The Jaguar XJC—Its rust points and good points

A Brief History of the Jaguar XJC

The Jaguar & Daimler XJ Coupes are amongst the world's most beautiful cars. It is also Jaguar's rarest production car with fewer than 10,500 built between 1975 and 1978.

These cars are the two door version of the XJ6 four door saloon. When Sir William Lyons began styling exercises for the new XJ models in the mid 1960's, it was obvious that he had notions of a two door coupe in mind for eventual production. Many of these early styling mock-ups were based on the coupe theme in various shapes, forms and sizes, and the XJC was the last Jaguar car to be designed and built by Sir William Lyons.

In 1969, he took a reject 2.8 litre RHD XJ6 body shell (to become #1 Prototype) and fashioned it into the XJC. It was tried with both 4.2 and 5.3 engines with both versions becoming known as XJ33 or XJ34, depending on which engine was fitted at the time. Automatic and manual gearboxes were also tested with both engines.

However, the Jaguar public would have to wait until the introduction of the Series II models, and well into this series, before

production XJCs could be seen. They were first shown in September and October of 1973 at the London, Paris and Frankfurt Motor Shows. The photo is from the German Motor show in 1973.

The two door coupe is based on the shorter wheelbase XJ Series I platform. Without the central window pillars the coupe body suffered from two main problems, these being structural rigidity and severe wind noise. The widening and strengthening of the rear window pillar overcame the rigidity problem. The wind noise problem was due to a low pressure area forming in the window area.

This tended to pull the front side windows outward and away from the sealing surfaces mounted on the rear side windows. Jaguar remedied the problem with an ingenious pulley and cable system that pressed the front windows inward toward the seals. This ingenious pulley system was nicknamed 'Monkey Climb' by its designer and Jaguars Chief Engineer at the time, Cyril Crouch. Nevertheless, the result is a car that although not as quiet as a regular saloon, is still reasonably quiet.



German Motor show in 1973

When the XJ coupes arrived, they were clearly meant to be the sporty version of

the XJ models. In the UK, Europe, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia they were offered in four versions: Jaguar 4.2C; Jaguar 5.3C; Daimler Sovereign and the Daimler Double Six

XJC Production Figures

There has been, and it seems there will always be, conjecture about the exact number of XJ Coupes produced and sold between 1975 and 1978, with total production estimates ranging from between 10,400 to 10,488.

The following numbers are from the book, "Jaguar - A Living Legend", by Anders Ditlev Clausager and include right and left hand drive models. Anders, the Chief Archivist at Jaguar Cars, sourced the following figures with the help of Ian Luckett and Richard Chillingsworth from Jaguar Cars Limited.

Nigel Thorley also gave the same production figures in his book, "Original Jaguar XJ". So it should be safe to say that these figures are probably the most accurate. One Jaguar 5.3 coupe from the list was sent to receive the full Daimler Vanden Plas treatment. It remains the only Daimler Vanden Plas Double Six XJC ever produced, and it carries the original Jaguar chassis plates: 2G50002.

Model	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	TOTALS
Jaguar4.2C	2	1	2925	1746	1776	37	6487
Jaguar5.3C		11	821	663	329	31	1855
Daimler Sovereign			471	587	613	6	1677
Daimler Double Six		1	76	149	159	22	407
TOTALS	2	13	4293	3145	2877	96	10426

Acknowledgment: Words in this article from www.xjc.com Courtesy Phil Evans

My Jaguar Story



My first Jaguar XJC was a 1976 XJ4.2C (Drophead conversion)



My second a 1977 Daimler Sovereign Coupe 4.2 (Current)



Thirdly I purchased a 1978 XJ4.2C MOD as a project car with the aim of doing some mild customisation.

The full story can be found at : www.myjaguarstory.com



To assist in this project I also purchased an accident damaged XJC as a parts car to complete the project

A Buyers (Rust) Guide for the Jaguar XJC and Daimler Sovereign Coupe (Some hard learnt Lessons)

The following comments are not meant to be definitive but rather the reflection of one owners experience with owning one Daimler Sovereign Coupe and three Jaguar XJCs, one of which is currently being restored and mildly customised.

Built in the 1970s during a period when Jaguar was owned by Leyland, these cars suffered seriously from some poor build issues resulting in common problems encountered in maintenance and restoration.

My purpose in this article is to report on what I have found to be the main rust issues these cars all seem to suffer from. In fact the rust issues seem to be so common in these cars and in many cases so concealed that one suggests there are probably many coupes on the road today where the owner is blissfully unaware of the problems.

I hope the following comments and photos will be of assistance to coupe owners and to anyone contemplating the purchase of one of these beautiful cars.

The Common Rust Points in a Jaguar XJC

I intend to list the common rust points that I consider to be the Primary concerns and should be checked out when purchasing a coupe. Some but not all are unique to coupes.

1. Inadequate Drainage—Rear Quarter Panel

The coupe's design means it does not have the normal draining facility as provided in a four door car with drain holes in the bottom of the doors. So water ingress via poor outer rubber seals on the rear quarter windows is drained by a drainage pipe from the cavity below the window lift mechanism. This drain pipe carries the water through the sill panel. Now that is fine except the pipe is far too small in diameter and therefore so easily blocked. The result is water sits in the cavity below the rear quarter window and can also overflow into the space below the rear seat.

I have even had a friend of mine comment on driving a coupe and hearing the water sloshing around under the rear seat.

The rusting will occur in the bottom of the this cavity (Pic 1.), in the under seat area (Pic.4), in the bottom section of the outer quarter panel (Pic. 5), and in the rear section of the inner sills. (Pic. 6)

So this area of the coupe must be inspected carefully.

Good maintenance will include locating the drain pipe where it emerges from the bottom of the sill panel and ensuring it is not blocked. The shape of this drain does not help. (Pic. 2.)

A good remedy if at any time you are repairing this area is to replace the small drain pipe with a pipe twice the diameter. (approx. 20mm)

Inner and outer sills generally can also suffer from rust but this is not peculiar to the coupes. (Pic.6.)



Pic. 5. This bottom section of the rear quarter panel can also be effected by the blocked drain.



Pic. 6. Inner and outer sills can also suffer badly. The inner sills will often go undetected.



Pic. 1. Photo shows the rusted cavity / drain point and remains of the drain pipe.



Pic. 2. The original very small and inadequate drain pipe. Inner sills also suffer as this repair shows.



Pic. 3. Pipe replaced with a significantly larger pipe cut off below the bottom of the sill panel. Inner sill repaired.



Pic. 4. Rust damage under the rear seat adjacent the cavity beneath the rear quarter window.

2. Front Wheel Well Inner Guard Panel

The forward section of the inner guard panel viewed from under the front wheel well can be a major rust spot. (Pic. 7). The photo shows the RHS bonnet hinge where it locates in the forward end of the chassis rail. This section for some strange reason is made up of two layers of sheet metal and with water ingress provides an ideal environment for serious rust. The bonnet hinges will be seriously compromised.

This is not easily observed and so often overlooked in an inspection. The factory stone guard material applied in this area can hide some major issues.

Equally the end of the under radiator panel protrudes into this area and acts as a convenient ledge for accumulated mud and gravel resulting in rust. Once rust has managed to create an opening at this point, water ingress in this spot will fill the under radiator cross panel, again causing rust issues in the cross member. **(see bottom right hand corner of Pic 7)**

The soundness or otherwise of this section of the inner guard can really only be properly investigated with removal of the factory spray on stone guard material.

To repair this area the whole section of the panel needs to be removed and replaced with new metal. (Pic. 8 & 9)

3. The Top of the Doors and Inner Door Panels

This is probably one of the most sinister and hidden spots for rust in your coupe.

It remains a mystery to me as to why this occurs in the coupes and not in the four door cars to my knowledge. It seems to me to do with the construction and extra strengthening required in the larger coupe doors.

Under the outer skin of the door there is a secondary panel running the length of the door at the top. (Pic. 11) Water ingress seems to be via poor rubber outer seals (Pic. 10) and in via the poorly sealed hole for the remote mirror mechanisms (Pic. 10). The inner panel follows the contour of the outer panel and provides an ideal spot for retention of moister and the subsequent tin worm.

I suspect that many of our coupes suffer in this spot without our knowledge. There is no easy fix except for a full or partial door skin removal and inspection followed by the necessary repairs. (Pic. 11.)

A maintenance suggestion is to check the seal under the door mirrors to prevent water ingress.

Whilst on the subject of doors, our coupes suffer the same problem as any car if the drain holes at the bottom of the doors become blocked. Check these regularly.



Pic. 11. Top half of the door skin removed to repair the inner panel



Pic.7. The forward section of the inner guard observed from the wheel well with guard removed.



Pic. 8. Panel replaced and repaired



Pic. 9. Rust removed, new panel welded in and new stone guard coating applied.



Pic. 10. This pic shows the damage from a poorly sealed access hole for remote mirror mechanism

4. The "A" and "B" Pillars

Again design faults seem to cause some rust issues with the "A" and "B" pillars.

With the "A" pillar, there is a strange design issue here whereby a closed vee shaped cavity is created about half way up the pillar. Any water that enters this cavity via a bad window seal or corrosion in the bottom of the scuttle cavity will eventually create a rust issue. (Pic. 12)

A solution would be for a drain hole to be created forward of the rubber door seal at this point to alleviate this problem.

5. The base of the "A" and "B" Pillars

The base of the "A" and "B: pillars should be inspected for rust. The problem at the base of the "B" pillar I suspect is unique to the coupe as water is allowed to enter via poor rubber seals at the top of this half pillar. (Pic. 13)



Pic. 13. The base of both the "A" and "B" pillar are susceptible to trapped moisture and hence rust

6. The Scuttle Panel

(Pic. 14) Whether this is a result of poor window rubber seals or not I am not sure but does often occur and also results in the rusting out of the inner scuttle panels. This could also be the cause of water ingress into the "A" pillar and resulting rust at its base as mentioned above. Good maintenance should include an inspection of the duck bill hose that drains the scuttle to ensure they are not blocked

7. The Channel for the Rubber Door Seals and Boot Seals

This is an area easily overlooked and often hidden from view. The bottom door seal channels and boot seal ridge will trap moister and will often be found to be completely rusted away. The only remedy is a complete replacement of the channel. (Pic. 15 and 16)



Pic. 15. Channel for the door seal rubber holds water and can be almost completely rusted away.



Pic.12. Half way up the "A" pillar there is a vee shaped cavity that can trap water from a bad seal further up.



Pic. 14. This seems a strange place for rust to occur and may not be as prevalent as other spots.



Pic. 16. The ridge seam that supports the boot lid seal.

8. The Rear Beaver Panel

This is the panel that is under the rear of the car beneath the rear bumper bar and welded to the rear of the boot floor.

The design is such that water ingress mixed with the collection of dirt and debris provides another ideal home for the dreaded tin worm.

An inspection in this spot is a must and additional adequate drainage in this area will assist in keeping it dry. In (Pic. 16) the beaver panel has been removed and the rear end of the boot floor repaired. (Pic.17) Shows the state of the old panel removed. None of this rust was readily visible from an external inspection.

9. Floor Panels

Certainly not unique to the coupe except that the rear floor panels can suffer as a result of the block drains under the rear quarter window as mentioned above. The front floor towards the front firewall can suffer, usually from a leaking window seal or A/C unit or heater (**Pic. 18 and 19**)



Pic.18 Rusted passenger side floor panel



Pic.19 Drivers side floor panel



Pic.20 The roof is cleaned up and rust spots cleaned up

10. Under the Vinyl Roof

Big issues can lurk here with very little outward evidence. One solution—Remove the vinyl and paint. (Pic. 20)



Pic.16. The beaver panel has been removed and the rear end of the boot floor repaired



Pic. 17 The state of the old panel removed.



Pic. 21 Check around the front outer headlight

11. Around the Front Headlight

Again not unique to the coupe but very common and not very easy to remedy / repair. Dirt and crap seems to be able to lodge in and around the outer headlight and cause the problem. (Pic. 21)

Summary

Please accept this article a Jaguar XJC enthusiasts attempt to pass on some information learned from experience. I do not profess to be an expert and accept that others may well have more information and comments to add.

A Buyers Guide

The information in this article may well be very useful for someone unfamiliar with these beautiful cars who is considering a purchase. Despite the rust problems that can plague the XJC it remains in my opinion one of the most desirable Jaguars of all time with its style, comfort, performance and rarity. It truly encapsulates the GRACE—SPACE and PACE of the Jaguar marque.

Maintenance

Much of the information in this article gives rise to a list of good maintenance procedures.

- 1. The Drain in the base of the rear quarter panel must be checked regularly. Better still replace it with a larger drain pipe if you are repairing this area of the outer sills.
- 2. The external rubber window seals for the rear quarter panel should replaced if split or damaged. His is an easy job that does not require the chome channel to be removed. I found a suitable seal at Rare Spares that simply slid into place and provided an excellent seal.
- 3. Check that your door mirrors are well sealed to prevent water ingress to the top of the doors. The door rubber seal should be maintained in good condition.
- 4. Regularly check that the "Duck Bill" drains in the scuttle panel are not blocked.
- 5. Suggest you find a way to ensure the rear beaver panel is not holding water/moister and rubbish. Maybe provide additional drain holes.
- 6. Ensure front and rear windscreen rubbers are sealing properly and the A/C unit along with the heater unit is not leaking.

So that's it—ENJOY YOUR COUPE! And remember they love to runso drive them regularly.

What To Look For