misplaced in the production store and forgotten about. At last, with the use of keys the problem was solved at a stroke, or perhaps a twist, and Horace was duly given a big handshake by all the Directors.

And that is the end of the story, and perhaps this thread.

Tony M

PS Horace was a real person and was exactly as I portray him. He was often at the end of many jokes in the factory, and always took them with a smile, seemingly not realising that he was being made fun of. It was Horace who received a fully embossed personal invitation to Prince Charles' wedding and many other such events. He is, of course, to be found among the crowd of employees in the picture of the Topic Interceptor.

... Early Interceptors had a cable fitted to the boot lid release mechanism which could be found by reaching up by the spare wheel. I forget how many cars were so fitted, but it 'saved my life' in 3139 when my keys fell out of my pocket after sliding, unintentionally, some way down the snow at the top of the Rigi mountain in Switzerland. Fortunately the spare keys were in the glovebox and Edgar Schwyn was impressed at my lack of concern about how to recover them!

The idea was dropped when it was thought that security had been compromised once it became common knowledge.

Starrachse bem Interceptor

I can tell you that the real answer as to the choice of live as opposed to independent rear axle on the Interceptor was Kevin Beattie's firm belief that a well located rear axles was as good as most independent set ups, and he refused to be shaken from this belief. Big Bertha was much later and was the test bed for the Jensen 'F', with self levelling suspension etc etc.

I was given a demonstration drive around the Nurburgring by Pau Frere who, approaching most corners at around twice the speed that I had dared to go, muttered each time 'Mr Jensen, you really should have independent suspension!' But the smoothness of our progress seemed OK to me!

Rostyle Felgen

RO were late with wheels for us and the very first single page Interceptor leaflet, Crystal Blue side view, has fibreglass Rostyle mock ups, the car is on jacks!

Mist Grey

Some may know that the RR Silver Shadow was originally to be named the Silver Mist, until the German agent pointed out the meaning of 'mist' in German. Joking about this one day at the Frankfurt Show in 1972 with Gerd Schaeffer, his response was to hand me our colour chart! Mist Grey became Silver Grey very quickly.

Interceptor am Golf Tournament

The scene is a pro/am golf tournament at the old Copt Hill course near Birmingham. We had provided an Interceptor as the prize for a hole-in-one at the short hole, and there was one on display in the main marquee.

Several visitors from the Jensen dealer network came along, notably the Welsh contingent from Cwmbran, always a great crowd to be with. We were enjoying a pint or two in the bar and gazing in admiration at the extraordinarily good looking brunette behind the bar. Time came to leave as the bar closed and we walked through into the marquee where the Interceptor was displayed and we stood at the back of a small crowd admiring the car.

Suddenly we realised that the aforesaid brunette was standing just in front of us with her colleague. At that moment we heard her say 'Anybody who can give me a ride in one of those can have me!'. At once several Welsh heads turned towards me with questioning looks. I fished in my pocket and produced the keys of the car I was using - the Hillman estate hack runabout! We left without another word.

Carl Duerr und Int Mk I 115/2949

It was a demonstrator, but also used by Carl Duerr on trips from the factory. It was licensed when Duerr started work at West Brom in January 1968. For commuting from the Albany in Birmingham to and from the factory he would take one of the cars undergoing road test for evaluation purposes.

...Carl never had a company car in the UK. He either took a road test car to commute to and from the factory

from his hotel or he was driven longer distances by the works driver, Albert Jackson, in one of the factory demonstrators. Had 2949 been a factory owned car it would have carried a West Bromwich registration number....

...Before the J-H was produced, there were very few company cars for use by employees. Carl Duerr always used a production car from the final road test section for commuting to and from the hotel he stayed in during the week, as he was home in Munich at weekends. Dick Graves used the P66 until it was sold, and Tony Good had a car in London for PR purposes, not for road test use. The sales demo and press cars were used by employees on official business where applicable. The Service Dept ran a loan car, CV8 CEA 382C for one, and a couple of non-Jensen hacks, such as the Morris 1100 estate, a Hillman Hunter estate etc. When Albert Jackson arrived as Duerr's driver and company 'shover' he used a Vauxhall Viscount for general visitor ferrying etc.

Once the J-H arrived, several senior managers were allocatecd cars, and this 1973 car was, I am pretty sure, one of these. So it was a works car but not a Press demo.

Überhitzen beim Interceptor

This reminds me of one of the many arguments between Sales and Engineering at JML, remembering that the company was always led by the engineer(s). In this case, as Keith Anderson has said, the intention behind all the foam packing was to direct as much possible airflow through the radiator.

I believed, and still do, that this is not the right approach. I proved that releasing the bonnet catch in slow moving traffic caused a significant drop in engine temperature, highlighting the need to release air from the engine bay, but hardly practical.

The two electric fans are more than capable of pulling an adequate supply of air through the radiator with or without shutting off airflow to the sides. By shutting off the airflow to the sides, all air into the engine bay has to pass through the radiator, which simply means that all air coming into the engine bay is heated and reduced in volume, and this does not help to cut down engine bay temperature.

I am not sure if there are any stats to support this, but I have an idea that cooling problems with Interceptors actually got worse over time, not always because of age, but partly due to the shrouding of the radiator. Of course there are other factors such as air conditioning, various anti pollution sysems and such that in themselves made the engine run hotter, but here is a question: Do CV8's overheat and if not, why not?

... My Interceptor driving experience over seven years was with brand new cars, never more than three months old. Engine temperature was always critical in hot weather, but not such as to involve over heated coils. We are now talking about 40 year old cars which, even with the best cleaning of the water system, cannot match the brand new condition. Of course coils get hot, but if you add super heated under bonnet conditions and heat conduction by strapping the coil to the engine, it is not surprising that coils will break down. Moving them to the wing is a very good idea.

Better cooling fans will help, but the fundemental problem still remains, and that is how to get the air out of the engine bay. Remember my report of the effect of releasing the bonnet catch in slow moving traffic? Not being certain that the fans were working wile creeping around the North Circular if hot and humid conditions, the temp guage immediately dropped to normal once the air was released from the engine bay.

Louvered Bonnet

Most of you will know the history of the louvred bonnet, but just to confirm things:

When we were planning the SP, one item causing some head scratching was how to differentiate it from the Interceptor without involving major body panel changes. With strong Rootes Group connections (Kevin Beattie and Richard Graves) thoughts turned back to the 1950's Sunbeam Alpine Sports and thus the louvred bonnet was chosen. So it was purely a cosmetic factor, nothing to do with cooling.

The principal trouble with the Interceptor, and to a slightly lesser degree the FF, cooling system is the configuration of the engine bay where, with the engine set back and tight into the transmission tunnel, air flow around it is poor and, more fundemental, it is very difficult to get rid of or change the very hot air within the bay. At reasonable speeds the cooling system copes well, but as soon as 'crawling' speeds are reached, particularly after a fast motorway run, up soars the engine bay temperature. Gradual improvements in radiator blanking panels, forcing air through as opposed to round it, helped but the basic problem remains, how to get rid of the air passed through the radiator. The side vents are only marginally effective, again because the air cannot get around to them easily.

It was while driving along the North Circular in an FF one day with very heavy stop/start traffic, reasonable ambient temperature but very humid, I watched the temp guage slowly climb up to the red line. Usually it was possible to feel the vibration from the coolling fans but on this occasion I could not, so I pulled the bonnet catch with the intention of jumping out to check the fans as soon as the traffic allowed. Low and behold the guage dropped back to normal withing a couple of minutes. Problem solved, or so I thought, and rteturned in due course to the factory to report to the Engineering Dept that, once again, the Sales Dept had got the answer to a tech problem! Not surprisingly my elation was short lived and I was advised to bxxxxr off and leave thing to those better informed! I should mention here that there was no real chance of serious overheating in the FF that day, and needles into the red line do not always spell disaster - providing the fans are working as they should!

However, the seed was sewn and eventually full louvred bonnets became an option. Unfortunately, as others have already pointed out, they do not achieve the same effect as releasing the boinnet catch. Not only that, but they were badly executed, never straight, badly protected and, again as has been said here, they let water into the engine bay. Remember. at any reasonable speed, the air flow at the foot of the windsceen is negative, or almost so, which is why air gets through into the ventilation system.

Keith Andrews and one or two others have designed a mod involving extended bonnet catches, allowing the bonnet to be opened slightly and secured in that position, and it works a treat, although at the expense of appearance. I travelled many thousands of miles around Europe in all sorts of weather conditions and never, ever, had an overheating problem, but I was always in a new or nearly new car.

Had I the choice now, I would not have a louvred bonnet. I would certainly pay very close attention to the previous posts on this forum concerning fans and radiators etc.

130mph

By the way, who has ever tried to go for more than 130 mph in an Interceptor?

Many times! But long ago with very young cars.

Karosserie

The point is that the main seams on the front wings to front panel were not flush welded, as can be seen in the photos. A deep channel was left which required to be filled with lead. The same applies to the apron under the screen. This was typical of small volume manufacture, where super fit panels would have been prohibitively expensive, and also accounts for the lead loading of panel edges to provide for even gaps to doors etc. Well, relatively even!

David Millard once had a call from a new owner concering the 1/4 inch difference in the gap between rear wings and tyres. He was not really impressed by David's comment "You've got a good one there, sir".

A feature to be seen while walking along the body-in-white section in the early morning was the lads cooking their bacon sarnies at break time, using the welding torches and spare metal squares to create the hot plate. I seem to remember that it became a feature in the BBC documentary, Carl Duerr with Judith Jackson, motoring correspondent of The Times.
Times have changed....

117/3139 und 117/3150

117/3139, Tangerine/Moccha, was the 1969 Geneva Show demonstrator and Press car. This picture, taken at the factory in July 1969, shows me handing over this car to Edgar Schwyn (right of the picture) and at the same time two new cars to Messrs Pedersoli and Jacomeli, both hoteliers in Crans Montana. I will gladly have a copy made for the current owner of 3139 if he contacts me. I cannot positively identify the chassis numbers of the other cars.

117/3150, Crystal Blue/Black, was my demonstration car after 3139. This picture was taken in the Burgplatz in Braunschweig. Mike Chambers, then our export technical representative, and I were on our way to Bad Harzburg for the start of the (in)famous Constanze Damen Rally, arranged as a competition for the motoring wives of prominent German people by the magazine. As Carl Duerr's wife was a well known actress she entered, and of course this meant a back-up car! The Rally started in Bad Harzberg and ended in Luebeck, and was a very interesting trip and good publicity. So, having been stationed in Braunschweig 1955-58 I took the opportunity to revisit, calling in at the offices of the Braunschweiger Zeitung to see if we could get a little more publicity. The driver in the picture is their motoring reporter by the name of Schimpf. I also sold this

car later on to Schwyn, but the ex-factory date in Calver is the date I registered it in UK, not the date of sale to Schwyn. Does anybody have this car?