

Carshow Outtake – 1954 FBW AN35V: The Forecast Is For Classic Sunshine In The Alps



One of the pleasures of being a Curbyvore is never knowing what you might see. I was recently at a small but perfectly formed classic car show, in the grounds of Lord Nuffield's home, Nuffield Place, and saw an FBW for the first time in my memory. FBW isn't an internet abbreviation you'd hope not to have to explain to Mum, but is the name of a once proud Swiss truck builder, noted for its individually specified and built vehicles.



FBW is derived from Franz Brozincevic Wetzikon, a truck builder founded in 1922 by Croatian Franz Brozincevic in the town of Wetzikon, close to Zurich in Switzerland, and the company specialised in two main areas – trolleybuses (trolleys) and well engineered, spe-

cific purpose trucks built as far possible from in-house components. Production of trucks was effectively limited to the hundreds per year, and a favourite were underfloor engine versions produced from 1948.



This example, owned by a local collector of what he called “his toys”, was built in 1954, initially for the Swiss Army as a mobile X-ray clinic able to travel to avalanche sites and the like. It has a six cylinder, 8.6 litre diesel engine, giving around 115 bhp and a comfortable maximum speed of 40 mph, though with the ability to climb as well, if a little slowly. Some one asked if it would do 70 mph, downhill? A brave idea, I suggest.



The body was originally built by coachbuilder Carrosserie Langenthal, west of Zurich. Langenthal are still very much in business, building specialist truck bodies and trailers.

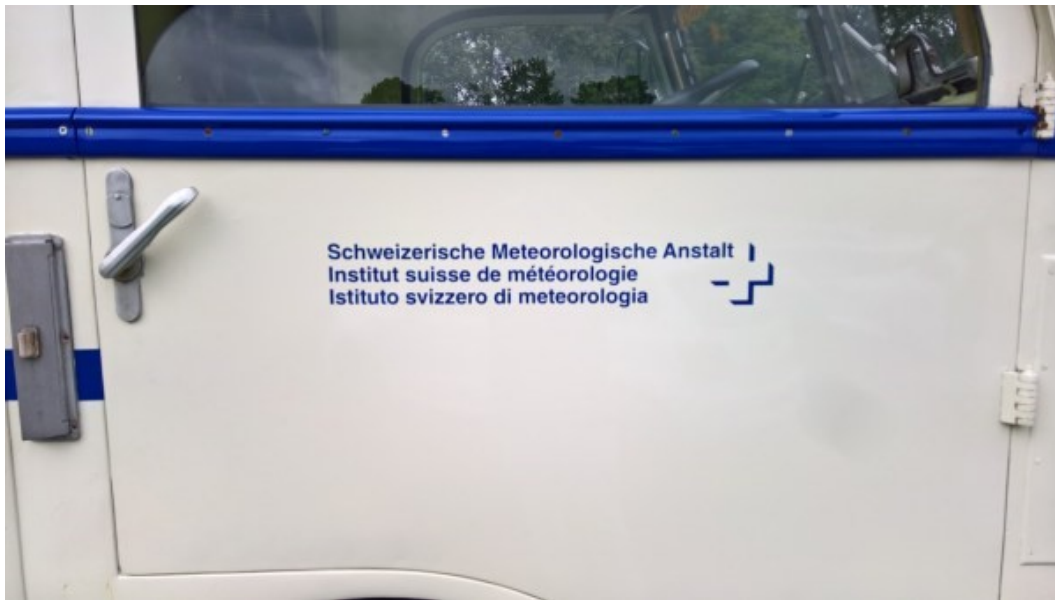


The truck is right hand drive, and always was, as required for use on the mountain roads of the Alps with sheer drops at the road's edge. The driver was considered to be better able to judge the position his vehicle relative to the edge of the road if he sat on the outside.

In 1959, the vehicle was converted for use as a weather station for the Swiss Meteorological Institute, who it served for 40 years before coming to the UK where it was restored, externally and mechanically, to its weather station standard, including the tri-lingual signage. Internally, the truck is to become a camper, and quite a spacious one at that.



FBW merged with Saurer in 1982 to create the snappily titled Nutzfahrzeuggesellschaft Arbon & Wetzikon, better known as NAW and by 1984 part of Mercedes-Benz trucks. The old brand names faded, as did the trolley buses, though examples are still in service in eastern Europe and South America.



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