



# Record Crowds at Brightwells Results in 85% Sale Rate

Almost 2,000 people flocked to Brightwells in Leominster to bid on over 120 classic cars and motorcycles in their March 18th auction. Veteran auction reporter, Richard Hudson-Evans, who was present on the day, said the size of the crowd was “quite extraordinary” and declared it “one of the best attended UK collector vehicle auctions in recent times.” The result was an impressive 85% sale rate as buyers defied gloomy reports of a credit crunch to snap up car after car.



“It was probably our best sale to date in terms of clearance and we were absolutely delighted with the result,” said Brightwells’ classic car expert, James Dennison. “Reflecting current market trends we had more than our usual quota of foreign clients and phone bidders were a curreing feature of the day.” Over a dozen vehicles went to overseas buyers in countries including America, Canada, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, France and Germany.



Top lot of the day was the 1932 Lagonda 16/80 Tourer which went to a private Swiss buyer for £59,100 despite having started out in life as a saloon. Next best was an incredibly rare and early 1901 Singer Motorwheel tricycle which fetched a staggering £36,250 – undoubtedly a new world record for such a vehicle. The winning American bidder is planning to enter the trike in this year's London-to-Brighton run where it is sure to arouse much interest. At the opposite end of the spectrum, a nine-year-old carbon fibre-bodied AC Cobra CRS MkIV with just 1,200 miles on the clock was also hotly contested before finally being knocked down to a UK collector for £35,700.

Reflecting the enduring popularity of both these sports cars, a restored 1964 Austin-Healey 3000 MkIIA secured a healthy £27,900 while a lovely 1970 Mercedes 280SL Pagoda made £25,650. Punching well above its weight was a tiny 1933 MG J2 which soared way beyond top estimate to finish on £21,750 despite being an older restoration that had barely been used for 30 years. Just as impressive was the £10,000 paid for a diminutive 1936 Fiat 500 Topolino.

Also exceeding expectations were a very macho 1954 Volvo TP21 Sugga Command Car which made £10,000 and a beautifully restored 1955 DeSoto Fireflite Sportsman Hardtop Coupe which went to a German buyer for £15,600. Perhaps the most surprising result of the day was the whopping £11,150 paid for a pristine 1967 Ford Cortina 1600E, almost certainly a new auction record for the model and which reflects a growing following for saloon cars of that era.

Other 'popular classics' that did surprisingly well included a fully restored 1964 MGB Roadster which made £10,700, a low-mileage 1961 Rover 80 that raised £7,250 despite being a lowly four-cylinder model, and a very original 1959 Ford Prefect 100E that made a heady £4,600. With everything making such strong money it was hard to spot any bargains, but the two Maseratis in the sale both looked good value at just £24,500 for the 1972 Bora (half the going rate for a top example) and £16,750 for the 1972 Indy America – the latter's price no doubt depressed by its automatic gearbox. "We always had a sneaking suspicion that the sale was going to go well, despite all the doom laden economic news in the media," said Mr Dennison. "There was a carnival atmosphere all day, the sun shone brightly throughout and the results were enormously encouraging not just for us, but for the classic car market as a whole which appears to be as buoyant as it has ever been.

From a standing start just four years ago, Brightwells is now firmly established as one of the top five auctioneers in the UK collector vehicle market and we are confident that we will be able to build on this success in the future. We already have some world-class vehicles entered into our next sale on **June 24th** and we can't wait to stage the whole show all over again!"

**Note: All prices quoted above include the 10% buyer's premium. To see the full results or for further information please contact James Dennison on**

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