Shake, Rattle & Groan

This article was first published in the magazine of 2CV GB, and was to have been an in depth look at one or two of the more common noises from 2CV running gear – here are 6 of them, read on

1 Groaning, graunching or mooing like a distressed cow. If your 2CV does this when it goes over a bump, you could just put up with it - no harm will be done. For a cure, read on. Your car's springs are housed in steel tubes 460mm long x 100mm diameter, a rod comes out of each end of the tube, connecting the springs with the suspension arms, around the rods where they exit the tubes are rubber gaiters – pull these back to gain access to the tube. The groaning noise is simply a material, similar to brake lining, rubbing on the dry, rusty inside of the steel tube so a little lubricant is required inside.

The lubricant usually recommended is castor oil, a vegetable oil, specified so it will not break down the rubber buffers each end of the tube - you can use sunflower oil - it is cheaper and easier to obtain. How to get the oil into the tube? Access to the tube will be easier with the car raised up a little. A pump action oilcan with a PVC tube pushed onto the end is one way of getting the oil where you want it – a dozen strokes into each should suffice. A 'Waxoyl' applicator gun lance is a good alternative but best of all is a paraffin gun powered by air from a compressor. Treat both sides of the car, re-fit the rubber gaiters and take for a test drive down your favourite bumpy track to distribute the oil.

If the noise hasn't gone away and is still there a couple of days later, lift one side of the car, jack up front and rear and replace with axle stands. The suspension tube now needs to be rotated by 180°, do this by gripping the rim at one end of the tube with an adjustable wrench and rotate in either direction. If the tube will not move, do not worry – take this opportunity to spray the nuts and fittings at each end with WD 40 and try again at a later date.

Or simply put up with the noise!

2 Scraping and squeaking accompanied by stiff steering could be a major problem. Part of the steering lock starts to rub on the inside of the lock housing and can be a sign of a bent/rusty chassis. Check, with the car stationary, for any trace of metal dust around the back of the steering lock. If the noise is harsh and appears to come from the lock, the steering column has probably moved up inside the lock because of a folding chassis. Inspect also the bottom of the column behind the rubber gaiter;

this may have become cracked. As a rule, an expert should check out any stiffening of steering action – particularly if you know you have rust in the chassis or if recent welding work has been done.

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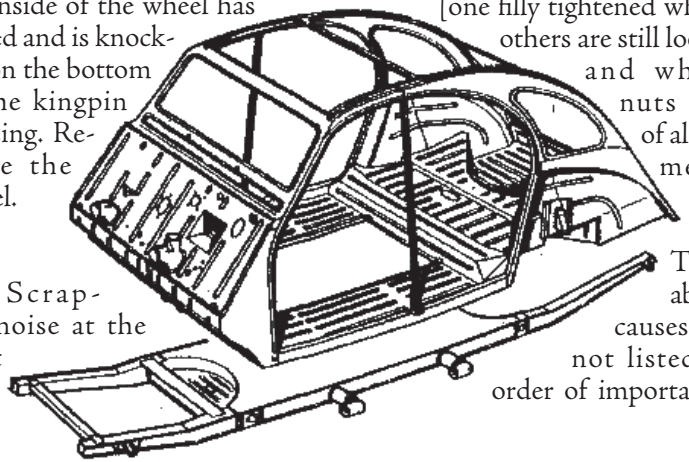
3 Wheel bearing noise is more easily heard on those 2CVs with a hard plastic steering wheel. As you go round a corner listen for a rumble – if this disappears or becomes significantly quieter when you put the palm of your hand on the centre cap of the wheel then you have wheel bearing trouble. It is actually worth borrowing a hard plastic wheel to try if your car is fitted with a soft one.

4 Loud knocking as the car is turned in one direction. If you have taken a rear wheel and fitted it to the front the problem could simply be that the inside of the wheel has rusted and is knocking on the bottom of the kingpin housing. Replace the wheel.

5 Scraping noise at the front as the car bounces. This can easily be checked by bouncing the car when it is stationary. Two likely problems here, first and easiest to spot is the inner wing may be making contact with the drive shaft – bend back the offending part to cure. More common and slightly more elusive is another problem with the wing rubbing on something, this time on the back of the top of the suspension arm hub. To cure this problem you must remove the inner wing and bend back the part, which fits behind the arm.

6 Wheel wobble. Wheel wobble warrants an article by itself but here are a few causes. Rusty inside of the wheel, damaged tyre, worn driveshaft, bent wheel rim, a lump of greasy dirt on the inside of the rim, worn wheel bearing, worn kingpin, worn track rod end, worn shock absorber, wheel nuts loose, wheel nuts tightened incorrectly [one filly tightened whilst others are still loose] and wheel nuts out of alignment.



The above causes are not listed in order of importance.