

Crowds brave arctic conditions to snap up bargains at Brightwells



Undeterred by sub-zero temperatures and a layer of snow outside, another large crowd flocked to Brightwells on 1st December to see some 70 cars come under the auctioneer's hammer at the last classic car sale of the year at the Leominster salerooms. By the end of the day 50 cars had found new owners in a sale which grossed almost £450,000.

Despite a high bid of £95,000 the star lot of the sale, a 1921 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost that had been rebodied in the 1970s, just failed to sell so top price of the day went to a rare 1939 Triumph Dolomite Roadster. One of just 200 examples made and very rarely seen at

auction, this was a mechanically sound example but with tired paintwork and chrome that soared well above top estimate to finish on £34,650 after a protracted battle between an American phone bidder and an ultimately successful UK enthusiast in the room.

Next best price went to a 1969 Aston Martin DBS/6 Vantage which made £30,690 while a flamboyant fibreglass replica of a 1930s Mercedes-Benz 500K with a 5-litre Ford V8 engine made £29,700. A highly original left-hand drive 1971 Mercedes-Benz 280SL 'Pagoda' with just 47,000 miles and three owners from new fetched £28,820 while a 1997 Aston Martin DB7 with a rare manual gearbox and just 49,000 miles made a respectable £17,600.

A brace of Morgans also sold well with a sound but cosmetically scruffy 1937 4/4 with a 1.2-litre Coventry Climax engine fetching £17,600 while a very smart 1996 4/4 two-seater with a 1.6-litre Ford Zetec engine raised £15,400. A pair of MGC GT models also changed hands with a 1966 pre-production development car in lovely condition fetching £12,100 while a 1969 example in reasonable order fetched £5,610. A 1959 MGA Coupe that had been restored in the early 1990s and little used since made £10,560.

Attracting a large amount of interest before the sale, a very smart 1948 Riley RMB 2.5-litre saloon that had once been a squad car with the Cambridgeshire police force made a well-above estimate £12,320 which is believed to be a new auction record for the model, while a 1958 Austin A35 Saloon in superb original condition also made a record £4,510. The £7,700 paid for a lovely 1963 Austin Mini Countryman was also the second highest price achieved at auction for one of these cars, beaten only by the ex-Lord Louis Mountbatten car sold for £10,500 in 2007.

A beautifully original 1972 Jaguar XJ12L Saloon with just 32,000 miles on the clock also made a record £11,000 while a sound but slightly scruffy 1970 Jaguar E-Type Series II 2+2 Coupe made an above estimate £14,520. A very sharp 1992 Lancia Delta Integrale Evo 1 also did well to raise £16,170 proving the continuing popularity of these excellent machines, while the £5,830 paid for a superb 1987 Porsche 924S was also an exceptionally high price for the model. Other results of note included the £11,220 paid for a very tidy 1943 Willys MB Jeep and the £8,140 raised by a highly original 1972 Rover P5B Coupe.

Bargains of the day had to be the pair of early 1970s NSU Ro80 saloons which only fetched £660 and £440 apiece, despite both being in roadworthy condition – does nobody love these quirky Wankel rotary-engined machines which were so amazingly futuristic for their time? A 1971 Alfa Romeo 1750 Berlina saloon also looked good value at just £1,650 while a 1966 Daimler 2.5-litre V8 Saloon with excellent bodywork also looked a snip at just £4,950 – curious how far behind their Jaguar Mk2 counterparts these cars still lag, possibly because of their almost obligatory automatic transmissions.

"Altogether we were delighted with the results of the sale, particularly with the atrocious weather conditions prevailing at the time," said Brightwells' classic car consultant, James Dennison.

"Attendance was slightly down on our usual numbers but those who made it to the sale were generous with their bids for the good cars and we yet again achieved some exceptional prices. A fair few foreign buyers were also in evidence despite the poor travelling conditions. The sale rounds off an excellent year for Brightwells during which we have sold over 300 classic cars with a turnover of over £3.3m. Due to demand from our customers we are adding another sale to our calendar for 2011 and will now have five sales between 2nd March and 30th November next year."

To view the results of the December sale in full, please visit www.brightwells.com and click on 'Classic Vehicles' or phone 01568 611122. Brightwells' next sale is on 2nd March 2011 and entries are now being accepted.

Note to editors:

All the prices given above include the 10% buyer's premium but exclude the VAT.

For hi-res images of any of the vehicles, or for more information, please phone James Dennison on 01568 611122 or email classiccars@brightwells.com