

Last sale of the year goes out with a bang

17th December 2009

Another capacity crowd packed into Brightwells' Leominster saleroom on Saturday 12th December to see over 100 classic cars come under the hammer. By the end of the day 75 vehicles had changed hands to give a sale total of £600,000 and a clearance rate of almost 70%.

"Ours was the last of four UK classic car sales in the same week and the last of 2009 so we are particularly pleased with the result which shows that there is still plenty of life in the market," said Brightwells' classic car expert, James Dennison. "As ever, good cars did exceptionally well reflecting the escalating costs associated with attempting to bring an average car to top condition. Left-hand drive cars also punched above their weight thanks to the favourable exchange rate for continental buyers."

Top price of the day went to a beautifully restored 1958 Jaguar XK140 fixed-head coupe which made £51,900 after a fierce battle between two determined private bidders. Next best was a lovely 1903 Oldsmobile Curved Dash, fresh from the London to Brighton Run, which made £37,400. An absolutely superb 1964 Daimler Dart SP250 made a huge £30,800 – further proof that this model has enjoyed a bit of a price surge recently, this being the second example to crack the £30,000 barrier at auction this year. A freshly restored 1963 Daimler 2.5-litre V8 Saloon also did exceptionally well to finish on £17,400 no doubt helped by the winning combination of Gunmetal paint and a red leather interior.

A fully rebuilt 1951 Bentley MkVI 'Big Bore' saloon shot well beyond its £18,000 top estimate before finally falling to a Swiss collector for £25,900. Foreign interest also accounted for the £20,100 raised by a tidy 1958 Austin-Healey 100/6 left hooker and the £11,000 forthcoming for a very ropey 1959 example, also in left-hand drive. Among the Yanks a stunning 1941 Buick Super Eight Coupe made a well-deserved £22,300 while a very original 1955 Oldsmobile Rocket 88 went to a German phone bidder for £10,600.

Nice Triumph TR3As always do well at auction and a very shiny 1959 example made a healthy £16,400. £16,800 sounds a lot of money for a Rover, but the handsome 1948 12hp Tourer, one of just 200 made, deserved every penny of that price and was one of the most widely admired cars in the sale. Strong results at the lower end of the market were the £8,700 paid for a low-mileage 1991 Lotus Elan SE Turbo and the £8,000 raised for a well-restored 1969 Austin-Healey Sprite MkIV.

A brace of 1990/91 Aston Martin Virages made £10,700 and £16,200 respectively, showing that the market still does not rate these once £100k-plus cars very highly. However, as with all Astons, their day will surely come again and good ones are probably worth hanging on to as they will become scarce once the current low prices have driven more and more into the wrong hands.

Bargain of the day was surely the 1984 Bentley Eight which had once belonged to Terry Wogan – estimated at a modest £6,000 - £8,000 it was knocked down for just £5,000 to a Hungarian collector who had never even heard of the Oirish smoothie! So much for celebrity provenance...

01568 611166

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To see all the results please visit www.brightwells.com or phone the office on 01568 611122. Brightwells' next auction is on Wednesday 24th March and entries are now being invited.

ENDS

Note to editors:

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

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

01568 611166

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