

CITROËN 2CV AND BERLINGO



Tin snail, Dolly, or Deux Chevaux. Call it what you will, the Citroën 2CV is a cultural design and automotive icon, so after more than 40 years in production it is no surprise that nearly four million cars and two million vans were made. While DVLA figures show that around 3,500 2CV cars are still licensed on UK roads, and many more are SORN, just a handful of vans are on the database. Yet despite nearing extinction on these shores, the modern van driver owes a debt of gratitude to the 2CV van, because it is the ancestral root of many of the most current crop of LCVs.

With a compact cab backing onto a boxy loadspace offering good volume and sizeable payload, the shape and feel of many modern French models such as the Renault Kangoo and Citroën Berlingo owe their heritage to the 2CV Fourgonnette (the French word for delivery van).

However, times have changed and technology has certainly moved on from the 602cc engine found in this particular AKS 400 model 2CV.

Efforts are being made across the automotive industry to cut engine emissions, and many manufacturers have hit upon stop/start as a simple solution to reducing CO2 output when vehicles are stationary. Citroën's latest Berlingo light van adopts that technology as part of its new micro-hybrid drivetrain system fitted to Airdream models. With a regenerative braking system that actually only feeds power

back to the alternator during braking, allowing alternator load on the engine to be decreased at other times, the Berlingo e-HDi90 Airdream is significantly more advanced than the 2CV's inboard front brake design. Yet both are innovative solutions to help solve a problem.

The Berlingo's regenerative braking helps the modern Citroën achieve an impressive 123g/km of CO2 emissions and a claimed 60.1mpg, while the 2CV's brake design limited the unsprung mass of the vehicle, improving handling and, more importantly, allowing the vehicle's famed suspension performance and travel. Despite nearly 40 years of engineering advancements separating the test vehicles, these two defining characteristics of old and new unify our Citroëns.

Fuel consumption

Emission objectives aside, the Fourgonnette's original design closely apes the Berlingo's current goals. The 2CV – which was designed to convey a basket of eggs across a ploughed field without any breakages – was expected to carry four farmers (or in the case of a van, two and a 400kg load) to market at a fuel consumption rate of more than 70mpg. More than 60 years after the first 2CV car and 2CV van models were produced, that emphasis on economy has returned to the latest Berlingo, and so, too, has the inboard braking system – albeit only as a side

