

Give a Difference



The 430hp C Range offers great potential if rigid GVW increases occur in future.

ALWAYS expect the unexpected' is a great motto to use through life. If only I could remember that phrase more often. Renault Trucks debuted its new range of commercial vehicles in Scotland just over a year ago at the 2013 Black Isle Show and since then I've been able to inspect these sensational new truck models at a series of events, but until recently I'd never driven one on the road.

I had no doubts that the latest Renaults would have moved the bar up several levels on their predecessors, but after a day's driving back in late July I was staggered at the actual level of innovation and improvement.

Without giving too much



The three well placed access steps are complemented by generous grab handles.

Renault's sensational new C range tipper comes under the spotlight on a Transport News 'Full Scottish,' 200 mile appraisal. John Henderson our regular wheelman reports on the best 8x4 rigid he's driven to date!

away before this appraisal report, all I will say is 'Underestimate these new Renault trucks at your peril.' The inaugural 21st century Renault supplied for appraisal north of the border took the shape of a C Range 8x4 Construction chassis fitted with the top choice, high roof sleeper cab.

Power was courtesy of Renault's 11 litre DTI engine, which was coupled to a 12 speed Optidriver automated gearbox. The double reduction PMR2191 rear axles are plated for 21 tonnes and come with a differential lock and a drive ratio of 3.89:1.

Not so common Alcoa matt alloy 22.5in wheels were shod with Bridgestone 315/80 tyres. Our steel came with a 5,100mm wheelbase on a chassis that has 13mm side member thickness. Renault quotes a chassis cab kerb weight of 10,061kg for this particular 8x4 and that figure duly delivers a 21,939kg body and payload allowance.

An insulated PPG Fabrications Smoothline alloy tipper body was fitted, alongside Edbro hydraulics, a PM Onboard weighing system

and a Hydroclear lightweight sheeting system. The truck for testing was loaded with sand to around 29,500kg and had less than 3,000km on the clock.

A walk round inspection revealed an extremely robust chassis, which I'm told is 80% Kerax and 20% Lander in Renault's old money.

Renault's Range C models come with a choice of three different engine sizes of 8, 11 and 13 litres that give power outputs from 250 to 520hp. Our tipper came with the middle option DTI 11 motor in Euro 6 mode, which is offered in 380, 430 or 460hp outputs. Once again the middle choice 430hp power plant was present and this proved well on top of the job for 32 tonne GVW operations.

COMMON SENSE

Digressing for a second, if the UK were to up the maximum weights for eight wheeled tippers to 34 tonnes, a common sense move if ever there was one, a 430hp truck like this would be ideal for the job. The C430s maximum torque of 2,040Nm is delivered between 950rpm to 1,400rpm,

making this an extremely flexible engine that minimises the number of attendant gear changes required.

It's no secret that this straight six motor has relations on the west coast of Sweden and the overhead camshaft unit with rear mounted timing gears is incredibly quiet in operation. Common rail high pressure fuel injection is present and operates at 1,700 bar.

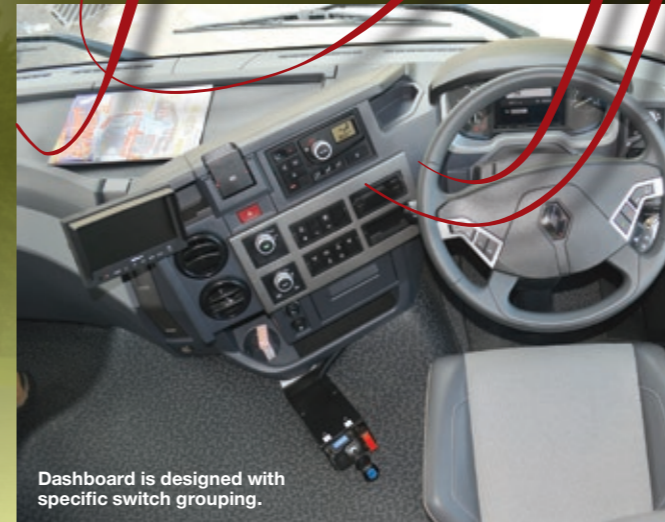
A four valves per cylinder head set-up assists the turbocharger and closed circuit gas recycling systems. On the road, little of the DTI 11's 82 dB (A) volume output reaches the cab interior and the motor is super smooth in operation.

The Renault tackled our two timed Perthshire hill climbs with consummate ease and rather surprisingly it only dropped one gear cog on the long drag up Balmanno Hill. With the C430 being straight out of the box, no fuel measurement was possible, but if my own trip calculations are anything to go by, this truck will excel in economy terms.

To stretch fuel economy parameters further, Renault Trucks offer a comprehensive Optifleet/Optifuel programme that includes a detailed handover, worksite training and telemetry reports with expert analysis.

A single plate 430mm diameter clutch plate feeds Renault's Optidriver ATO 2612E gearbox.

This component offers 12 forward and three reverse gears via a rotary selector on the right hand steering



Dashboard is designed with specific switch grouping.



Hinged front grille gives easy access to a number of components.



Top option sleeper cab offers 2,136mm of headroom.

The fantastic driving position is complemented by superb visibility.

column. I used full auto mode for around 99% of the time, but I'd recommend the excellent manual option for slow speed manoeuvring in situations requiring a precise speed control.

First gear carries a deep ratio of 11.73:1, whilst 11th is direct drive and top gear gives an overdrive of 0.79:1. On most single carriageway roads with a 40mph speed limit, the C430 would happily cruise along in 11th gear, thereby delivering the maximum response levels for any geographical undulations.

Optidriver is well programmed to take into account the current vehicle weight and ever changing road conditions. In the week after I drove a dual clutch Volvo FH for the first time, the Renault C430 still impressed me with its snappy, well timed ratio changes in a wide variety of situations.

Aluminium gearbox

housings help keep weight to a minimum, whilst the inside lubricant temperature is regulated by an oil/water heat exchanger style cooler. Renault's S81 power take off unit has a maximum torque of 1,000Nm and ratios of 0.90/1.14:1.

The C430 is equipped with two robust Renault PMR2191 double reduction axles, which have a combined plating of 21 tonnes. These units are

incredibly quiet in operation and despite being loaded to around 92% of the GVW, not a whine or rumble was heard or felt all day.

Out on the road, Renault has set new parameters for the others to match with its steering, chassis and handling standards. The C430 is an 8x4 rigid that drives like no other and I could not get over the improvements made during our 200 mile Scottish

sortie. The redesigned 430mm diameter steering wheel felt just right in my hands and the multi function switchgear within its spokes is large, robust and easy to read.

Our truck came with the optional Ultimate leather wheel with switches for cruise and telephone controls.

A variable flow, hydraulic power steering pump delivered impeccable turning movements that were



Battery box and aluminium air tanks are safely tucked out of harm's way behind nearside crash bar.



Offside mounted fuel tank holds 315 litres.



One for the Renault family album! New C Range sleeper towers over a previous Premium tractor unit.

millimetre perfect and easy to gauge, whilst on the straighter sections of our route, no see-saw corrections were required.

Renault quotes a 10,306mm kerb to kerb turning circle for the C430 and the truck certainly seemed agile in some confined situations. The substantial C Range chassis includes reinforcement from the drive axle front to the rear rail end and comes with a removable front towing cap.

Component planning is superb with a 32 litre AdBlue tank on the nearside, between the front steering axles, whilst the battery boxes and aluminium air tank sit further back behind the side crash bars. Across on the offside, a similarly well protected aluminium fuel tank holds 315 litres of diesel.

Generous laden ground clearance levels, 326mm at the rear and 293mm up front, give the C430 a tough looking stance and furthering that

image is a three part steel front bumper with headlight grilles, which also contains a retractable windscreen access step.

The suspension is undoubtedly firm enough to cope with the job in hand, but the system is well tuned to minimise vibration and roll feedback in the cab. Up front steel leaf springs are bolstered by a stabiliser bar, whereas back at the business end it's parabolic units, stabiliser bars and rear shock absorbers.

The A702 between Fairmilehead and Abington is our usual handling test bed and the Renault excelled through the many twists and turns of varying road width, on a day when wet grass verges required position perfect driving along its entirety.

The C430's braking performance, via two primary sources, easily matched the

forward progress of Renault's powertrain. The full air electronically managed service brakes have emergency braking assist, in addition to the more usual ABS and ASR acronyms.

Pedal operation, on the few occasions it was required was first class, with minimum travel swiftly bringing in a reassuringly firm bite and retardation thanks to the large all round ventilated discs.

The electronic parking brake puts a similar component used by Renault's Swedish cousins right into the shade, as this switch is chunky enough to look important and its twin, built in warning lights are a clever touch, as is the discreet warning bleep to confirm correct engagement. Volvo would do well to follow suit here.

The lion's share of slowing on our drive was thanks to the Optibrake engine brake that delivers a highly useable maximum power rating of 303kW at 2,300rpm, over three separate stalk positions.

This component delivers a real bite when required and it passed our downhill approach test to the M90's junction 10 with apparent ease. The 40mph maximum speed here was achieved well within the required time.

Eight wheeled tippers with high roofed sleeper cabs are much in demand at present, as operators continue to work further afield from base and their drivers require several nights out most weeks. Ideal for this scenario, the C430 sleeper exterior is right up to date and easy on the eye.

A four point mechanical cab suspension system is tuned to perfection and a brace of useful exterior storage boxes look good enough to accommodate a full set of muddy PPE gear. The rear view mirror assemblies offer no discernable blind spots in addition to class leading rearward vision thanks to generously sized, electrically heated and adjustable mirror lenses.

Inside the roomy cab, an Ultimate Alu finish provided a list of extras as long as Sauchiehall Street, all finished in top quality materials that look easy to keep clean.

Multiple adjusters for the steering column and driver's seat deliver the perfect driving position and I emerged fresh and ache free after a day at the wheel. Some of the switchgear will be familiar to drivers used to the previous Renault ranges, but it pays to take time and learn the new set-up.

The main dashboard contains switch groups which can be moved around to suit the user's personal preferences, whilst the dash computer contains an encyclopaedia's worth of information, in addition to the ability to remember ten different driver's preferences through



Euro 6 emissions require a substantial exhaust system.

installation of their digital tachograph card!

Clever ideas like this abound onboard the C Range and any driver will feel part of the 21st century here. Storage solutions match the surrounding innovation inside and the quality of seating and bunk materials is top notch.

It would be an understatement to say I had my eyes opened with the new Renault C Range 8x4 tipper. I wasn't alone on the day, as we returned to the truck after the lunch halt at Kinross to find a local tipper operator and her drivers giving the C430 a detailed look over.

Needless to say we opened up the interior for viewing and reported our good news so far. There and then request for a similar demonstrator model was quickly passed on to sales colleagues by Dave Young, my Renault minder, such was the impact of this truck.

My concluding notes on the run said that the Renault C430 was the best 8x4 rigid I'd driven to date and that this vehicle was a winner. Renault's new range of trucks has put it right up at the forefront of our CV marketplace. Operators really must take a close look at this C Range and its stablemates to 'vive la difference'.

Route: - Start at Abington services; join M74 at junction 13 heading northwest until junction 4 then onto M73 northbound. Merge with M80 at Mollinsburn and continue onto M9 and A9 until Perth and turn right heading south on the M90 until first stop at Kinross services.

After halt, turn right onto A977 heading for the Clackmannanshire Bridge via Powmill and Forest Mill. After crossing the River Forth turn right onto A905 through Airth and Fallin. Then turn left onto A91 for Stirling Services to second stop and fuel check.

Join M9 eastbound for Newbridge then fork left onto M8 east to join Edinburgh City Bypass at Hermiston Gait. At Fairmilehead junction, exit bypass and pick up A702 and return to Abington services.

Route breakdown: -
 Motorway- 102.9 miles
 Dual carriageway- 31.8 miles
 A class roads- 64.4 miles
Total- 199.1 miles

Circuit Sectors
 1. Abington to Kinross- 100.2 miles
 2. Kinross to Stirling 29.4 miles
 3. Stirling to Abington 69.5 miles

Hill Climb Statistics
Cairnie Brae (A9 Northbound) **Balmanno Hill** (M90 Southbound)
Time- 3mins 38secs 4mins 40secs
Lowest gear- 10th 11th
Minimum speed- 36mph 40mph

Weather conditions: Mild conditions with heavy showers all day. Temperatures ranging from 14 degrees C at the start to 17 at the finish accompanied a moderate easterly wind. Date of test 29.07.14

Renault C430 P8x4 K E6 8x4 tipper at a glance

Engine- Renault DTI 11 engine straight six turbocharged diesel

Gearbox- Optidriver ATO 2612E 12 speed automated

Wheelbase- 5100mm

Rear axle ratio- 3.89:1

Brakes- Electronically controlled full air system acting on all round ventilated discs

Suspension- steel parabolic springs all round

Wheels and Tyres- Alcoa matt aluminium alloy wheels with Bridgestone 315/80 R22.5 tyres

Bodywork- PPG Fabrications Smoothline insulated alloy

Tipping Gear- Edbro CX14 single ram

On Board Weighing- PM 1155 four cell system

Unladen weight as per specification- 12,800kg