

A NEW ARRIVAL: BRITISH EV START-UP STUNS THE INDUSTRY WITH HUGE DEAL

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PUMA

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Ignition.



Welcome.

THE stand space is being
snapped up, the keynote
speakers have cleared their

diaries and the Car Dealer team are looking forward to
another great event. Of course, I'm talking about CDX,
the most important expo for the automotive industry –
and it will be taking place at Farnborough International
Exhibition & Conference Centre on Tuesday, April 28.

I won't waffle on too much about why you need to
be there, but it would be rude of me not to mention the
awesome expo, wonderful workshops and compelling Live
Stage discussions that make CDX what it is.

If you're unsure about your attendance or maybe live a
long way away from Farnborough (hello to our readers in
the north of Scotland and Northern Ireland!), please do
make the journey and join us – tickets are free.

You won't regret it and you're guaranteed to pick up
some fascinating insights, useful tips and advice plus a
whole lot more to help your business run more smoothly
and make more money. We have a four-page preview of the
event in this edition of the magazine – turn to page 18 to
read all about it!

PASTURES NEW

The more eagle-eyed among you may notice that
someone's missing from the panel on the left – our very
own Andy Entwistle has left his job as managing director
of Blackball Media and moved on to pastures new.

Those pastures, incidentally, involve relaunching the
British Motor Show, which will take place from August
20 to 23. Like CDX, it's being held at Farnborough
International in Hampshire.

The whole Car Dealer team decamped to our local
hostelry on the day of his departure for a farewell lunch
and very enjoyable it was too.

Sitting opposite Andy at the pub, I asked him what his

most memorable moment had been during his time with
Blackball. He didn't hesitate and cast his mind back to the
2012 Used Car Awards – the very first such ceremony we
had organised.

'I just felt so proud that our little team from Gosport
had managed to put together such a great event – it was
a moment I felt was very significant in the history of
Blackball Media and Car Dealer,' he told me.

I was there on that night too and understood exactly
what Andy meant. The first Used Car Awards night was
truly special and they are still going strong of course
almost eight years later!

This year's event takes place at The Brewery on Monday,
November 30 and we hope to see you there.

SUPPLIERS GUIDE

Free in the bag with the mag this month is a nice little
extra we're sure you'll find useful in the weeks and months
ahead. It's the 2020 Suppliers Guide, with the details of
hundreds of firms you may want to consider working with.

From facilities and finance companies to trade bodies
and training organisations, we hope the guide will prove to
be indispensable in the year ahead.

There are plenty of other goodies in issue 144, too.
Oliver Young visits a McLaren dealership in the New Forest,
Darren Cassey finds out about the technology behind
Nissan's recent 230-mile autonomous drive, and Ryan
Hiron takes a detailed look at Arrival – the British EV
manufacturer that has been hitting the headlines in recent
weeks. Enjoy the issue.

Dave

Dave Brown
Production Editor

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Driven: Honda e

Cutting-edge technology and an all-electric powertrain from Japanese manufacturer



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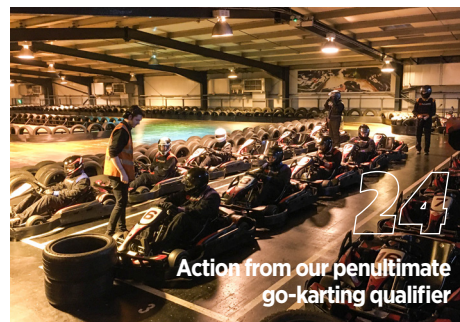
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Our events...



As voted for by you, Car Dealer Power is unique. To find out who won what following the latest industry-wide survey, go online to bit.ly/cdpower19



The Used Car Awards, sponsored by Black Horse, take place on Monday, November 30. Want to be a winner in 2020? You can enter online now at bit.ly/UCA-2020



Car Dealer's must-attend automotive trade expo features the Live Stage, workshops and more. **Turn to pages 18-21** for the latest about the 2020 event, which takes place on April 28.

THE BIG STORY

No time to lose as Boris moves the goalposts on petrol and diesel ban

Now the automotive industry has to act even more quickly to hasten the adoption of EVs – but is the new, earlier deadline a good idea or merely pointless virtue-signalling?

A ban on sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles will be brought forward to 2035 and will include hybrids for the first time, it has been announced.

The plans were outlined as the prime minister launched key UN climate talks in the UK. The COP26 talks will take place in Glasgow in November – ‘COP26’ stands for ‘the 26th Conference of the Parties’ – and Boris Johnson made a speech setting out Britain’s stall as a leader on tackling climate change.

He urged other countries to follow the UK’s lead in setting targets to cut their emissions to net zero – with major reductions to greenhouse gases and any remaining pollution offset by measures such as planting trees.

As part of the UK’s moves to meet its legal goal to reach net zero by 2050, the government will consult on bringing forward a planned ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2040 to 2035 – and earlier if feasible. Transport secretary Grant Shapps mooted the year 2032 at one point, sparking a fresh wave of concern.

The ban, which government advisers the

Committee on Climate Change have called for by as early as 2030, will also include hybrid vehicles for the first time. At the launch event, attended by Sir David Attenborough, Johnson called for international efforts to reach net zero as early as possible through investment in cleaner technology and protection of natural habitats.

Johnson said: ‘Hosting COP26 is an important opportunity for the UK and nations across the globe to step up the fight against climate change. As we set out our plans to hit our ambitious 2050 net-zero target across this year, so we shall urge others to join us in pledging net-zero emissions.’

‘There can be no greater responsibility than protecting our planet, and no mission that a global Britain is prouder to serve.’

AA president Edmund King said the new target on car sales was incredibly challenging.

He added: ‘We must question whether we will have a sufficient supply of a full cross-section of zero-emissions vehicles in less than 15 years.’

‘We will also need a package of grants coupled with a comprehensive charging infrastructure at homes and in towns, cities, motorways and

rural locations. At the very least, the government should take up the AA demand to cut VAT on new EVs to boost sales and make vehicles more affordable to those on lower incomes.’

He also raised concerns that hybrids would be excluded from sale under the plans.

A Department for Transport spokeswoman said: ‘We are consulting on a range of possible dates to bring forward the end to the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans.’

‘The consultation proposal for this is 2035 or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, as well as including hybrids for the first time.’

RAC spokesman Simon Williams said: ‘While the government appears to be constantly moving the goalposts forward for ending the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicles, drivers should not be worried about opting for a plug-in hybrid now. They are potentially the perfect stepping stone for those who want to go electric but who have concerns about range, as they aren’t as expensive as battery-electric vehicles.’

‘At the moment, they give drivers the best of both worlds.’

WHAT THEY SAID...

Quentin Willson

Motoring journalist and FairFuelUK campaigner



‘Cleaning our air is an absolute priority but it won’t happen through aimless virtue-signalling by politicians. The United Kingdom is woefully underprepared for vehicle electrification, is broadly ignoring marine, aviation, industrial and domestic combustion, and needs to really incentivise consumers and industry to change their behaviour.’

Brian Madderson

Chairman of the Petrol Retailers’ Association



‘Many of our members have already embraced low-carbon systems, re-engineering their businesses towards roadside retail with improved valeting and larger convenience and food-to-go facilities that cater for the slower refilling of electric cars. However, there are financial and technical hurdles that will need to be overcome to integrate EV charging into many of their forecourts.’

Steve Nash

Chief executive of the Institute of the Motor Industry



‘Just five per cent of technicians are qualified to work on electric vehicles, so in the next 15 years the race will be on to get the rest up to speed. Those who aren’t properly trained or equipped to work on EVs would be risking serious injury or potentially fatal shock. It will be interesting to see if there is any focus on additional funding for technician training in the spring Budget.’

Nicholas Lyes

Head of policy at the RAC



‘A more ambitious target should be the catalyst for faster change, but there are many hurdles. Manufacturers face a great challenge in switching their production from conventional powertrains to cleaner electric technology. More EVs will also require a great deal of investment in charging infrastructure – particularly for those who rely on on-street parking outside their homes.’



There's so much to do...

PRICES of electric vehicles need to tumble and far more needs to be done to bring the UK's charging infrastructure up to scratch.

They were the overwhelming reactions from across the automotive industry to the government announcement that the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles was being brought forward to 2035 and would now include hybrids.

The plans were outlined as the prime minister, together with broadcaster and natural historian Sir David Attenborough, launched the next COP26 UN Climate Summit, which will take place in Glasgow in November.

Ian Plummer

Commercial director
at Auto Trader



'The government is yet again changing the goalposts for manufacturers – 2035 is a stretch, let alone 2032. Electric vehicles aren't the same as their petrol and diesel counterparts, so we need to start thinking about the way we use and refuel them in a different way. We need to change mindsets and think about charging EVs like we do our smartphones.'

Alex Buttle

Director at
Motorway.co.uk



'The government already had its work cut out to meet its 2040 deadline. By bringing that deadline forward by five years, it has brought even more pressure on itself. If the government is to stand a chance of meeting such an ambitious target, the challenge remains the same as before: it must improve the UK's EV infrastructure and encourage early switching to electric cars.'

Mike Hawes

Chief executive
of the SMMT



'It's extremely concerning that the government has seemingly moved the goalposts for consumers and industry. Accelerating an already very challenging ambition will take more than industry investment. This is about market transformation, yet we still don't have clarity on the future of the plug-in car grant, while the UK's charging network is still woefully inadequate.'

Sue Robinson

Director of
the NFDA



'UK motorists should continue to receive incentives to ensure a consistent and successful transition to electric vehicles. This must include preserving the current plug-in grant. Cost continues to represent one of the key barriers to the uptake of EVs. Lack of affordability must not be the reason consumers hold on to their existing vehicles rather than buying an electric car.'



Women wearing protective masks in Chinatown, London

HEALTH CONCERNS

Coronavirus puts Geneva Motor Show in jeopardy

Geneva Motor Show organisers have said the event will still be going ahead as planned, despite the deepening coronavirus crisis cancelling a technology show in Europe.

The Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona, which attracts 100,000 visitors from across the world, was cancelled on February 12 – the first time the show had been called off in 33 years. Organisers blamed the coronavirus outbreak.

Now, organisers of arguably Europe's most important car show – which attracts 600,000 visitors – have admitted they are carefully monitoring the coronavirus outbreak on an 'hour-by-hour' basis.

A spokesperson for the Geneva Motor Show – set to be held between March 5 and 15 at the Palexpo – told the PA news agency that at the time of going to press the show 'was still going ahead', but she admitted they



by **JAMES BAGGOTT**
@CarDealerEd

were cautiously watching the situation evolve. Laura Manon, spokesperson for the show, said: 'The news that the Mobile World Congress has been cancelled has just reached us and is a shock. We are carefully looking at the situation and taking advice from health organisations here in Geneva and the World Health Organisation with regards to our show. As it stands, the motor show is still going ahead.'

'Last year, less than one per cent of visitors came from outside Europe, but we are aware the coronavirus situation is changing by the hour.'

The Geneva Motor Show published a statement on its website which said organisers had put in place a sanitary action plan that included increased cleaning and disinfection.

Staff were also being given training

on personal preventative measures and new signs were being installed at the show to remind attendees about hygiene recommendations.

The statement said: 'The current situation in Switzerland is rather reassuring – none of the samples tested so far has been positive for the novel coronavirus.'

The MWC started to look in doubt when big-name attendees including Ericsson, Sony, Nokia, Vodafone and Deutsche Telekom pulled out.

Geneva Motor Show organisers said that so far no exhibitors had pulled out, but that the situation could change at any time. 'We advise visitors and exhibitors to monitor our website carefully for any updates on the show's status,' added Manon.

A spokesperson for the World Health Organisation said it was down to national authorities to 'make decisions about these types of issues based on their own assessed risks'.

The spokesperson added: 'There is no evidence at present to suggest that there is community spread outside China, so the WHO is not requesting that large gatherings are cancelled.'

'We are carefully looking at the situation and taking advice from health organisations.'

Geneva Motor Show spokesperson Laura Manon

An 'inevitable consequence' as car plants affected

EUROPEAN car production could face delays as coronavirus shutdowns in China affect parts supply to factories.

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) has announced that it has 'identified potential risk within the next two to four weeks at one manufacturing facility in Europe', but there are

concerns that this could affect other manufacturers across the continent and in the UK, too.

David Leggett, automotive editor at analytics firm GlobalData, has warned that the next few weeks are 'critical' for car manufacturers because 'the typical car is made up of 20,000 parts,

and there is an elongated supply chain of parts and sub-assemblies put together in complex sequence to create the finished vehicle'. He added: 'We have been waiting for this and it is an inevitable consequence of the deepening and spreading economic impact of the coronavirus.'

ACQUISITION

Haynes is sold to French rival for £114.5m

Haynes Repair Manual

Based on a complete teardown and rebuild



HAYNES Publishing has been snapped up by a French rival for more than £114m, the company has confirmed.

Infopro Digital has agreed to pay £114.5m for the business, and although the deal, which will see shareholders paid 700p for every share they own, still needs to be voted through, it has been recommended by both boards.

News of the sale sent Haynes' share price soaring by 58 per cent to 682.5p.

Haynes was best known for producing car manuals in the days before the internet, and put itself up for sale last November.

At the time, bosses said they had spent the past five years re-establishing the company as an online business and believed now was the right time to leave the stock market and be run privately.

John Haynes, who created the series of maintenance guides, died last February at the age of 80, following a short illness.

JAGUAR

Production of I-Pace disrupted

JAGUAR has temporarily halted I-Pace production as a result of battery supply issues. In a statement, the British firm said: 'Jaguar Land Rover has adjusted production schedules of the Jaguar I-Pace in Graz due to temporary supplier scheduling issues. We are working with the supplier to resolve this.'

MERGER

Three dealerships close in reorganisation at Sandiccliffe

The Sandiccliffe group closed three of its dealerships in February as it looks to focus on its large-scale operations in the East Midlands.

Sandiccliffe's Ford dealerships in Hucknall and Melton Mowbray shut their doors for the last time on February 12, with the business concentrating on its state-of-the-art FordStore showrooms in Nottingham and Leicester as well as its larger Ford site in Loughborough.

Sandiccliffe Kia Melton Mowbray also closed but the company's Kia showrooms in Nottingham and Leicester will still be operational.

Around 50 members of staff have been affected by the closures – but Sandiccliffe managing director Paul Woodhouse told the Melton Times that more than 95 per cent

of them had accepted alternative employment within the group.

Explaining the rationale behind the reorganisation, a statement on the company's website tells customers: 'At our larger sites, we are able to offer you longer opening hours, quicker MOT and servicing facilities as well as a more personalised and exciting customer journey. The move allows customers to choose between three major Ford locations across the East Midlands, all of which offer first-class FordStore experiences from the very best in the industry.'

Paul Woodhouse, managing director of Sandiccliffe, says on the site: 'FordStores are the future of

Ford Motor Company and we are delighted to have been chosen as a leading partner of Ford of Europe to continue the distribution and servicing of the historic brand.

'We have invested heavily in our state-of-the-art FordStores in Nottingham and Leicester as well as making significant improvements to Sandiccliffe Loughborough. In short, this merger enables us to provide our customers with better-quality facilities and a service they deserve.'



RESULTS

Group reports rise in profit and turnover

THE Chester-based Mitchell Group has published its financial results for 2019, revealing that turnover rose from £49.4m to £53.7m. As well as enjoying the nine per cent rise in turnover, Mitchell Group also saw its gross profit increase by 10 per cent and net profit by 14 per cent.

After 10 per cent of the net profit had been given to charitable causes, the company posted a profit of £2.44m with a 4.6 per cent return on sales – up from 4.4 per cent in 2018 and against an industry average of 0.9 per cent. The motor retail company recently marked its 30th birthday and represents Lexus, Skoda and Mazda across the Wirral, Cheshire and north Wales – having done so for 20, 19 and 15 years respectively.

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News from around

What's been hitting the headlines on the home front? Here's a

CHESTER

New FordStore open after £3m investment



PENDRAGON has opened a new FordStore in Chester following a £3m investment.

The state-of-the-art facility sees Ford Chester, part of the Evans Halshaw branch of the company, become one of the Blue Oval's flagship dealers in the area.

A year-long construction period led to the creation of the dealership in Sovereign Way. The business was previously located in Stadium Way, roughly a mile to the east. As well as having space to display new Ford models, it has room for 200 used vehicles and a 17-bay workshop.



WORCESTER

Swifts set to soar, thanks to showroom's support

A DEALERSHIP in Worcester has pledged ongoing support for a local junior football team.

Bristol Street Motors Ford, in Cosgrove Close, has supported Stourport Swifts' U13 team with new football kits, training tops and jackets. The dealership has also become the official main club sponsor for all social media activity, meaning that the club's

tweets, Facebook and Instagram posts all carry the company's branding.

General manager Andy Kite, pictured with some of the Swifts, said: 'As a dealership, community support is very important to us and Stourport Swifts are a great fit. The team have a fantastic history in the local area, and we are proud to be supporting them.'

CARDIFF

Garage turned car into a Rover Range!



A RANGE Rover owner was left 'embarrassed' after a garage mixed up the lettering on the boot after repairing her car – meaning the words read 'ROVER RANGE'.

Aimeejo Madge took her Range Rover Evoque, similar to the one in our picture, to 1st Choice Accident Repair Centre in Cardiff after it was rear-ended, reported The Sun.

The work took several weeks, after which it was returned to Aimeejo, who told the paper: 'It must have been the only Rover Range in the world.' 1st Choice Accident Repair Centre declined to comment.

BELFAST

First for new branding after £2m makeover



AGNEW Volkswagen Belfast has become the first retailer in the UK to display the manufacturer's refreshed logo and feature its new branding.

The site has reopened after a £2m refurbishment, which started around the time that VW's new logo and identity were unveiled.

With new sales and service facilities, it is furnished with fixtures and fittings that showcase the brand's new 'Vibrant Power' ethos.

The graphics inside the showroom have a more colourful palette and heavier focus on people, alongside Volkswagen's range of cars.

Best-selling new cars in January

January 2020

Source: SMMT

Ford Fiesta	6,087
Ford Focus	5,287
Nissan Qashqai	4,608
Vauxhall Corsa	4,373
Volkswagen Golf	4,027
Mercedes-Benz A-Class	3,214
Kia Sportage	2,457
BMW 3 Series	2,422
Volkswagen Polo	2,336
Vauxhall Grandland X	2,261



WEST MIDLANDS

Driver crashes into barriers at dealership



A DRIVER crashed into the barriers outside a BMW dealership in the West Midlands after losing control of their vehicle.

The dark-coloured BMW 3-Series left the road and careered across the pavement outside Sytner Oldbury BMW in Wolverhampton Road. The back end of the vehicle was suspended in the air after the crash.

Police said the vehicle wasn't insured and some cannabis was found at the scene. The driver was arrested.

Picture: West Midlands Police

the UK

round-up of stories



First drive: **Hyundai i10**

The all-new kid on the city car block for those wanting fewer frills

Forecourt, p44

LEICESTER

Soup-er donation will help health project



BRISTOL Street Motors' Citroen dealership in Leicester has given a donation to a soup kitchen's health education project.

The organisation was chosen after it applied to the Social Responsibility Awards – an initiative backed by Vertu Motors, which operates the franchise.

Dealership general manager Simon Blackwell, pictured, said: 'We are delighted to support the soup kitchen's health education programme and help people to start on a new journey.'

HULL

Listers brings 'iconic' Porsche back to city



A MULTI-MILLION-POUND Porsche Centre has been opened by the Listers group in Hull.

Located on the Bridgehead South Business Park, it marks the return of the luxury car marque to the city.

Director Richard Kitteridge said: 'Porsche is an iconic brand and we are delighted to be able to welcome guests into our new centre to browse models such as the 911, Macan and Cayenne.'

The new dealership boasts a 22-car showroom, a state-of-the-art workshop, and has 26 employees.

HENDON

Suzuki deal means double the appeal



CROWN Motors has joined Suzuki's UK network and become a dual-brand franchise in the process.

The six-car, 2,300 sq ft Crown Suzuki showroom in Hendon joins Crown's Honda dealership at the premises as part of a decision by the retailer to refurbish and transform the 10-year-old site into a dual-franchise business. Lee Monahan and Tim Dibbs, joint managing directors of Crown Suzuki, said: 'We look forward to a long-term relationship with Suzuki and to building their footprint in London.'

'Opening a new van factory under the spectre of a no-deal Brexit and torrid times for the supply chain appeared to make little sense.'

Craig Cheetham, p65

YORK

Plaque marks grand relocation for team



A NEW Volvo dealership operated by Ray Chapman Motors has officially opened in York.

The business has relocated to Great North Way in a multi-million-pound move from its previous home in White Rose Close.

Among the special guests at the ceremony was Volvo Car UK managing director Kristian Elfvefors, who presented a plaque to staff to mark the occasion.

Dealer principal Duncan Chapman told The Press the design of the premises was aimed at making customers feel 'relaxed and at ease'.



A delighted Ray receives the keys to his car from Motorpoint Castleford customer services manager Rachel Bowden at Xscape Yorkshire

CASTLEFORD

Back of the net! Peugeot prize makes Ray's day

A FORMER professional footballer-turned-teacher is over the moon after winning a car from Motorpoint Castleford and Xscape Yorkshire in a charity raffle.

Ex-goalkeeper Ray Francis, who played for Leeds, collected the keys to the Peugeot 108 from the leisure complex in Castleford after entering the competition at the venue just before Christmas.

Francis, who lives in Camberley and now teaches

at a sixth-form college, was visiting Xscape Yorkshire with eight-year-old daughter Isabella when he bought some raffle tickets in aid of the Yorkshire Children's Trust.

Chris Goodison, general manager of Motorpoint Castleford, said: 'We couldn't be happier for Ray and we hope he enjoys driving his car from Motorpoint. It's a real pleasure to raise funds for the trust.'

FUNDRAISER

Formula One billionaire buys £182m stake in Aston Martin

Luxury sports car-maker Aston Martin Lagonda has sold a £182m stake to a consortium led by Canadian billionaire Lawrence Stroll as part of a major fundraiser to protect the future of the British manufacturer.

The company, known for making James Bond's cars of choice, said it would raise a total of £500m through the group's investment as well as a £318m rights issue supported by major shareholders.

Rumours about Stroll's interest in the company started circulating in December, as reported by Car Dealer.

Aston Martin, which issued a profit warning in January, said the consortium – led by the owner of Formula

One team Racing Point – had bought a 16.7 per cent stake in the business. However, the consortium has the option to increase its holding to 20 per cent.

Chairwoman Penny Hughes said Aston Martin's 'difficult trading performance in 2019' put severe pressure on its liquidity and left the company with 'no alternative' but to secure significant investment.

'Without this, the balance sheet is not robust enough to support the operations of the group,' she said.

'Notwithstanding recent weak

trading, the strength of the Aston Martin brand and our expanding portfolio of cars has allowed us to attract a strong new partner in Mr Stroll to support the turnaround of the business.'

The deal will, however, also reportedly see job cuts. Meanwhile, the Valkyrie hypercar will have its launch this year, with the mid-engined sports car Valhalla to follow.

However, the Electric Rapid E project has been suspended, according to Autocar, and the Lagonda electric SUV launch, which was originally set to take place next year, has been postponed for at least five years. The car-maker said 2019 was a 'disappointing year' after trading fell below expectations.



Aston Martin Valkyrie

LATEST FIGURES

Continuing decline in UK car production

THE number of cars built in the UK fell to its lowest level in almost a decade in 2019 – with a further decline expected this year. Production was down by 14.2 per cent to 1,303,135 vehicles – the lowest since 2010, when 1.27m were made – amid structural changes in the industry, weak confidence in the UK, slower demand overseas and Brexit-related issues.

The SMMT said factory shutdowns last spring and autumn, timed to deal with expected disruption from leaving the EU, had a 'marked effect'.

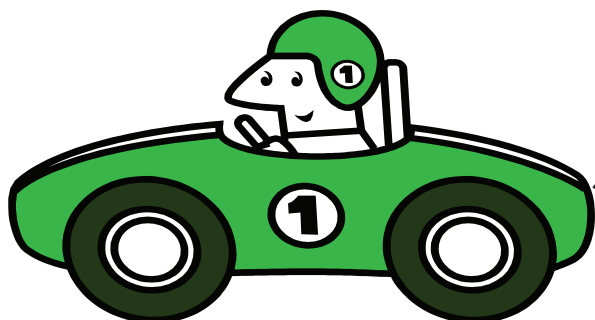
Production for UK car buyers fell by 12.3 per cent to 247,138 and by 14.7 per cent to 1,055,997 for export, although overseas orders accounted for more than four out of five cars built in the UK. Shipments to EU countries fell by 11.1 per cent last year.

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ARRANGEMENT

SsangYong York partners with racecourse



SSANGYONG York has partnered with Wetherby Racecourse.

The newly opened dealership will supply it with vehicles to transport the race starters at this year's meetings, as well as provide the support vehicles for the doctors who give medical care during race meetings.

Paul Sanderson, managing director of SsangYong York, said: 'Brand awareness is at the heart of horse racing's appeal, where races command TV coverage and there are a number of race days featured on free-to-air coverage in Britain.

'We want SsangYong to be at the heart of Wetherby races. It's about building a relationship between two businesses.'

Jonjo Sanderson, chief executive and clerk of the course, said: 'We are thrilled to be partnering with SsangYong York.'

TECHNOLOGY

A new Arrival that has got the whole industry talking

Ryan Hirons reports on a landmark day in the creation of a sustainable future.

The start-up British electric van manufacturer Arrival has secured a massive deal with UPS, the global parcel delivery company. UPS has placed an order for a whopping 10,000 Arrival vehicles and plans to roll them out across the UK, mainland Europe and North America by 2024.

The exact value of the deal hasn't been stated, although Arrival says it is 'worth hundreds of millions of euros each year', while UPS also has the option to take another 10,000 vehicles over the next four years.

The American delivery firm's venture capital arm has made an unspecified investment in Arrival as well. Carlton Rose, president of UPS global fleet maintenance and engineering, said: 'Our investment and partnership with Arrival is directly aligned with UPS's transformation

strategy, led by the deployment of cutting-edge technologies.

'These vehicles will be among the world's most advanced package delivery vehicles, redefining industry standards for electric, connected and intelligent vehicle solutions.'

Avinash Rugoobur, chief strategy officer at Arrival, said: 'Arrival has created Generation 2 electric vehicles that are better in price, design and experience than traditional fossil fuel vehicles and existing EVs.

'This gives fleet managers a highly compelling commercial and environmental reason to switch to electric and will accelerate the adoption of electric technology globally.

'At Arrival, we believe this is among the most impactful areas to start the transition to a fully electric future, and our partnership with UPS will drive

us both towards our shared vision of cleaner mobility.'

Craig Cheetham, Car Dealer's resident LCV correspondent, said: 'Arrival is a company I've had my eye on for some time and this is an astonishing development for them.

'When the company first revealed its funky-looking light truck two years ago, it was making a lot of noise about the vehicle's potential in the zero-emission delivery market and was waiting for a major fleet player to come forward to kickstart the project.

'UPS is a company that has been going electric over the past three years and is an obvious partner for Arrival. This is great news for British manufacturing, design and engineering and will surely put Arrival on the map.'

An electrifying bolt from the blue – Sliding Doors, p65

NEW AMBASSADOR

Hendy Group recruits Tiff

FORMER Grand Prix driver and TV presenter Tiff Needell has joined forces with Hendy to be the ambassador for its performance and sports car division.

Needell – who has appeared on a wide range of TV shows, including Top Gear, which he co-presented between 1987 and 2001, and who is now a key presenter for Lovecars on YouTube – will be involved in a variety of activities for Hendy Performance.

Everything you need to know about the latest electric vehicle start-up

Who or what is Arrival? The technology company feels slightly shrouded in mystery. It's blasted on to the scene and has acquired key investments from companies such as Hyundai, Kia and, most recently, UPS, as we report above. But why are companies so interested in the British tech business, and what does it actually produce?

What is Arrival?

Arrival is a British start-up technology company. It's creating all-electric vehicles which, it says, 'deliver an experience like no other, but are priced the same as fossil fuel equivalents'. Founded in 2015, it employs more than 800 people globally and develops its own software, materials and platforms.

Where is it based?

Arrival has its headquarters in London, with another research and development facility in Banbury, Oxfordshire. However, this British-based firm doesn't just have offices in the UK, it also has locations in North America, Germany, Israel, Russia and the Netherlands.

Is it the next Tesla?

It's hard to predict the success of a start-up but Arrival is certainly on a rising trajectory. It was number 19 in LinkedIn's Top Start-Ups of 2019 list, which identified the best 25 new UK companies to work for.

Will it ever make cars?

For now, Arrival's focus is on the production of lightweight commercial

vehicles, which the company refers to as Generation 2 electric vehicles. There's no indication that the company is looking into the creation of consumer-focused vehicles.

Where does it make its vehicles?

Arrival vehicles are produced in low-footprint 'microfactories' which, the company says, create vehicles on demand that can then be delivered within three months. The firm says that these smaller-sized



'Arrival is a company I've had my eye on for some time and this is an astonishing development for them.'

Craig Cheetham



manufacturing sites are placed where they can help local communities with employment.

Who is working with Arrival so far?

Several companies have tried out its vans, while many others have fully invested in the firm. The Royal Mail tested nine of Arrival's vehicles in 2018, while UPS sampled the firm's vans even further back in 2016 – and it was obviously impressed, resulting as it did in the aforementioned announcement of 10,000 Generation 2 electric vehicle orders.

Blackberry also revealed in October 2019 that it would be supplying the operating systems for Arrival's vans, which will give the company a basis for Advanced Driver Assistance Systems within

the vehicles themselves. On January 16, Hyundai and Kia announced a €100m (circa £83m) investment in Arrival, which will see the firms given access to Arrival's 'flexible skateboard platforms'. In return, Arrival will be able to access their global presence.

Albert Biermann, president and head of the research and development division at Hyundai Motor Group, said: 'The eco-friendly vehicle market in Europe is expected to grow rapidly due to the reinforcement of environmental regulations.'

'Through the joint development of commercial electric vehicles with Arrival, we will be able to gain a competitive advantage and progressively establish our leadership in the global eco-friendly vehicle market.'

Who runs Arrival?

Arrival was founded in 2015 by Denis Sverdllov, a former general director of Russian mobile supplier and mobile service provider Yota Group. Arrival also hired Mike Ableson as CEO of its North America division. Ableson was previously General Motors' vice-president of EV and global strategy.

What have others said about Arrival?

Youngcho Chi, president and chief innovation officer at Hyundai Motor Group, said: 'This investment is part of an open innovation strategy pursued by Hyundai and Kia.'

'We will accelerate investment and co-operation with companies with advanced technology such as Arrival, to respond to the rapidly changing eco-friendly vehicle market.'

JCT600

£5.7m deal for new Ferrari showroom



JCT600 has awarded the multi-million-pound building contract for a new Ferrari showroom to MCS Group.

Under the £5.7m deal, it will not only construct the standalone, two-storey retail centre on City West Business Park in Leeds but it will also build a specialist vehicle preparation and repair centre next to it.

The showroom will be only the third in the UK to sport Ferrari's latest corporate identity, creating an art gallery-style experience with a focus on the use of multimedia and improved customer interaction.

The project is a £9m capital investment by JCT600 – the automotive retailer's highest-value project – and will create a number of new jobs. Work is due to start on it soon, with completion in the summer.

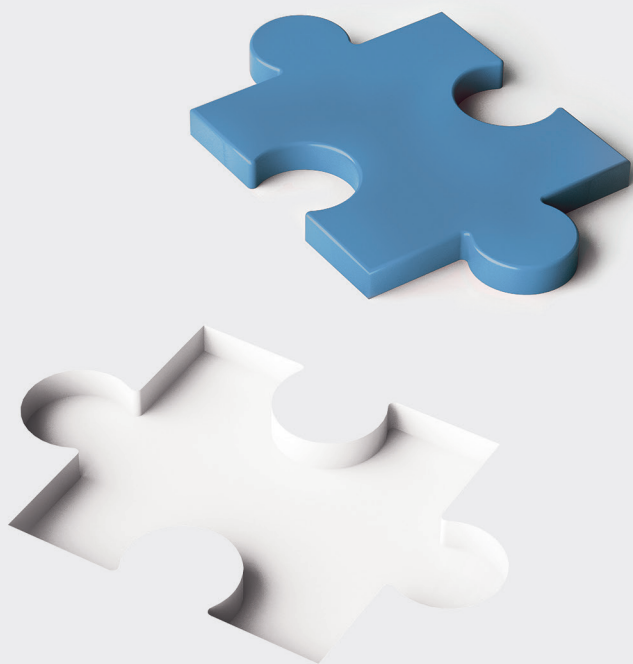
Our picture shows how it will look when finished.

PORSCHE

Adam is new MD of retail group

ADAM Flint has been appointed managing director of Porsche Retail Group. He took up his new role on February 1, following the retirement of Ade Smith.

Flint joined Porsche Retail Group in 2015 as centre principal at Porsche Centre Guildford. Formed in 2003, Porsche Retail Group is a wholly owned subsidiary of Porsche Cars Great Britain. Its five dealerships operate in locations such as central London, Hatfield and Reading.



Without ecommerce, your website isn't complete.

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LIVE STAGE

CDX 2020 will be packed with guests and great discussions

Car Dealer Magazine's Live Stage will be packed with big names and big discussions at this year's CDX.

The 2020 event is set to bring a host of great business minds together from car manufacturers, franchised and independent dealers to talk about the industry's challenges.

The packed timetable at CDX, on Tuesday, April 28 at Farnborough International, will include a variety of sessions, including Q&A panels and keynote speeches from our headline sponsors.

Also on the Live Stage – hosted by Car Dealer Magazine founder James Baggott – will be a special Women In The Motor Industry (WITMI) discussion session.

And later in the day we'll announce the winners of our Ewards, which will celebrate the

very best in digital dealerships and manufacturers with a host of awards handed out on the stage.

Tickets to CDX are free of charge for bona fide members of the motor trade and can be reserved online by going to cardealerexpo.co.uk

Baggott said: 'I am incredibly excited about this year's Live Stage programme. We've lined up some great guests we'll be announcing in the next few weeks, who will be giving their forthright opinions and advice on the stage.'

'Every year, the Live Stage attracts a huge audience as we pack it with varied and interesting content, and I love chatting to all our guests and hearing their take on the motor industry.'

The full line-up and detailed information about each session will be announced over the coming weeks, but so far the day looks like this...

The Car Dealer Live Stage line-up

- **Franchised Dealer Panel**
- **Independent Dealer Panel**
- **Manufacturer Panel**
- **Keynote speeches from headline sponsors including Codeweavers and eBay Motors Group**
- **Women In The Motor Industry Panel**
- **The Consumer's View, with guests from Auto Express and Autocar**
- **Ewards, the digital dealership awards**

Guests already confirmed to appear at the event include:



Daksh Gupta
CEO, Marshall Motor Holdings plc



Mike Allen
Motor industry analyst, Zeus Capital



Neil McCue
Group board director, Snobs Motor Group



Neil Smith
Operations director, Imperial Cars



Jamie Caple
Owner, Car Quay



Vicky Hart
Head of marketing, Hendy Group



Jaymie Stanbrook
Fleet manager, Rivvale Cars Group



Hayley Pells
Director, Avia Sports Cars



Jim Holder
Editorial director, Autocar / What Car?

If you'd like to be involved in one of the panels, please contact the editorial team at Car Dealer Magazine via the usual methods.



Headline partners



Codeweavers





WORKSHOPS

Range of topics will educate and inform – and it's all free!



Standing room only at last year's workshops

With just over two months to go until CDX, we can now reveal details of the exclusive programme of workshops we are planning for the big day on April 28.

Those who have been to our huge automotive expo before will know that our workshops are about educating and informing attendees and are free to attend for everyone.

Entry is on a first-come, first-served basis and they'll be hosted in the CDX expo hall at Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre.

Dave Brown, production editor of Car Dealer, said: 'We have a fantastic selection of sessions for delegates this year and they're sure to prove extremely popular. Many workshops in 2019 were standing room only and I'm sure it will be the same this year.'

'We have chosen a great range of topics to educate and inform our dealer delegates and they will be delivered by experts in their respective fields.'

'Many workshops in 2019 were standing room only and I'm sure it will be the same this year.'

Dave Brown

Line-up

1. The Future Of Retail:

The retail landscape is changing. Are buyers really ready to buy their next car online – and will that be different for new and used cars? Our experts in this workshop will explain what the market looks like now and how that could all change in the next few years.

2. The Future Of Mobility:

Fewer young drivers want to own a car than ever, with many people predicted to opt for leasing schemes and car clubs. How will the dealership of the future fit into that model and will there still be a business to be had?

3. The Electric Revolution:

More and more electric cars are hitting showrooms every month. But what's the best way to sell electric cars? What are the pitfalls? Our experts will explain how dealers of all shapes and sizes can get ready.

4. Finance – The Changes Coming Soon:

Dealers have great success selling finance, but will that be the case in the coming years? What are the next big things in finance and are there changes to regulations coming soon that dealers need to know about? Our experts will explain all.

5. Are Aftersales The Key To Future Profits?

Some dealers still think that once a car is sold and out of the door, their job is done. However, good dealers realise that's where the chance for future profits really begins. Our experts in this workshop explain the tricks to making a success of aftersales.

6. A Post-Brexit Future:

The first Brexit hurdle may now have been completed, but what will 2020 hold for the whole process? How will things pan out for the automotive industry in general and car dealers specifically? Our experts will explain what's happening, the potential pitfalls and, importantly, the opportunities that may arise.

7. Social Media Masterclass:

Great social media can catapult a dealership from being completely unknown to being

an online celebrity. But is the effort really worth it and can it lead to more sales? Our experts explain which platforms you should be investing time and effort in.

8. Stocking Your Dealership For Future Growth:

With diesel demonised and hybrids and electric cars rapidly gaining popularity, the demands on a dealership's stock have never been greater. So how should a dealership search for the right stock for their site in 2020? Our experts in this masterclass will guide you through an ever-changing world.

9. Preparing Your Website For 2025:

In five years' time, will all car sales take place online? What exactly will customers want from your website? And where should you be investing most of your time, effort and money? Our experts will explain how the online landscape is changing and where you should be spending your money.

10. Getting Ready For E-commerce:

The online car sales revolution is coming. Used car dealer Cazoo has launched a specific online-only sales site, while more and more dealers are investing in web-based sales solutions. Our experts explain how you can get e-commerce on your site and prepare for the future of online car sales.

11. The Sales Executive Of The Future:

Sales roles are changing, and changing fast. With more and more customers researching their purchases online first, most buyers simply want help with an order when they get to the showroom. How do dealers prepare for this? Our recruitment experts will reveal all.

12. Cutting Costs Without Cutting Back:

In these tough times, looking at every cost line and justifying whether it is really needed is vitally important. But where do you start? Are there areas in most car dealerships that get traditionally fat? Can you get smarter with advertising? Our experts will pass on their top tips to help you set up your cost base for future growth.



To register for your ticket to CDX 2020, visit the website
cardealerexpo.co.uk

EDWARDS

Do you dazzle at digital? Then these are the awards for you!

Entries are flooding in from dealerships looking to celebrate their digital assets at this year's Car Dealer Magazine Ewards event.

The Car Dealer Ewards – set to be held at CDX and launched online in January – will highlight the very best dealers, both franchised and independent, as well as leading car manufacturers who excel in the digital space.

Hosted by Car Dealer Magazine founder James Baggott on the Live Stage at CDX, the Ewards will be handed out live at 3.30pm.

Tickets for CDX are completely free of charge for bona fide members of the motor trade and can be reserved online at cardealerexpo.co.uk

The closing date for Ewards entries is March 31, after which point the judging process will begin. The judges, made up of the Car Dealer Magazine editorial team and experts from the industry, will assess the entries and then shortlisted companies will be invited to attend CDX.

It's advisable that all those companies that nominate themselves for an Eward reserve tickets for their team immediately.

Baggott said: 'Already we've seen some amazing entries coming in from dealers and manufacturers who are excelling online.'

'In these changing times, when dealers are selling cars in a variety of channels and increasingly online, now is absolutely the right time to be celebrating the very best digital dealers.'

'Already we've seen some amazing entries coming in from dealers and manufacturers who are excelling online.'

James Baggott



About the Ewards 2020

How can I enter?

Dealers can now nominate themselves or others for an award in each category and these, along with recommendations from the judges, will go forward to the next stage.

Car Dealer's editorial team will work with our panel of judges to pick the very best in each category. The deadline for entries is March 31.

Those judges, made up of sponsors of our Ewards and the Car Dealer editorial team, will compile a shortlist of five finalists in each category – all of whom will be invited to CDX.

Our head judge, Car Dealer founder James Baggott, will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.

When will the winners be revealed?

The Ewards winners will be announced on the Car Dealer Live Stage in the afternoon of CDX, the UK's leading motor trade expo. This year the event is being held on April 28 at Farnborough International.

The five shortlisted contenders in each Eward category will be invited to attend CDX, where the winner and two highly commended firms in each category will be announced. Ewards will be handed out at the event and the full results published in Car Dealer Magazine.



Headline partners



Codeweavers





What are the Ewards categories?

Dealer Websites

- **Franchised Dealer Website of the Year**
- **Independent Dealer Website of the Year**
- **Car Supermarket Website of the Year**
- **Manufacturer Website of the Year**

Our Website of the Year winners will be judged not only on their usability and looks, but their innovation, engagement and how they serve customers. Each judge will have a guide on what to look for, but will use their own experience and knowledge to hand out their points.

Social Media Awards

- **Best Use of Twitter**
- **Best Use of Facebook**
- **Best Use of Instagram**

For the Social Media Awards, we'll be looking at those dealers who use the aforementioned social media platforms, and the judges will choose between the businesses who they feel use each platform most successfully. Engagement, variety and innovation will be celebrated.

Other Awards

- **Online Marketing Campaign of the Year**

Whether it's an advert on social media, a YouTube campaign or another digital marketing masterpiece, this award will be handed to a dealer or manufacturer who has excelled with an online marketing campaign.

- **Best Use of Video**

Dealers and manufacturers are experimenting with all sorts of video usage, from showing off their stock, bespoke videos for potential customers or innovative advertising. This Eward will look at them all and honour the very best.

And the BIG one... Digital Dealer of the Year

Our overall winning digital dealer will be the operator who has all digital bases covered. They'll excel across the digital field and we'll be celebrating their success with this overall winner's Eward. It will really be something to shout about!

Q&A

The logistical lowdown on CDX 2020

Where is CDX 2020 being held?

After last year's success as a venue, Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre in Hampshire will be playing host once again.

How do I get there?

It's just off the A325, and accessible from the M3 (junction 4) and A31. Head for Gate F, using the postcode GU14 6TQ for your sat nav, then follow signs for the parking, which is free and plentiful – there's space for up to 3,500 vehicles. Once you've parked, signs will direct you to the CDX welcome desk.

The centre is also within easy reach of four railway stations, namely Farnborough Main, Farnborough North, North Camp and Aldershot.

Heathrow Airport is a 30-minute drive away, or you can catch the shuttle bus to Woking railway station, where the train journey to Farnborough Main takes 10 minutes – see Heathrow's website at heathrow.com for further details.

Driving from Gatwick Airport takes 50 minutes, or you can catch the train from Gatwick to North Camp, which takes 50 minutes, followed by a 10-minute taxi ride to the centre.

There's also the privately run Farnborough Airport, from where you can be transferred directly to the venue.

How do I get a ticket?

Bona fide members of the motor trade can obtain FREE tickets to the event. Simply go to cardealerexpo.co.uk to complete the straightforward registration process and obtain your ticket. Print it out, bring it with you and it'll be popped into a lanyard at the CDX welcome desk.

What if I forget my ticket?

Not a problem. If you've completed the

registration process, we can print it out for you and admit you to the exhibition hall. You can turn up without having registered beforehand, too, but gaining access to CDX will take a little longer while we complete the formalities for you. Do it in advance, though, and gaining entry will be a breeze.

What time does it all get under way?

The expo will be open from 8.30am. With dozens of trade stands, plus fantastic extra features such as the Business Hub, it's best to arrive early to take it all in.

The action on the famous Car Dealer Live Stage kicks off at 9am. That's also when our packed programme of workshops gets under way. For full details of the

day's events, and to plan which sessions you'd like to attend, head to the CDX website at cardealerexpo.co.uk – this will be continually updated with details as we get nearer to the big day.

What if I feel peckish?

Two large areas in the expo hall will be serving delicious food plus hot and cold drinks throughout the day. You won't be able to miss them – the bigger one is slap bang in the middle of the expo hall, with the smaller one to the left of the Live Stage – so you won't go hungry or thirsty.

How about internet access?

There'll be free wifi throughout the expo hall, so you can go online as and when you need to.

How else can I find out what's going on?

Every visitor to CDX will get a complimentary show guide, which will also be available as a download ahead of the event. Our fantastic app will also be back to help you plan your day and locate specific suppliers – you'll be able to get hold of it via the App Store or Google Play. [CD]



To register for your ticket to CDX 2020, visit the website
cardealerexpo.co.uk

APPOINTMENTS

New team at the top as calm returns to Lookers

Mark Raban has been appointed as the new chief executive of Lookers with Cameron Wade joining him as chief operating officer and director. Both take up their positions with immediate effect.

Raban joined the board in July 2019 as chief financial officer and has nearly 30 years of multi-channel retailing experience. Before coming to the group, he was chief financial officer at Marshall Motor Holdings, and his previous experience also includes being finance director of Inchcape Retail and Selfridges Retail.

Wade joined Lookers in December 2016 as franchise director of the Audi division. His previous roles include commercial director and managing director at Peter Vardy.

Phil White and Richard Walker will remain in their interim executive roles until March 31, when they will revert to their previous positions of chairman and senior independent director respectively.

White said: 'I am delighted to be announcing Mark's and Cameron's new leadership roles. They both have significant sector experience which is well suited to both the group's immediate priorities and longer-term strategic objectives.'

Raban said: 'Lookers is a great business which is well positioned to take advantage of the many emerging opportunities across the sector.'

'It's a privilege to have the opportunity to lead the group,



New leadership roles: Cameron Wade, left, and Mark Raban

working closely with our brand partners and supported by a talented team. I would like to thank Phil and Richard for their considerable support during the recent transition period.'

In its announcement to the London Stock Exchange, Lookers said the search for a new chief financial officer would start soon.

The appointments aim to restore some calm to the beleaguered motor retailer and aftersales service group, which sent previous CEO Andy Bruce and chief operating officer Nigel McMinn packing last November as it gave a second profit warning to the City and announced widespread dealership closures. It is also being investigated by the Financial Conduct Authority over the way it sold car loans between January 1, 2016 and June 13, 2019.

Lookers' announcement about the executive appointments coincided

with the release of its year-end trading update, in which it said the group's like-for-like unit sales of new vehicles in the final quarter fell by 6.6 per cent, compared with a UK market decline in new vehicle registrations of 1.6 per cent. Meanwhile, like-for-like unit sales of used cars increased by 3.8 per cent. It also said that of the 15 dealership sites identified for closure, four had been sold, making £8.3m. The rest and other legacy surplus properties will be sold during 2020.

Lookers added that it was continuing to co-operate with the ongoing FCA inquiry.

Raban, whose appointment is subject to standard regulatory approvals, said in the statement: '2019 was a challenging year for Lookers.'

'The declining new car market, political and economic uncertainty and increased operating costs were all factors in the group's decline in profitability. Over recent weeks, the board has instigated a number of clear and decisive actions to stabilise and improve operational and financial performance. The board remains confident about the long-term prospects for the group.'

MARSHALL

£6m refurb is completed at Volvo showroom



MARSHALL Volvo Grantham is celebrating the reopening of its showroom after a £6m refurbishment.

Remaining at its original site on Spittlegate Level, Marshall Grantham's new-look signature lounge area boasts Scandinavian-designed furniture, free wifi plus Swedish cakes and coffee.

Large windows also allow customers to see all activity in the new workshops.

Marshall Grantham will be offering the new Volvo Personal Service, too, which means that technicians will liaise with the customer from the point of booking, right through to explaining the services which they themselves will have carried out.

Geoff Wicks, retailer principal, said: 'Our recent refurbishment isn't just about a change of furniture, it's designed to make our customers feel relaxed and at ease in an environment that provides flexible waiting, working and assessment areas.'

CAZOO

Big advertising campaign starts

ONLINE used car buying platform Cazoo has kicked off a multi-million-pound TV, radio and outdoor launch campaign.

Cazoo, which launched in December, says it is already delivering on its promise of better selection, value, quality and convenience for used car buyers across the UK.

'They have significant sector experience which is well suited to both the group's immediate priorities and longer-term strategic objectives.'

Phil White

Pendragon takes £700k hit selling US Chevy dealer

PENDRAGON has sold its Californian Chevrolet dealership – but for some £700,000 less than planned.

Last August, it announced that it was offloading the Puente Hills showroom for approximately £17.2m to Scott Biehl – the operator of a

privately owned dealership. However, it was revealed on February 11 that the deal had fallen through, for unspecified reasons, with the motor retailer announcing that the buyer would be JBR Automotive Inc instead – at a ticket price of £16.5m.

Pendragon – which was founded in 1989 and operates the Evans Halshaw and Stratstone brands – said the transaction was completed on February 10. It added that the sale was in line with its programme of shedding its US motor group.

94% of dealers
rate our finance industry
and business knowledge
good or very good



“Our account manager supported us with our FCA licence which has helped generate more customers due to offering finance. He also set up a funding plan so we can stock better quality cars, higher value cars, more cars. More stock equals more footfall and more sales.”

Justin Lee, Martin Lee Car Sales

The top three teams at the Harlow qualifier take to the podium



ROUND 4 - HARLOW

Bikers smash it on four wheels as our challenge nears end

Round four of the Car Dealer/Close Brothers Motor Finance Go-Karting Challenge took place at TeamSport Karting's Harlow track – and the evening had drama from the beginning...

The 10 outfits that made their way to the track for the penultimate qualifier were filled with anticipation.

It started with a 15-minute practice session, and the team comprising Colwin Motorcycles, Doble Motorcycles and Hythe Hill Motorcycles, who called themselves – perhaps to no surprise – The Bikers, set the fastest lap, proving to be as good on four wheels as they are on two. Allen Ford Essex were a close second, followed by Saxton 4x4 in a creditable third.

The practice run proved to be a clean affair with no crashes or drama – although that couldn't be said for the rest of the race.

Before the showdown began, each team huddled together for crucial tactical discussions then moved on to the grid. Essex Prestige Autos and Allen Ford had the enviable honour of being at the front row of the grid, but would they crack under the pressure?

Essex Prestige were on the ball from the start and headed into an early lead after the first lap,

with everything looking promising for a good clean race – until a six-kart pile-up brought out the yellow and red flags for the first time, allowing Allen Ford and Essex Prestige to stay out in front, where they built up a comfortable gap ahead of the rest of the pack after five laps.

The next few laps consisted of clean-cut racing, and pure concentration from all of the teams could be seen through their ever-dropping lap times. After the first 20 laps had been completed by all the competitors, early leaders Allen Ford and Essex Prestige found themselves fighting to stay in front alongside Stratford Car Sales, having built up a lap lead from the rest of the field. But would their luck run out?

By the time the race was 30 minutes down with another 60 to go, Allen Ford had pulled away with a remarkable 18-second lead over Essex Prestige. However, like lions hunting their prey, The Bikers were moving their way through the pack – setting some impressive lap times as they stealthily climbed up to third on the leaderboard.



It was bumper to bumper at one point...

Things were starting to get increasingly interesting when competitiveness really started to shine through, with almost all the teams incurring penalty stops by this point and Stratford Car Sales proving to be the worst offender, racking up three in the first 30 minutes.

By the mid-point of the 90-minute race, Allen Ford still held a comfortable two-lap lead over Essex Prestige. The Bikers were continuing their charge, though, and were only a few seconds behind second place at the halfway stage.

With 30 minutes remaining, Allen Ford looked to have things in the bag, but The Bikers had the gap down to less than one lap at this stage – could they find the pace to mount a challenge for the lead? It certainly looked possible, with The

See the next edition of the magazine for a full report with pictures of the



PHOTOGRAPHY:
ANDY ENTWISTLE & KEV DAY

The latest from our fleet.
Long-termers, p79

See pictures from
previous events at
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Dates and tracks

Qualifiers

Wednesday, October 16	Stockton-on-Tees
Thursday, October 17	Manchester
Wednesday, November 13	Reading
Thursday, January 16	Harlow
Thursday, February 6	Cardiff

Final

Wednesday, March 4	Leicester
--------------------	-----------



It's the final countdown!

BY THE time you read this, the last qualifier will have been held and the finalists will be ensuring they're match-ready for our challenge's big climax.

It all started in Stockton-on-Tees last October and – five heats plus plenty of excitement later – will culminate in what promises to be a lap-tastic spectacle in Leicester on March 4.

Here's a reminder of the drill...

What time does the racing start?

Teams need to arrive at the venue before 7pm. Free parking is available. Before the race begins at 8pm, there's a mandatory drivers' briefing plus a 15-minute practice session, which will get you used to the layout, kart and pit stops.



Bikers now posting the fastest lap of the night at 33.453 seconds – just two seconds off the all-time track record.

Roy Tolley were making good progress in third place at this point, while HP Tradings were also putting in some quality lap times in fourth – chasing down the last podium spot.

And then, with just under 20 minutes left, the once seemingly impossible happened – The Bikers grabbed the lead from the clutches of Allen Ford. Would they hold out?

Once in the lead, The Bikers never looked back and they pulled away to an astonishing two-lap gap in the last 10 minutes to clinch an impressive victory over Allen Ford, who had been very consistent throughout the night and finished in a well-deserved second place. Meanwhile, HP Tradings took the third spot on the podium in an overall enthralling contest.

Report by Emily Lunn and Kev Day

Results from Harlow

Laps completed
during the
90-minute race

The Bikers	139
Allen Ford Essex	137
HP Tradings	135
Saxton 4x4	135
Roy Tolley	135
MA Carter Motors	133
Stratford Car Sales	132
Isaac's Car Company	132
Essex Prestige Autos	131
Van Wise Group	124

Who can drive?

Every driver needs to be in the motor trade but no professional racing drivers are allowed.

You can combine with other local dealers to make up your team of four. As long as they work in the motor trade, they can be part of your team.

Will I need any gear?

No. TeamSport provides helmets, race suits and gloves, so there's no need to buy any gear.

Are there prizes?

Yes! The top team will be presented with a grand winners' cup to take home, while the second- and third-placed foursomes will be given trophies.

What's the cost?

Nothing! Thanks to Close Brothers, it's free.

Cardiff heat – the final qualifier of the challenge!



INCHCAPE

Farewell to CEO Bomhard

Inchcape chief executive Stefan Bomhard has resigned to take up the same role with international cigarette company Imperial Brands.

The announcement marks a big step up in responsibility for Bomhard, who has headed the global luxury multi-brand automotive distributor and retailer since 2015. London-listed Inchcape has a market value of £2.6bn, compared with Bristol-based Imperial's £18.4bn.

But it also comes with a healthy pay rise for Bomhard, who made a £739,000 base salary at Inchcape. His new wage packet will be almost £1.3m, with a potential bonus of up to 200 per cent of his salary, plus incentive pay.

He said: 'It has been a privilege to lead such a high-quality organisation in an exciting and dynamic sector. I would like to thank the strong



team that I have had the pleasure of working with.

'I know Inchcape will continue to go from strength to strength. I leave Inchcape with gratitude to our

partners and shareholders who have supported Inchcape through my time with the business.'

Nigel Stein, group chairman, said: 'I would like to thank Stefan for his transformational leadership of this company. The Ignite strategy he implemented has substantially refocused and grown the group's activities towards a more profitable distribution-weighted business model. In order to achieve these significant developments and enhance Inchcape's organisational strength, Stefan has developed and empowered a strong management team that will continue to drive the business forward following his departure. We are grateful to Stefan and wish him continued success.'

Bomhard's departure date will be announced in due course.

The group will announce its full-year results on February 27.

JAGUAR LAND ROVER

Boss Ralf Speth to step down soon

JAGUAR Land Rover boss Ralf Speth is to step down in September.

The 64-year-old will leave his role at the end of his current contract after 10 years in charge to become a non-executive vice-chairman of the business.

He was appointed chief executive when Tata bought the business from Ford and said: 'I feel very honoured to have worked with so many dedicated and creative people, both inside and outside Jaguar Land Rover.'

Over the past decade, JLR has expanded its model range and moved into fresh markets.

However, falling demand for diesel vehicles and sluggish demand in China has seen the business announce a strategy to cut £2.5bn of costs, leading to thousands of job losses.

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2019 FIGURES

Used car market holds steady with 7.9m sales

The UK's used car market finished 2019 almost on a par with the previous year, recovering to just a 0.1 per cent drop following two quarters of growth in the second half.

According to the latest figures from the SMMT, a total of 7,935,105 transactions took place in the year – down 9,935 on 2018.

There was continued robust demand for used petrol and diesel cars, with sales of the latter down just 0.6 per cent to 3,297,953 and a 41.7 per cent market share. Petrol sales fell by an even more marginal 0.3 per cent to 4,494,611 transactions, contrasting with zero-emission battery-electric vehicle demand, which surged by 21.8 per cent to 14,112 but was equivalent to just 0.2 per cent of the market.

Combined, alternatively fuelled vehicles (hybrid, plug-in hybrid and battery-electric) were up emphatically,

increasing 23.4 per cent with 135,516 changing hands and accounting for 1.7 per cent of all sales. Meanwhile, transactions of the latest, cleanest Euro 6 models, available since 2015, were up 32.5 per cent as more of them reached the used market, helping to address air quality concerns.

Reflecting trends in the new car market, superminis remained the most popular used buy, maintaining their 2018 performance and taking a 32.8 per cent market share. The lower medium and upper medium segments were the next most popular, taking 27.0 per cent and 11.8 per cent of sales respectively, but down 0.8 per cent and 5.8 per cent. The fourth largest, dual-purpose, was the only one to post growth in the full year – up 11.1 per cent to take 12.1 per cent market share.

Used car prices remained firm in 2019, with the average up 0.6 per cent

to £12,800. Mike Hawes, SMMT chief executive, said: 'It is encouraging to see used car sales return to growth in the latter part of 2019 after a prolonged period of decline, and we need to see a similar rebound in new car sales if we are to meet environmental targets.'

'A buoyant used car market is necessary to maintain strong residual values and, clearly, it is now outperforming the new car market.'

Top 10 models in 2019

Model	Transactions
1 Ford Fiesta	351,767
2 Vauxhall Corsa	299,791
3 Ford Focus	293,276
4 Volkswagen Golf	260,344
5 Vauxhall Astra	243,746
6 BMW 3 Series	184,470
7 Mini	168,878
8 Volkswagen Polo	157,352
9 Audi A3	127,294
10 Renault Clio	126,587

Source: SMMT

'A buoyant used car market is necessary to maintain strong residual values.'

Mike Hawes, SMMT chief executive

New network chief is appointed at Hyundai

HYUNDAI has appointed Andrew Waite as head of network development as it continues to strengthen its dealer network.

Waite, who boasts more than 25 years of automotive sales and fleet experience, will focus on developing the brand's representation across the country and will drive long-term commercial improvements across the

network. Waite has worked previously for brands including Fiat Chrysler, Volkswagen Group and Ford, and brings strong strategic plus operational experience to Hyundai UK's senior leadership team.

He said: 'I'm incredibly excited to join Hyundai, a brand that has grown hugely and that invests continually in new and innovative products. I

am looking forward to working with my new team to help our retailers maximise profitability by delivering an exceptional retail experience.'

Six new Hyundai dealerships opened in the last month of 2019, increasing Hyundai UK's representation to 167 outlets.

The new sites are spread across the UK.

GROUPE PSA

'It's an exciting time to take the reins at Citroen'



EURIG Druce has been appointed managing director of Citroen UK.

Druce, pictured above, has held the position of sales director for Citroen UK since 2016 and has a wealth of experience in Groupe PSA.

He joined in 2001 as a trainee and spent 14 years working directly with the network in field-based roles across both sales and aftersales, including director of parts & service operations for Peugeot, Citroen and DS Automobiles.

Druce, who succeeds Karl Howkins, said: 'It is an exciting time to take over the reins from Karl.'

'I look forward to accelerating the momentum that we have built up as we increase our market share and prepare the Citroen brand for electrification and new models.'

MOTORPOINT

Golf tournament is on the cards

MOTORPOINT has teed up a partnership with Burnley Golf Club. The independent car retailer, which has had a branch in the town for almost 20 years, will be the club's main sponsor for the next 12 months.

Motorpoint is creating an invitational 'Motorpoint Open' this summer as part of its drive to help raise awareness as well as money for its charitable partner, Lancashire MIND.

Jordan Dean, general manager, said: 'We can't wait for our partnership to tee off.'



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PARTNERSHIP



David Lewis, left, and David Peel at the newly launched Lincoln dealership

Tribute to Pentagon as two more Peugeot dealerships opened

Peugeot UK managing director David Peel joined his Pentagon Motor Group counterpart David Lewis for the official openings of the retailer's two latest dealerships.

Based in Lincoln and Barnsley, the two sites double the number of Peugeot dealerships in the Pentagon portfolio, joining existing dealerships in Burton and Scunthorpe.

Both showrooms are the main Peugeot dealerships for their areas, offering new and used vehicle sales as well as parts and service support.

Lewis said: 'We have watched Peugeot developing steadily in the UK, with new models in important sectors and strong credentials in the electric/hybrid sector.'

'Its ascendancy continues to be demonstrated, with What Car? and Company Car Today awards already picked up since the start of the year.'

'These come on top of recognition in 2019 with such things as "Most Dependable Brand" in the JD Power survey and its win in the important SUV sector with "New Car of the Year" at

'We see Pentagon as an ideal partner and look forward to sharing in their success.'

David Peel



by **JOHN BOWMAN**
john@blackballmedia.co.uk

the Auto Trader New Car Awards. It has impressive implementation plans for electric and hybrid vehicles for the current year, and we see it as a manufacturer with both the desire and ability to keep growing. We are very happy to join Peugeot on that journey.'

The Lincoln showroom has been completely refurbished and rebranded from its former Citroen use, with that marque now in separate premises on the multi-franchise site.

The Barnsley site was formerly a Fiat dealership with Pentagon and also houses a Nissan franchise.

Peel said: 'At Peugeot, we look for dealer partners who understand our ethos and want to work to our standards.'

He added: 'They are the public face of our brand, so it is very important that they believe both in our products and our values.'

'We see Pentagon as an ideal partner in all these regards and look forward to sharing in their success as we move forward together.'

Pentagon, which is part of Motus Group (UK), now operates 50 franchise outlets across a range of major vehicle manufacturers, with 26 sites across the East Midlands, north-west of England, South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

James Litton

TRADER TALES

An easier new year? Nope, we can't have nice things...

Having written about Brexit on and off for the past four years, I thought that the fog of uncertainty enveloping the motor trade was at last starting to lift with December's election result.

The early signs in January were encouraging. With strong used demand and wholesale pricing coupled with a further delay to any Brexit cliff-edge until the end of 2020, it looked as though we might have an easier year of it.

But the motor trade simply cannot have nice things. Recently, the government decided to bring forward the ban on new combustion-engine cars to 2035, as you may have read on pages 6 and 7 of this very magazine.

Bravo Boris! Fresh from telling the rest of Europe that Britain will not conform to European standards (a dare to all car manufacturers to take their plants out of the UK), the prime minister is now scaring the would-be car buyer by telling them that buying anything other than a Renault Zoe would be financial suicide.

I will be 56 in 2035. All I'll be looking forward to then is endless prostate exams.

For many car buyers of 2020, the same fate awaits, so the reality is that 2035 is a long time away. If you did a 36-month PCP in 2020, you will have got through five cars by the time we get to 2035.

The problem is more doubt. Gone is the doubt of Brexit, here is the doubt of electrification.

Many buyers are simply not convinced (nor should they be) that there is a viable alternative to their four-year-old diesel in electric form.

Range anxiety, lack of infrastructure and increased purchase costs all lead to indecision, which results in no new car business.

Car manufacturers are investing trillions in alternative fuel technology and the speed of development will – in my opinion – comfortably outstrip the deadline imposed by political leaders, so why do it?

The changing public attitudes to sustainability and environmental impact are driving this change, so the only political intervention required is to help support what's going on by offering grants and subsidies – but these are in short supply. So Boris, for crying out loud, focus on 'getting Brexit done' by cementing a trade deal that protects British manufacturing jobs within the motor trade and stop banging on about banning combustion engines.

Britain can be at the forefront of investment, design and the construction of alternatively fuelled vehicles, but we need to stop biting the hand that feeds us.

James Litton is an automotive retail consultant who always has something to say about the industry he loves.



'The problem is more doubt. Gone is doubt of Brexit, here is the doubt of electrification.'



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NISSAN

The team and tech behind a landmark autonomous trip

Self-driving cars might be closer than we think, with Nissan and its partners in the driving seat. Darren Cassey reports

Electrification might be the public face of change in the car industry, but there's another battleground bubbling away in the background that will be even more revolutionary.

At the start of the last decade, the idea of cars driving themselves was the preserve of science fiction, but as we head into the 2020s, autonomous driving has become a genuine reality.

Nissan recently revealed that in November 2019 one of its Leaf electric hatchbacks drove 230 miles north from the firm's technical centre in Cranfield to its Sunderland factory using autonomous driving technology.

We visited Cranfield to speak to the team behind that 'Grand Drive', namely HumanDrive – a £13.5m government-backed project to advance autonomous vehicle technology with a focus on giving it more human driving characteristics.

The partners involved in the project all brought their own abilities to the table: Nissan, which provided vehicles and leads the autonomous vehicle development; Hitachi, which is focusing on artificial intelligence and 'machine learning'; and the University of Leeds, which uses a world-leading simulator to study how people drive.

Each Leaf in the project is fitted with advanced technology that can map the vehicle's surrounding, including high-definition cameras and lidar, which shoots light beams into the surroundings and measures how long they take to return to the source. This helps to create a

constantly updating, highly detailed 360-degree image around the car.

Military-grade GPS also helps the vehicle know exactly where it is in the world, and on-board software reads all of this data to ensure the car travels safely through it.

At this stage, Nissan says it is working with the technology in its simplest form to make sure it nails the basics. Therefore, a car can't be dropped in a random location and given a random destination to figure out its own path through the world; instead, its path must be mapped by human drivers first so the vehicle can follow it.

Although that's initially disappointing – it was perhaps optimistic to think fully self-driving cars are already here – the technology on show is still incredibly impressive, because it has to adapt to the chaos that surrounds it.

While it's following the said route, it has to deal with being cut up by cars on the motorway, know when to safely enter a roundabout, and stop at traffic lights when they're on red.

Where it's perhaps most impressive on a 13-mile test route on real roads near the base – including a busy M1 – is the country lanes surrounding the Cranfield base.

The central dividing lines are faded, the road surface is atrocious, and vehicles of various sizes speed towards you on the other side of the road. The vehicle is simply sticking to its mapped route, but it's doing so with incredible accuracy and

while also knowing what's a hazard and what isn't.

Nissan has been developing its own 'intelligence' systems, which were fitted to the car that did that epic 230-mile drive, but project partner Hitachi has been working to give them a more human characteristic. It's a key focus of the project, with the aim of making passengers feel safer and more comfortable with the sensation of a person driving – like going 'from a taxi to an expert chauffeur', according to Nissan. Hitachi's software still uses routes planned in advance, but its technology takes the 3D image of the world the sensors 'see' and interprets it based on huge amounts of data it has collected from analysing how real drivers react to certain situations.

While Hitachi is busy doing that, the University of Leeds' Institute for Transport Studies has been studying human drivers to obtain the data set Hitachi can use. The university boasts the most advanced driving simulator in the country and



The road to self-driving cars

1958

Cruise control
Chrysler becomes the first manufacturer to implement cruise control.

1995

Adaptive cruise control
The Mitsubishi Diamante is the first vehicle that can automatically adapt its speed.



2000

Lane-keep assist
A Mercedes Actos truck is the first vehicle to feature technology to help the driver stay in the lane.

2003

Autonomous emergency braking
Honda and Toyota are the first to feature autonomous emergency braking in their cars.

2009

Self-driving cars
Google is one of the first to begin developing self-driving cars. The project – called Waymo – is now a standalone firm.





has created virtual worlds that human drivers must navigate. It then takes the data from how they negotiate junctions and hazards and builds a model for the vehicle to follow.

It's all incredibly clever – and it soon becomes clear that getting the cars to drive themselves is only the beginning. But with government-backed projects such as this, the UK hopes to be at the forefront of the fast-moving tech. The signs seem positive. Nissan has received more funding from the government and its HQ in Japan to continue pursuing its research. Self-driving cars might be closer than you think – regulation and public acceptance could prove the only stumbling blocks...



Inside an autonomous Leaf, with huge amounts of data enabling the car to travel safely

2018

Self-driving car death

Uber suspends its self-driving car tests after a pedestrian is killed by an autonomous vehicle.

2019

Driverless cars carry passengers on UK roads for first time

British firm FiveAI is the first to be allowed to carry normal passengers in self-driving cars in the UK. Previously, only trained experts were allowed.



AUTONOMOUS CAR PROGRESS

Where are other manufacturers with their self-driving car plans?

Tesla

Undoubtedly one of the front runners in the self-driving car world, Tesla says its cars are already 'full self-driving'. Standard on all Teslas is Autopilot – where it can accelerate, steer and brake autonomously. Full self-driving capability is available for £5,800, though, which is where it can automatically park, change lanes and turn off the motorway on to A and B roads.

Later this year, Tesla will enable it to recognise and respond to traffic lights, as well as be 'summoned' – where the car can come to find you in a car park, rather than vice versa. Whether the law will permit such tech still remains to be seen, though...



BMW

The majority of BMW's models are available with plenty of driver assistance features – such as adaptive cruise control, self-parking and lane-keep assist. But around the corner is BMW's new 'iNEXT' model – a car that will offer level 3 self-driving technology, which is essentially 'eyes off' in certain scenarios. The previewed steering wheel on this flagship model will also allow drivers to easily switch between autonomous modes. On a slightly separate note, self-driving tech company Aptiv and ride-hailing firm Lyft are using versions of the BMW 5 Series for their tests over in the US. Lyft has completed 100,000 paid journeys using the vehicles.



Audi

Audi isn't one of the immediately obvious leaders in autonomous technology, but thanks to the flagship A8 luxury car, this is a brand that is very much a front-runner here.

Problem is, it's too far ahead. That's because its A8, which debuted in 2017, can already be equipped with level 3 autonomous technology but current legislation doesn't allow for the model to be fitted with such a feature, which is known as 'Traffic Jam Pilot', in the UK. It works at speeds of up to 37mph and means the driver wouldn't actually have to pay any attention at all, as the car can handle all key functions.



2019

The first production-ready self-driving car

Volvo reveals first production-ready self-driving car, using Uber's autonomous system.



2030

When you may be able to buy them

It'll be another 10 years before you'll be able to buy a self-driving car, say experts, although it could be even further away.



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Big Mike

Our man on the inside shares his thoughts on the car business

Hiding from the wife while taking a Forrest Gump isn't what it used to be

Without wanting to sound crude, what do you do when you have to pop to the constitutional office for a 10-minute sit-down? And don't blush. We all do it – even the Queen.

I bet she doesn't sit there playing Words with Friends on her phone though, or do what I do – scour Facebook Marketplace and Gumtree for the latest private sale bargains. Indeed, the amount of interesting motors I've bought after discovering them while 'taking a Winnie' is astonishing.

It's also, though, quite sad. Our phones are eroding our passion for reading, and while I quite enjoy playing silly games or looking at old motors while having a Forrest Gump, I used to venture in there with a rolled-up copy of Auto Trader or Exchange and Mart for half an hour at a time, and I miss it.

Auto Trader has now been absent from the UK's newsstands since 2013, Exchange and Mart went a couple of years earlier, and while you can still pick up a copy of Friday-Ad round my way, it's only really any good if you're looking to buy a dining table or a rabbit hutch, not a low-mileage Micra. And I don't really want to look at rabbit hutches when I'm riding on the log flume.

Before the digital era, my default position when communing with nature was to flick straight to the 'Car Bargains Under £1,000' section, and I wouldn't emerge from the crapping cupboard until threatened with either divorce or Mrs M's cooking, whichever was the least foreboding.

I also know for a fact that I'm not the only person to have spent my post-digestive peace and quiet looking at potential stock, as a recent online discussion with other dealers (most likely conducted while they, too, were hiding in the pooping pod) saw unanimous agreement between us all that the loss of Auto Trader was, in fact, a tragedy.

Sure, it was padded out with random ads for cranes, caravans and farm equipment, but in amongst all that, there was a whole sea of potential, all of it finished in easily smudged monotone.

These days, you can make a decision on whether or not to go and view a car by looking at stacks of images hosted online, with a description that isn't limited to 52 words of text, but back then you had to make a judgment call based on a black-and-white photo the size of a postage stamp. Sometimes you didn't even know what colour a car was until you were standing on the owner's drive inspecting his flagstones for tell-tale oil marks. The amount of wasted journeys was a joke, but the thrill of the hunt was part of the job and it's not quite the same these days.

Then there was the smell... and by that, I mean the publication, not the room in which it was most commonly read. Nothing – and I mean nothing – smelt like a copy of Auto Trader, whose print was so fresh and paper stock so thin that it had a unique whiff, one of papery ink. Indeed, I can smell it now by just thinking about it, and I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one.

Also, it was a different price in every town. Where I'm based, over the western side of Birmingham, we used to get the Birmingham Central, Staffordshire and the Black Country, plus Worcestershire and Shropshire editions, all of which were a different size, cost and shape. And who else remembers waiting for their appointment with the 'Trader man', who'd pop round every Thursday with his camera to get a few happy snaps of your latest stock, which some goon back at the office would then jumble up so you ended up with an ad for a Micra with a picture of a Vauxhall Astra beside it?

Modern ways of selling cars are far easier and more efficient, providing you can deal with illiterate plonkers emailing you with offers to swap for a PlayStation, a stolen mountain bike or a line of sniff (which does sound like a recipe for a fun evening, to be fair), but the mystery, skill and expertise of being a bona fide car dealer has fallen by the wayside with those black-and-white thumbnail images that defined an entire era.

Buyer's nose just isn't what it was, and I can no longer use it as an excuse to hide from my wife on the porcelain prayer chair for more than 10 minutes at a time. And that, folks, is a right shi**er.

'I know for a fact that I'm not the only person to have spent my post-digestive peace and quiet looking at potential stock.'



Who is Big Mike? Well, that would be telling. What we *can* say is he's had more than 40 years in the car trade so has probably forgotten more about it than we're likely to know.

Run a courtesy car? You

I'M thinking of running a courtesy car – I acquired a cheap, low-mileage 2010 Ka last week. Insurance want £115 to add it on to the end of the policy. Only thing that puts me off is risking our no-claims bonus. Thoughts please guys?

MrC

You must be mad! Let them order a taxi. I base this comment on one single 'experience'. A friend ran a couple of courtesy cars for his various customers (car sales and a workshop) and then one day, one was wrecked. A proper job, driver pi****-up, a number of parked cars smashed up, the courtesy car looked like it had been dropped out of an aeroplane.

I don't know how insurance companies work but as well as the no-claims bonus, the policy was loaded and his next year's bill (which I saw) had more than doubled to over £8k and that was after he'd pared back cover. Over the next few years it must have cost him a five-figure sum, all for someone who walked away financially scot-free.

BHM

Is there no way you could ask a customer to self insure and provide proof of insurance? A garage that did work for me used to do this – it sounds daft but many were happy to do it for the use of the car and it was still cheaper for them to take out seven days' insurance rather than hire a car. I don't think it would be worth it otherwise – you'd be risking your no-claims bonus and insurance costs in the event of an accident.

Casper

My courtesy car add-on on my insurance was £30 for last year. Don't have a dedicated one but usually tax a p/x or just a cheaper stock car. As soon as I use a stock car as a courtesy car, the phones start ringing on it!

Nick M.K.

Picture of the month



It's not all brand-new and shiny cars here at Car Dealer – sometimes older models need a bit of love too. It's why Jack here is lugging a refurbished gearbox up to the office, in readiness for some work to be done on a 55-plate Mini Cooper. Needless to say, it wasn't an easy one to carry up two flights of stairs!

Beware of lending out cars on the customer's own insurance. If something untoward happens and some fault is found affecting roadworthiness, like a not fully efficient handbrake, it is down to you. There have been cases where dealers have been charged. Sometimes when I have had someone who understood the liability, I have just invoiced them for the loan car which they have signed and let them use their own cover. When they returned, the invoice was torn up. This was long ago but after that, if it was a big job, we had a cheap hire car deal. I think you should have some sort of separate cover for supplying courtesy cars.

trade vet

Not worth the hassle for us, it's just inviting problems into your life. Unless you're a busy repairing garage, people don't expect a courtesy car when they're buying used and if they do, just reset their expectation level.

grant8064

Had a courtesy car for years. Nothing special, but never had any issues. However, I don't advertise the fact and only lend it out to people I like or who pass the Moron Test.

NOACROSS

I think it's got to be one to swerve, we've managed fine without so far. Let them arrange their own travel logistics.

MrC

Slightly off-topic but I get the occasional person asking if I'll do them day's insurance to get them home. As a one-man band, I have absolutely no intention whatsoever of getting involved in the legalities of strangers driving on the highway. Your insurance paperwork would have to be absolutely watertight because, my guess is, they'd come after the small car dealer, not the big insurance company.

I imagine any irregularity would be pushed my way – 'No Your Honour, I told him I have 12 points on my provisional licence but he said I'd be okay for the next fortnight', swiftly followed by their defence barrister – 'It is most unfortunate my client mowed down the bus queue of school kids but the financial burden of compensation for the grieving families surely lies with BHM who, my client attests, was responsible for completing the drive-away insurance.'

If a customer is either too lazy or too skint to insure their new wheels, I'm not interested in getting involved and exposing myself to risk.

BHM

Top tweets



Massive congratulations to Malcolm Hewson and Sheila Tombs who picked up their 20th Volkswagen from us last week! (Shown left.) Enjoy your brand new car! PS: They drive down from Gloucester and are the owners of the first vehicle bought at the new Hedge End site!

Peter Cooper Motor Group
@ThePCMG

Are you an apprentice in the #automotive industry? Did you know that Ben is your industry charity? We're here for everyone who works, or has worked, in the automotive industry – for life.

Ben @BenSupport4Auto

We are pleased to announce the launch of a brand new IT apprentice scheme, based at our head office in Nottinghamshire! Completion of the programme will see our trainees gain an Infrastructure Technician Apprenticeship qualification.

PendragonPLC @PendragonPLC

Been to 7 OEM conferences this year so far. A consistent message – retailers will continue to be the foundation of their business. There will be a reduction undoubtably – my guess 25 per cent to 30 per cent in next 5 to 10 years. Strong groups with decent brands in good markets will reap rewards.

Daksh Gupta @MarshallMotorGp

More and more of our readers are joining the debate – and it couldn't be

have got to be joking!

DISAPPOINTMENTS

Buying a lemon and losing money

JUST out of curiosity, what is your biggest loss? I haven't lost for a long time but had two this week. They say it comes in threes. I had a wiring loom completely burn out on a newish Clio on Monday. Then today, the chain has jumped on a BMW 3 series – a 13-plate with 55k on the clock. I'm just hoping I can still squeeze some profit out of these two.

Pip

I have very rarely 'lost' but bought a grade 5 white Scirocco blind four months ago for £3,300. 'Because it was cheap.' It needed: body work and paint (£600); dual mass and clutch (£575); turbo actuator (£150); boost sensor (£70); satnav repairing (£75); MOT and service (£120); aircon re-charge (£50).

Finally ready last week and it's up for £5,495 but it was an absolute shocker of a purchase – I must have been blind drunk bidding on it. I may make £100 on it if I'm lucky after putting a warranty on it.

Grantlfc81

I've had two Range Rovers suck £4k each out of me. I once bought an SL450 R107 but

the bulkhead was so rusty the wipers weren't even attached – that was a £5k repair 15 years ago. There have been loads to be fair, it's part of the job.

Arfur Dealy

I'm currently about £3,500 into fixing a £3,000 mini. Timing chain, clutch, rear quarter respray. Will push my luck and advertise it for £3,595.

JA Trader

Just sold an Audi Q7 that went up to Inverness. It had suspension issues and went all over the place to get fixed, ending up at Audi with a bill of almost £4k.

andymc1973



How to handle the VAT issue...

I'M looking at branching out into some commercial vehicles, potentially. Say I market a van for sale at £5k plus VAT aimed at business users, is there any law which stipulates that I can't advertise the same vehicle at £6k including VAT to attract Joe Public? (provided I break down the VAT element on the sales invoice and hand it across to the VAT man?)

Huggins

Just market it inc VAT.

Arfur Dealy

So I don't have to sell business to business – provided the buyer is made aware of the VAT element of the sale/sales price?

Huggins

Private can't claim VAT back. Business can claim VAT back. That's the only difference there is to it. Just show VAT on either invoice when you sell it. Of course you send VAT to customs in either sale.

David Horgan

You are much better off selling exc VAT as most people will search low to high so your £4,999+VAT van will be seen by more people than one at £5,999 inc VAT.

Contracts

You don't need to make a big song and dance about it. It'll be on your invoice, that's all you need to do.

When looking at tiles and grout on the shelves, do B&Q employees warn customers that receipts include VAT?

The few times I've had vans I've found it easier to write something along the lines of 'TOTAL price, no VAT to add' because the sub-£5k mark is generally full of private men and one-man-band companies who aren't VAT-registered so when looking at adverts, if they see '+VAT' they think they're being raped.

Basically a '£3,600' van will be an easier sell than a '£3,000+VAT' van. Weird, I know, but that's how people's minds work.

BHM

CAR SALES MEMES

We've teamed up with Car Sales Memes to bring you a few of their funniest captions and slogans each month. Enjoy!



WE DEFINITELY DON'T NEED THE EXTENDED WARRANTY AS WE KNOW A MECHANIC!



Search for Car Sales Memes on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and give them a follow!

Around the world

Dealer news from somewhere other than here

USA

NINE cars were 'totally scorched' when fire broke out at a used car dealership in Annapolis, the state capital of Maryland. Adding to the dangers for firefighters were sparking power lines overhead and burning utility poles. Live wires even fell on to fire hoses, meaning crews had to retreat for their own safety. Once the power supply had been cut off to the cables, the fire on February 3 was quickly extinguished, fire chief John Ortlieb told the WTO website.

JAPAN

PROSECUTORS in Tokyo have issued an arrest warrant for ex-Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn, who skipped bail while awaiting trial in Japan and is now in Lebanon. Japan has no extradition treaty with Lebanon though, so he is unlikely to be arrested, and Lebanon has indicated that it will not hand him over. Ghosn has said he is innocent of allegations that he under-reported his future income and committed a breach of trust by diverting Nissan money for his personal gain.

AUSTRALIA

TWO car dealerships plus an online auction site have been penalised for allegedly selling or advertising cars subject to recalls under the Takata airbag saga. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission issued infringement notices to Grays Ecommerce Group Ltd, Berwick Motor Group and HG Innovations for 'allegedly selling or advertising vehicles under active recall', said the Car Advice website. As a result, the three corporations have paid fines totalling 63,000 Australian dollars (circa £32,500).

GERMANY

MORE than 7,500 Volkswagen dealers from over 50 countries have been travelling to Wolfsburg for a special – and impressively large – event. The dealers at the huge conference, which has taken 18 months to organise, are learning about the new Golf 8, the all-electric ID.3 and Volkswagen's new brand design.

PHILIPPINES

HYUNDAI has opened its first passenger car dealership in Baguio City. The showroom, run by Grit Motors Corporation, is the first one to represent the South Korean brand in the Philippines' Cordillera region. Dealer principal Archimedes Go said he and his team would work with 'grace, excellence and honesty' to make Hyundai number one in Baguio.

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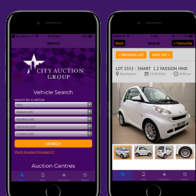
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PARTNERSHIP

Caterham packages aim to woo budding race drivers

Iconic British sports car maker Caterham has partnered with Santander Consumer Finance to offer finance packages on its road and race cars for the first time.

The plans also cover racing in the Caterham Academy – which includes a full season of racing, with drivers owning a fully road-legal vehicle at the end of the agreement.

That means six championship races at some of the best-loved race tracks across the UK, including Silverstone, Brands Hatch and Knockhill. In addition, on their journey to becoming novice racing drivers, driving enthusiasts will take part in the Association of Racing Driver Schools course, attend training seminars on vehicle set-up and be provided with exclusive test and car-handling days with Caterham's Motorsport staff.

Santander is sponsoring the Caterham Motorsport championships once again this year.

At the end of the agreement, which includes a final balloon payment, racers can keep their fully road-legal Caterham Seven or, if they want to,



upgrade it to progress to the next championship: Caterham Roadsport.

The finance offer is also available on all Caterham Seven road cars, including used vehicles at all Caterham's UK dealers.

Graham Macdonald, chief executive of Caterham, said: 'Cost has always been the biggest hurdle for any racing driver, especially those looking to

get started in the sport. By splitting the cost of racing a full season in the Caterham Academy across several monthly payments, we are making racing more affordable and open.

'By dividing the cost of ownership across low monthly payments, we are aiming to attract a new, wider customer base of driving enthusiasts and aspiring race car drivers.'

FLA

Consumer car finance market 'holds steady'



NEW figures released by the Finance & Leasing Association (FLA) show that new business volumes in the consumer car finance market grew in December 2019 by six per cent compared with the same month in 2018, and held steady in 2019 as a whole at over 2.4 million cars.

The consumer new car finance market reported growth in new business volumes of four per cent in December 2019 compared with the same month in 2018. In 2019 as a whole, new business volumes in this market fell by three per cent.

The percentage of private new car sales financed by FLA members was 91.7 per cent in the 12 months to December 2019.

The consumer used car finance market reported new business volumes up in December 2019 by seven per cent compared with the same month in 2018. In 2019 as a whole, new business volumes in this market grew by two per cent.

Geraldine Kilkelly, head of research and chief economist at the FLA, said: 'The performance of the consumer car finance market in 2019 was in line with expectations.'

STARTLINE

More products urged for full spectrum of options

MORE products are needed to accelerate the motor finance sector towards providing a spectrum of options to meet the needs of customers at all points of the market.

That's according to near-prime specialist Startline Motor Finance, whose chief executive Paul Burgess said: 'What we have done at Startline is add near-prime options to a motor finance sector that consisted almost entirely of prime and non-prime lending. It's an achievement and

serves an important need for dealers and car buyers but, essentially, we've only moved the choice from two levels of finance to three.

'What is clear to us is that there is a much wider spectrum of finance needs. Quite how many is difficult to say, but it would not be a stretch to suggest that the market should perhaps be operating over at least five identifiable levels that are easily understandable to dealers and car buyers.' He emphasised: 'It's not just

a matter of providing a kind of single sliding scale to cover different levels of risk – that's an approach driven by finance provider thinking rather than customer needs. Instead, it means developing an understanding of different groups of customers with different requirements and delivering products that meet those desires.'

Burgess said such an approach wouldn't just be better for the used car sector but would also fit into how the FCA views the market.

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Time is money

BEN GARSIDE

A monthly look at the world of automotive finance and marketing

You don't have to rely on one platform in the quest to attract customers

I've read a lot of posts online from motor traders stating that they're stuck with an online selling platform, that they're fed up of price increases and lack of service, and that they don't think it's worth it! There are a lot of potential customers to be sourced and you have many routes to market them;

especially in online marketing.

I read in a recent Car Dealer story that an eBay Motors Group study of 2,203 car buyers had found that buyers use an average of 3.5 sites, with 64 per cent using three or more sites and 40 per cent using at least four online marketplaces, while 11 per cent of buyers claim to use one car search website.

With this in mind, it's interesting that business owners still feel they are fully reliant on just one platform and that their business has no opportunities outside of their current set-up.

There are a good number of online vehicle search platforms for people to source their cars through. These websites will be touchpoints and comparisons for consumers over the course of their journey, so just one shouldn't be the be-all and end-all in your customer marketing. You'll always need a good mix of marketing outputs to get the best acquisitions through digital marketing.

Let's start at the beginning... your website. Having a quick and well-presented website is key in today's digital world. A consumer should never have to put up with a slow or poor-quality website. Your website is an opportunity to grow and is where your customers assess your professionalism and capability.

Setting up a blog may not be for everyone, but it could help to

sway a few customers who are in the market, especially if your product is slightly more expensive than a competitor's.

It doesn't need to be overly expensive, as you can add WordPress (or something similar) to your current website for free – just ask your website provider to add it as a new section.

While you're improving your website, you could also invest some time in local or national SEO – both are ongoing strategies, but just making sure your pages are written properly and your on/off page SEO has been done correctly really is worth it.

Being in the motor trade, we always need to work on building trust, for example gaining Google, Feefo or Facebook reviews. However, this isn't just about increasing your reputation as a top provider, it's also about sharing your great reviews and any award wins as a route to building advocates.

Setting up email marketing is a must for those of you with a database of past customers – you'll be able to nurture your previous customers with bespoke messages about your business, and send them personalised emails a couple of years after their purchase to let them know what vehicles you have in stock of a similar size and type, and maybe some emails based on demographics. This may even stop them searching elsewhere.

I haven't gone into significant depth on these areas and we still have social media, AdWords, display ads and remarketing to help your acquisition, mitigating your reliance on a comparison site as a single source. I could talk about these for days, so if anyone has any questions feel free to get in contact.

'You'll always need a good mix of marketing outputs to get the best acquisitions through digital marketing.'



Ben Garside is marketing manager for First Response. Call him on 07817 518739 or email ben.garside@frfl.co.uk

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YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO SUPERMINIS

Peugeot 208



THIS all-new model is more stylish than ever and you'll find it with an EV powertrain, as well as diesel and petrol engines.

It's the petrol version chosen here, with a 99bhp 1.2-litre PureTech unit and in mid-spec Allure trim, with 17-inch alloy wheels, climate control and a seven-inch touchscreen.

Despite it only just arriving in showrooms, Peugeot is already offering an £875 deposit contribution, to which the customer then adds £2,200. They then make 36 monthly payments of £289.48 – meaning that at the end of the three years they will have spent £12,261.28.

Should they choose to buy their 208, an optional final payment of £8,038 can be made, making the total £20,659.28.

Even with the contribution, a five per cent APR makes this £1,114.28 more expensive than the £19,545 cash price.

Renault Clio



THE fifth-generation Clio is another new kid on the block, and it's on the inside where Renault has really made the differences.

The material quality has improved, with buyers now also able to choose a 9.3-inch touchscreen and 10-inch digital instrument cluster. We've opted for a 99bhp 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine – the TCe 100 – in top-spec R.S. Line trim.

On top of a customer deposit of £2,098, Renault is adding £500. Following this are 36 monthly payments of £254, which means that at the end of the three-year contract, the customer will have forked out £11,242.

An optional final payment of £7,981 can be made if they choose to own their Clio, which brings the total amount payable up to £19,223, although a 4.9 per cent APR means this is £1,228 more expensive than the £17,995 cash price.

PUNISHMENT

Moneybarn pays out nearly £33m over customer treatment

Car finance provider Moneybarn has been fined almost £3 million after failing to help vulnerable customers.

The company has also paid more than £30m in compensation after a City regulator said it found serious breaches over how it treated customers who fell into arrears.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) slapped the sub-prime lender with the £2.77m fine after it said customers weren't given a 'realistic' time frame to clear their arrears. More than 1,400 customers ended up defaulting on their loans after signing up to short-term repayment plans with the firm, which is owned by FTSE 250 lender Provident Financial Group.

The FCA said the payment plans were 'unsustainable' and that many of the

customers affected were 'vulnerable'. It added that Moneybarn had now voluntarily paid compensation to all 5,933 customers who were potentially affected by the firm's failings.

The conduct regulator said Moneybarn unfairly treated these customers – many of whom had a poor credit history or none at all – between April 1, 2014 and October 4, 2017. Mark Steward, executive director of enforcement and market oversight at the FCA, said: 'Moneybarn did not give its customers, many of whom were vulnerable, the chance to clear their arrears over a realistic and sustainable period.'

'It also did not communicate clearly to customers in financial difficulty their options for exiting their loans and the associated financial implications, resulting in many incurring higher



termination costs. These were serious breaches.'

The FCA stated that Moneybarn didn't dispute its findings, meaning the potential fine was reduced by 30 per cent, otherwise it would have faced a financial penalty of at least £3,963,500.

Shamus Hodgson, managing director of Moneybarn, said: 'Throughout the investigation we worked collaboratively with the FCA.'

'We are happy that all customers potentially affected by these findings have been fully compensated for any detriment they might have suffered. The processes we have had in place since 2017 are clear, effective and appropriate.'

'The FCA has clarified its expectations of lenders in these important aspects of customer treatment, which will provide guidance for all finance companies within the motor industry.'

Seat Ibiza

WHILE the Seat Ibiza might be the oldest car of the trio, it remains one of the most well-rounded models in this sector.

It's fantastic to drive, impressively spacious and comes with some of the best petrol engines around. That's why we've chosen the 94bhp 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol unit for its great mix of peppy performance and economy. Affordable pricing means you can get a high-spec Xcellence version, too, which includes keyless entry and start.

Seat is offering a deposit contribution of £1,750, to which the customer adds £2,050. Over the three-year contract, the customer will make 36 payments of £212, bringing the total to £9,682.

A final payment of £7,605 can be made to buy it, taking the customer total to £17,287. There's a high 6.2 per cent APR, but the large deposit contribution means it works out just £182 more expensive than the £17,105 cash price.

JBR CAPITAL

Strong start to 2020 for prestige vehicle financier as it notches up fifth year

JBR CAPITAL has reported its busiest winter, with the independent high-end vehicle financier enjoying a strong start to the year as it looks to celebrate its fifth birthday in 2020.

The direct lender has revealed from its latest monthly figures that the average value of car financed is currently £75,929. It offers finance from £25,000 to £10 million for the purchase of prestige vehicles.

Executive chairman Darren Selig said: '2020 has started for us with a high volume of inquiries and pay-outs, making it our busiest winter yet since the inception of the company just five years ago.'

'With the general election and Brexit out of the way, consumers seem to have moved on and are gaining confidence regarding financing their vehicles, starting to realise the benefits.'

**BOOM TIME**

Blue hires extra staff as it enjoys rise in loan applications

BLUE Motor Finance is celebrating unprecedented continued growth in the used car finance market despite the uncertainty around the general election and Brexit.

It said it saw a 29 per cent increase in the number of car finance proposals for used cars being submitted after the December election, with a 27 per cent rise in proposals approved.

Chief executive Tiku Patel said: 'Consumers may well have been holding back on making major purchase decisions until there was more political certainty. Usually, used car sales slow down in the lead-up to Christmas but this year has been different – business levels have increased and continued at unexpectedly high levels.'

He added that the trend had continued into January, with record levels of loan applications to buy used cars, and it was hiring more staff to keep up with the demand.



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FIRST DRIVE

Hyundai i10

Hyundai believes in the city car segment, which is why it has introduced an all-new i10. Jack Evans finds out what it's like

What is it?

Although it's hard to ignore the overwhelming success of the SUV, Hyundai believes that there's still a place for the humble city car and it's why it has introduced this – the all-new i10. It's a completely new version of the firm's most compact offering, yet has been designed to give owners more space and practicality than ever before without forsaking that all-important dinky size which makes city driving a little easier.

The engine line-up remains unchanged, however, simply because the 1.0- and 1.2-litre units on offer deliver in terms of economy and reliability – two key places where cars like this need to succeed.

What's new?

The new i10 is lower and wider than before, and this gives it a far squatter appearance. However, as we've mentioned, this hasn't resulted in any loss of interior space – but we'll get to how it feels inside a little later on. Elsewhere, there's



Eye-catching

Wider and lower than before, the car has more presence than its predecessor.

Strong styling

The front end features a wide open grille that incorporates rounded LED daytime running lights.

'It's a doddle to pilot around congested towns and busy roads.'

an all-new cabin that better reflects the rest of the firm's line-up of cars, while there's a modern infotainment system too. Better still, the i10 is now bristling with safety assistance technology designed to ensure its occupants and those around the car are safer than ever.

What's under the bonnet?

Our test car was powered by the entry-level 1.0-litre petrol engine. Unturbocharged, it produces just 66bhp and 96Nm of torque.

This isn't a car designed for performance, after all, which is why it takes the i10 over 12 seconds to reach 60mph from a dead stop before reaching the heady heights of a limited 97mph flat out. Drive is sent to the front wheels through a five-speed manual gearbox, and although the i10 may not be the quickest car on the market today, it delivers on the efficiency

front, with Hyundai claiming up to 56.5mpg combined and emissions of 101g/km of CO₂.

There's also a larger 1.2-litre turbocharged engine with slightly more power, although it's expected that this 1.0-litre version will still be the pick of the bunch. It better suits the character of the i10, we'll admit.

What's it like to drive?

City cars are meant to be easy, relaxing and simple to drive. In that sense, the i10 delivers well. It's a doddle to pilot around congested towns and busy roads, thanks to light controls and an engine that responds eagerly. Although it's breathy to accelerate – only to be expected from a car with 66bhp – once it's up to speed it's quiet and refined, with motorways journeys undertaken in a far more composed fashion than you'd think a car like this could manage.

That five-speed manual is light, too, and unless you really need it we'd avoid the automatic; we spent some time behind the wheel of a car with an auto 'box and it's sluggish and dim-witted.



THE KNOWLEDGE

Model:	Hyundai i10
Price (as tested):	£14,495
Engine:	1.0-litre petrol
Power:	66bhp
Torque:	96Nm
Max speed (limited):	97mph
0-60mph:	12.6 seconds
MPG:	56.5
Emissions (CO ₂):	101g/km

TARGET BUYERS:

Those who want a zero-hassle, cheap-to-run supermini.

THE RIVALS:

Volkswagen Up!, Kia Picanto, Fiat 500.

KEY SELLING POINTS:

1. Low running costs.
2. Compact size.
3. Surprisingly practical.

DEAL CLINCHER:

The i10 could be all the car you'll ever need, thanks to its low running costs and great build quality.

All-rounder

The new i10 is efficient, pleasing to drive and good-looking.

How does it look?

In a time where large, imposing SUVs dominate the market, it's quite refreshing to see a compact, neatly styled city car arriving. The front end of the i10 is particularly strong, thanks to a wide open grille that incorporates rounded LED daytime running lights – a nod to the outgoing i10, which also featured circular lights in the grille.

Because it's now wider and lower than before it's got more presence than before, which will certainly gain it even more followers in the younger-driver segment, which is one that is crucial to the i10's success.

What's it like inside?

Despite its dinky proportions, there's a lot more interior space to be found in the i10 than you'd expect. Up front it's bright and airy, with plenty of visibility for driver and passenger. The materials are basic but not unpleasant; harder plastics are used frequently but they're there for a reason – they're hard-wearing and resistant to abuse, so it makes sense to put them in a city car.

There's plenty of space in the back, too. Sure, it's not got limo levels of legroom, but even with a taller driver you get a decent amount of legroom. Headroom is also excellent.

The i10 is technically a five-seater – a rare occurrence in the segment – but there's really not a lot of room in the middle at the back.

What's the spec like?

Hyundai, as with its other cars, is playing on the side of value for money with its i10.

It means that even in base-spec SE cars you get a 3.8-inch display, Bluetooth and air conditioning as well as cruise control and electric windows. This comes in at an impressive £12,495 which, when you consider that the i10 also has a five-year unlimited-mileage warranty, makes it exceptionally good value for money.

We'd likely upgrade to SE Connect trim, however, as this brings a larger eight-inch colour touchscreen incorporating Apple CarPlay and Android Auto – both features which most drivers will greatly appreciate. That said, the standard

infotainment system is easy and simple to navigate – although the sat nav was a little sluggish during our time with it.

What do the press think?

Auto Express said: 'The Hyundai i10 is a brilliant blend of space, comfort, refinement and value, though other city cars have more personality.' Parkers said: 'The new i10 is a very good city car indeed, with a stylish body, Tardis-like interior and more safety equipment than anything else in this class.'

What do we think?

The Hyundai i10 is just how you'd want a city car to be. Despite the onset of SUVs and crossovers, Hyundai still thinks that buyers want a low-cost, simple-to-drive, compact car and we'd have to agree – not everyone needs a tech-packed, ultra-luxurious way of getting about. The i10 may not have the most luxurious cabin or the very latest systems, but it's efficient, pleasing to drive and good-looking.



Eye-catching
The headlights come with a design inspired by the GT supercar.

Ford has revived its Puma – although this time as a crossover. Can it break into a crowded segment? Jack Healy jetted off to Malaga to find out...

What is it?

For many, the Ford Puma is a compact sports car that was an affordable coupe in the '90s. But with crossovers now dominating the market, the American firm has decided to repurpose the name on a new compact model with SUV styling.

This Puma shares a lot with the latest Fiesta – much like the coupe being similar to the Mk 4 version of the supermini – but now comes with an all-new look that sets it apart from most other Fords. It joins the Kuga, Edge and Ecosport in the SUV/crossover line-up for the American brand in the UK, but can this new option be as successful as its larger siblings?

What's new?

Although the name isn't, pretty much all of this car is. As we've said, it's based on the latest Fiesta, but unlike the supermini, this will be offered with mild-hybrid powertrains from launch – with the Fiesta receiving one later this year.

As well as that, there are segment-first features – such as the options of a hands-free tailgate and massage seats. Ford also supplies the Puma with a series of sensors, radars and cameras to complement its range of Co-Pilot360 driver assists. The new Local Hazard Information system is also included in the Ford Connect service, which warns drivers of disruptions and dangers along their journey. But we must mention the innovative storage as well, with its 80-litre box

under the boot floor that comes with a plug so you can happily store muddy boots, etc, then wash it and let the water out afterwards.

What's under the bonnet?

On the Puma launch event, we exclusively tested the new mild-hybrid petrol systems, which are based on the multi-award-winning 1.0-litre, three-cylinder EcoBoost petrol engine.

Mated to a 48V battery setup, it gives customers the option of 123bhp and 153bhp – and we'll be focusing on the latter.

Even with the electrical support, the engine remains very characterful – with it happy to rev well over 3,000 and pull you along nicely. But when you decide to settle down into a cruise, it feels smooth and doesn't make a lot of noise. The six-speed manual gearbox could be notchy at times, but on the whole it was a smooth partner for the powertrain. A seven-speed automatic is joining the line-up later this year, though.

The electrical assistance will also make a big difference in terms of fuel use. Ford says these units will come with cylinder deactivation to help reduce your fuel bill and it claims figures of 51.3mpg and 126g/km CO₂ – not bad for a small crossover. But to throw a spanner in the works for customers, a diesel unit is on the way, which is set to be even kinder on your wallet than the top-end petrol mild-hybrid.

What's it like to drive?

To put all this into context, we tried the Puma on smooth Spanish roads and it handled them superbly.

With the larger alloys on our ST-Line X model, we didn't feel too many bumps in the road being transferred into the cabin and it felt settled almost everywhere.



FIRST DRIVE

Ford Puma

There was a lack of feel and it wasn't the most engaging car in the world, but it certainly wasn't a bad car to drive.

Saying that, understeer only started to kick in when it was pushed, and even though it's a larger vehicle than the Fiesta, body roll was handled just as excellently, thanks to the sports-tuned suspension. We also have to say that even though there were Eco and Sport drive modes – as well as Trail and Slippery options – there was only a small difference between the modes, so you're better off leaving it in Normal.

How does it look?

Ford has said that the Puma comes with a more laid-back approach to design, and you can see where it's coming from. The 'anti-wedge' design has a flat line stretching from the headlight to the rear to complement the sloping coupe-like roof – hopefully drawn from the previous Puma.

The headlights come with a design inspired by the GT supercar, and it certainly helps the Puma to stand out. To enhance that, Ford has given the crossover flared wheelarches, and the sporty ST-Line X model we tried came with some stylish 19-inch alloys.

What's it like inside?

With its base a rather practical supermini, the Puma has been extended further by Ford – with a longer wheelbase and higher body making for more interior space. Even the tallest drivers in the front will find the headroom more than ample,



Roominess

A longer wheelbase and higher body help create plenty of interior space.

Options

Segment-first features such as a hands-free tailgate and massage seats are available.

while the large windscreen helps the cabin feel quite airy. Visibility could be improved, but it's to be expected with the coupe-like styling.

There's actually a lot of innovation in terms of storage on the Puma. Under the moveable boot floor is the aforementioned unique 80-litre compartment that has a plug in the bottom to let water out. That extends the Puma's boot space to 456 litres, which is a class-leading figure by a significant margin, and the opening is squared off for easier ingress and egress. The parcel shelf is also attached to the boot lid instead of behind the seats, which Ford says allows for more practicality.

What's the spec like?

At the event, we tried the top-spec ST-Line X model, which is joined by the Titanium X trim. The main features included a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster, the Sync 3 infotainment system, wireless smartphone charging, rear parking sensors, a B&O sound system, sports-tuned suspension and the FordPass Connect services setup.

For additional comfort and style, the Puma also comes with Driver Assistance, Design and Winter packs, which take the overall price of the vehicle close to £27,000 – a fairly sizeable amount for a car of this size and quality.

What do the press think?

Fleet World said the new Ford Puma was 'the best driving small SUV in its class' while Sunday Times Driving described it as 'a great all-round family car'.

What do we think?

Although the market wasn't calling out for another crossover, Ford has managed to put itself towards the forefront at the compact end of the segment. The Puma is practical, comfortable and, on the whole, good to drive.

'The headlights come with a design inspired by the GT supercar.'

THE KNOWLEDGE

Model:	Ford Puma ST-Line X
Price (as tested):	£24,695
Engine:	1.0-litre mild-hybrid petrol
Power:	153bhp
Torque:	240Nm
Max speed:	127mph
0-60mph:	8.8 seconds
MPG:	51.3
Emissions (CO ₂):	126g/km

TARGET BUYERS:

Families needing an efficient urban run-around.

THE RIVALS:

Nissan Juke, Skoda Kamiq, Volkswagen T-Cross.

KEY SELLING POINTS:

1. Practical layout.
2. Nice to drive.
3. Engine efficiency.

DEAL CLINCHER:

Great styling paired with an impressive driving setup.

FIRST DRIVE

Honda e

This concept car for the road is full of cutting-edge tech and an all-electric powertrain. Darren Cassey finds out if the future of the car is bright...

What is it?

This is the hotly anticipated Honda e, an all-electric city car that looks more like a concept than something you'd normally see on the roads. That's because it sort of is – Honda built a concept car in 2017 called the Urban EV, with cutesy, retro-futuristic styling that hinted at what the firm's all-electric future technology could look like. People loved it so much, Honda decided to build it as a halo model for its electrified future.

It's one of those cars you really want to love, because it looks so great inside and out and it's genuinely interesting in an industry of rampant parts sharing. However, some of the numbers could make it a tough sell – with prices starting at £26k and a range of just 137 miles, similarly priced competitors appear to offer more bang for your buck – or charge for your change, perhaps.

So, we've come to a stormy Valencia to find out if there's enough substance to make the Honda e compete on more than just style.

What's new?

Pretty much everything is new here, with this being built from the ground up to be an electric vehicle, rather than converting an existing model for EV life. Being the firm's first full EV, all of the important internals such as the motor and battery are new, as are all of the body panels. It also gets cameras in place of wing mirrors as standard.

Most of the more interesting newness is in the cabin, though. There's the dashboard-wide screens, the all-new user interface, an artificial intelligence system, and an ambience that feels more like a Scandinavian's lounge than a Japanese city car.

What's under the bonnet?

Power comes from a single electric motor that feeds only the rear wheels, fed by a 35.5kWh battery. Power figures are measured at 152bhp and 315Nm of torque for the motor, resulting in

Underpinnings

The Honda e sits on a bespoke EV platform.

an entirely respectable 0-60mph time of 8.3 seconds. The battery range is up to 137 miles, with recharging to 80 per cent from zero taking 30 minutes at a fast charger.

While performance is punchy and the motor is serenely smooth when you need it to be, that range figure will be a sticking point for many – rivals offer considerably more.

What's it like to drive?

As with most electric cars, the Honda e feels supremely responsive to inputs, scooting briskly off the line and darting between traffic with a nimble enthusiasm you just can't find in a combustion-engined car. Its performance can overwhelm the rear wheels, too, so if you stamp on the accelerator in the wet you're often greeted by spinning tyres. It does the cool, calm and collected thing too, though. Electric cars are ultra-relaxing to drive, making the Honda e the perfect antidote to a stressful inner-city commute,

Clear vision

It gets cameras in place of wing mirrors, which feed screens on the dashboard.





Target buyers

With a range of just 137 miles, it's targeted at city dwellers.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Model:	Honda e Advance
Price as tested:	£28,660
Engine:	Single electric motor plus 35.5kWh battery
Power:	152bhp
Torque:	315Nm
Max speed (limited):	90mph
0-60mph:	8.3 seconds
MPG:	N/A
Range:	137 miles
Emissions (CO ₂):	0g/km

TARGET BUYERS:

City dwellers who don't need much range and love new technology.

THE RIVALS:

Mini Electric, Peugeot e-208, Vauxhall Corsa-e.

KEY SELLING POINTS:

1. Serenity of EV power.
2. Comfy, spacious interior.
3. Cool on-board tech.

DEAL CLINCHER:

The ultra-cool cabin will win over buyers on its own.

'The Honda e feels supremely responsive to inputs, scooting briskly off the line and darting between traffic.'

work fantastically with the genuinely unique styling, looking hilarious mingling with more mundane machinery in traffic.

For some, the fact it stands out so much might be a turn-off, but it certainly turns heads.

What's it like inside?

If the exterior turns heads, the interior really is a show-stopper. The most prominent features are the wrap-around screens that dominate the dashboard. There's an 8.8-inch screen ahead of the driver, with two 12.3-inch touchscreens in the centre and ahead of the passenger.

The user interface is excellent, which is all the more impressive given Honda's existing infotainment systems are generally poor.

It's quick to respond to inputs and is easily configurable, with plenty of useful functions and an excellent sat nav.

It even has HDMI inputs, so you can watch high-quality video through it.

The material qualities are largely brilliant too. The wood dashboard is a premium touch,

and the steering wheel and few buttons present inside feel solidly put together, while the general ambience is that of a high-end Ikea lounge – called kumfikaar, perhaps?

Another win for the Honda is cabin space. The car is light and airy, even for taller drivers – though you'll be constantly knocking the heated seats on with your knee...

What's the spec like?

There are two trim levels available, with the base model starting at £26,160 and an Advance model starting at £28,660, both after the government's plug-in car grant. Monthly finance deals should be about £299 and £349 per month respectively, with about 30 per cent (about £8,000) deposit, though these deals are still being finalised.

All models get the wood trim, sweeping screens and cameras for wing mirrors as standard. The base model also gets 16-inch alloy wheels, heated front seats, a panoramic glass roof and adaptive cruise control. It's also a little less powerful. However, Honda is pushing

the Advance model, with the vast majority of early orders expected to have this trim. Extra kit includes the addition of a central camera mirror, automatic parking, heated steering wheel, heated front windscreen and a premium audio system.

An important note, though, is that there are optional 17-inch alloys on Advance models, which reduce the range from 136 miles to 127.

What do the press think?

The Sun described the car as 'cool, clever and a serious contender for your cash'. Sunday Times Driving said: 'There's a lot to like about Honda e.'

What do we think?

The Honda e is an utterly brilliant car. It looks amazing, has a light and airy cabin with fantastic technology, and it's great to drive. However, the range is a sticking point. Anyone who is one of Honda's ideal users, with a short commute and access to charging, will be fine, though. In short, anyone who can be persuaded to take a leap of faith won't be disappointed.



FIRST DRIVE

Toyota Yaris

Toyota's new Yaris is on the horizon, but how is development shaping up? Our man Ryan Hirons gets behind the wheel of a prototype to find out...

What is it?

What you're looking at here is a prototype version of the new Toyota Yaris, with the fourth generation of the Japanese supermini set to arrive on the market in September.

Although the light masking would suggest otherwise, it's a way off dealer forecourts for now, but Toyota has let us behind the wheel of this not-quite-but-very-nearly-production-ready version of the hybrid hatchback as it heads into its final phase of testing.

What's new?

Playing a crucial role in this fourth generation of the Yaris is Toyota's GA-B platform. A development of the TNGA underpinnings that its latest models (excluding the Supra) are sitting on, it's said to offer hugely improved torsional rigidity and a driving position set lower in the car without growing too much inside.

What that theoretically means is a better driving car, as well as a more comfortable one. Also new here is its hybrid powertrain with an engine derived from the latest Corolla, as well as a lithium-ion battery pack. There's a full visual change from its predecessor on the outside, too.

What's under the bonnet?

Put simply, Toyota has taken the 2.0-litre four-cylinder petrol engine from the Corolla, knocked it down to three cylinders – which has dropped capacity to 1.5 litres – while

linking it up to a new lithium-ion battery. Like the Yaris Hybrid before it, power is delivered to the front wheels via a CVT gearbox.

With the car in pre-production phase, Toyota is holding off on full details for now, but we do know the system produces 114bhp and sends the car from 0-60mph in 10.1 seconds. The firm also claims 80 per cent of urban driving can be done on electric power alone, and although official fuel economy figures are some way off yet, we managed about 60mpg.

This powertrain is leaps and bounds ahead of the one preceding it. Power delivery is much smoother, refinement is up and the CVT no longer tries its best to let the power unit imitate an elephant in pain.

What's it like to drive?

Immediately noticeable is how much more agile the car feels, which doesn't just translate to more fun but crucially a car that's very well suited to tackling the urban jungle.

That said, it still feels off the pace of the thrills a Fiesta will deliver, and our prototype had a habit of crashing over bumps, although engineers are looking at that.

How does it look?

A more aggressive approach to design is one that has worked well here, its angry face delivering more on-road presence and a smart rear end.

What's it like inside?

Toyota's efforts to improve the overall feel of the cabin have proved effective. The increased space up front between driver and passenger is an instant welcoming factor, while the newly engineered driving position is leaps and bounds ahead of its predecessor's imitation of driving a lorry that has offset pedals.

Boot capacity weighs in at 286 litres, which puts it a fair way off the Ford Fiesta and Volkswagen Polo, although space in the back row is sufficient for the average-sized adult to cover a reasonable journey in.

What's the spec like?

With its market arrival still some way off, exact pricing for the new Toyota Yaris is still a guess at this point – although Toyota has thrown around the word 'competitive' when pressed on the issue.

Keeping that in mind, plus a little extra for its hybrid guts, we'd speculate around £18,000 when it does go on sale later this year, but we'll know for sure much closer to the time. What we do know is that it'll feature the firm's Safety Sense suite of assistance technology across the board for no extra cost as it pursues a five-star Euro NCAP rating. Keep your eyes peeled to see if that comes to fruition.

What do the press think?

Autocar said: 'There's no doubt that the Yaris has taken a big step

THE KNOWLEDGE

Model as tested:	Toyota Yaris prototype
Price:	TBA
Engine:	1.5-litre petrol-electric hybrid
Power:	114bhp
Torque:	TBA
Max speed:	TBA
0-60mph:	10.1 seconds
MPG:	TBA
Emissions (CO ₂):	84g/km (provisional)

TARGET BUYERS:

Urban dwellers looking for a fun and efficient supermini.

THE RIVALS:

Ford Fiesta, Volkswagen Polo, Vauxhall Corsa.

KEY SELLING POINTS:

1. Vastly improved driving experience.
2. CVT gearbox is much better than before.
3. Cabin is leaps ahead of the last car.

DEAL CLINCHER:

Miles better than the old Yaris. (Fingers crossed the price doesn't jump too much!)

forward' while CAR Magazine added: 'If you already liked the Yaris, this is better than ever.'

What do we think?

It may only be early days for the fourth-generation Toyota Yaris, but signs of the hybrid hatch being a real contender for the supermini crown shine through.

Driveability is much improved over its predecessor, and the overhauled powertrain has taken the hybrid from testing the waters in the last Yaris to a genuinely recommendable option over petrol rivals. We'll have to wait until later in the year before delivering a definitive verdict on the new Yaris, but things are looking good.



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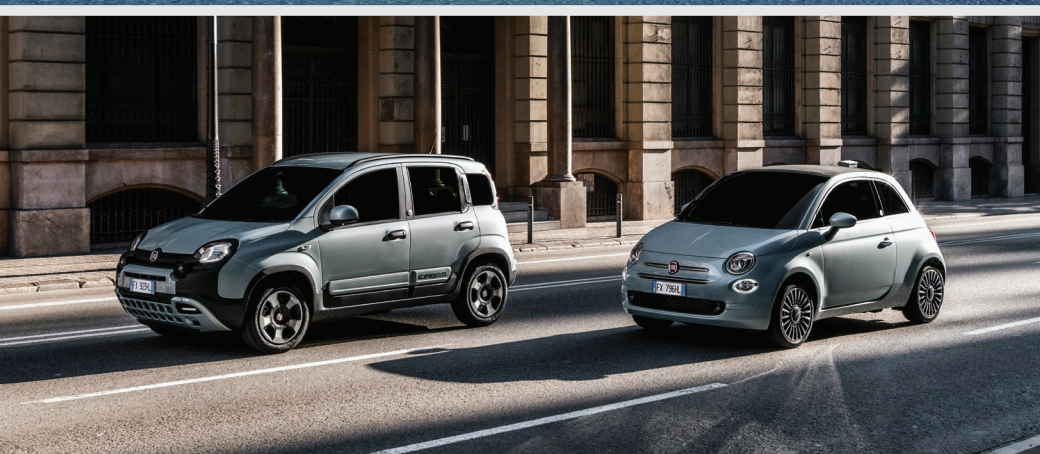


Rated Excellent

NEW MODEL ARMY

TOP PICKS FOR 2020

It's that time of the year when the registration changes again, this time with a move to the '20 plate. With customers bound to be flying into dealerships to see what's on offer, we've taken a look at the key cars that manufacturers have added to their line-ups.



Fiat

Electrification is Fiat's latest push, with mild-hybrid variants of its Panda and 500 city cars introduced to its line-up. Both are powered by a 1.0-litre petrol engine linked to a 12-volt motor, producing a total of 69bhp and 92Nm of torque. These battery-assisted versions are also marked out with a 'Hybrid' logo at the rear and an 'H' pattern on the centre console, while range-topping Launch Edition models feature seats upholstered in a material called Seaqual Yarn, which is made from recycled plastic.



Volkswagen

It's always headline news when a new Volkswagen Golf is introduced, and the eighth-generation model is arriving on UK shores imminently. This new version takes on a digital revolution inside, doing away with many physical controls and buttons, and instead moving key functions to its central 10-inch infotainment display. There's also a digital screen replacing its instrument cluster as standard. The firm has introduced the high-performance T-Roc R, too.

Skoda

Electrification is the name of the game with Skoda at the moment, with two new 'iV' models joining its line-up.

First is the Superb iV plug-in hybrid, linking a 1.4-litre petrol engine to an electric motor, resulting in an output of 215bhp and a claimed fuel efficiency figure of up to 217.3mpg. Further still, Skoda says it can manage 34 miles of electric-only driving.

There's also the Skoda Citigo-e iV. Mechanically similar to the Mii Electric, this EV is said to be capable of 164 miles before needing to be plugged in again and supports 40kW high-speed charging for no extra cost.



Jaguar

It's arguable that the last thing the Jaguar F-Type needed was a makeover, but that's exactly what the British big cat has been given. This new version takes on slim headlights low on the bonnet and tweaked tail-lights to bring it up to date with the rest of the firm's line-up. Its headline equipment change comes in the form of a 12.3-inch 'Interactive Driver Display', replacing analogue dials and gauges in the dash with a configurable screen displaying speed and efficiency info among other vital data. A recent update to the firm's all-electric I-Pace has seen the range for the model increased to 292 miles as well.



Audi

High performance has been the name of the game for recent Audi introductions, with the much-anticipated RS6 Avant joining the fray alongside a facelifted version of its RS Q3. The latter has also been made available in coupe-SUV 'Sportback' form for the first time, too.

Meanwhile, its A5 range has been treated to a mid-life refresh in a bid to bring its look into line with the firm's newest models, and the A1 Citycarver has been introduced to fill the rugged-looking city car niche.



Ford

Stealing the headline additions for Ford is the new Puma. Although the '90s original was a Fiesta-based coupe, the reborn version enters the competitive crossover segment with underpinnings again taken from its supermini brethren. Key to the Puma is a range of mild-hybrid engines plus a clever 'MegaBox' luggage compartment, which is a hidden 80-litre drainable section that's ideal for carrying the likes of muddy boots and smaller camping gear.



Renault

Renault's range has seen a huge revitalisation lately, headlined by the introduction of the new Clio. Although visually it's very similar to its predecessor, this fresh version of the Ford Fiesta rival gets a completely overhauled interior. An entirely new Captur crossover has arrived as well, sharing much of its mechanicals with the Clio and debuting technology such as an all-digital instrument cluster. There's also a second-generation version of the electric Zoe.



Vauxhall

Vauxhall's hit Corsa has arrived as a new generation, becoming the first model to be designed from the ground up under French owner the PSA Group.

Based on the same underpinnings as the Peugeot 208, it promises more space than its predecessor as well as a lower driving position.

A mid-life refresh has also been brought to the Astra. Although visually near enough the same as before, it takes on a completely new selection of engines, with a mix of petrols and diesels offered.



Nissan

Walk down any street and you're almost certain to spot a Nissan Juke, and now a new generation is here to build on the original's popularity.

Although its new look may not be as polarising as before, the crossover still looks unlike anything else in its class, while Nissan has also placed a particular focus on increasing cabin space. It takes on high-tech ProPilot driving assistance systems, too, which bring a taste of autonomy via a sophisticated adaptive cruise control system and a suite of safety kit.

Kia

Joining Kia's line-up just in time for the plate change is the Soul. This electric-only hatchback borrows the award-winning e-Niro's power unit – a 64kWh one in its largest form, said to offer more than 280 miles of driving between charges as well as a respectable 201bhp power output.

Plug-in hybrid variants of its Xceed crossover and Ceed Sportswagon estate are also now available to order, with first deliveries arriving in April.



McLAREN DEALERSHIP

620R GOES DOWN A STORM

McLaren's new 620R is currently on a tour of the British manufacturer's dealers. Oliver Young caught up with the high-performance car at Harwoods Group's New Forest showroom



Limited to just 350 units – only around 30 of which are expected to be sold in the UK – the 620R now tops McLaren's Sports Series range. It sits above the already rapid 570S and 600LT and is essentially a road-going version of the manufacturer's 570S GT4 customer racing car.

To celebrate the arrival of this new track-focused machine, McLaren showrooms across the UK have been holding events to show off both the car and what the dealerships have to offer.

McLaren New Forest's was held on a Sunday morning in February, coinciding with Storm Ciara – but gales and rain were quickly forgotten after stepping inside the Bramshaw showroom.

The immaculate space, while relatively small, played host to a beautiful yellow P1, a striking purple 600LT Spider, a sizzling red Senna and, of course, the 620R.

Only one example of the 620R, in rather a tame spec I was told, is travelling between dealers. It started in Glasgow before making its way south. After the New Forest, the car was heading to Ascot, then off to Europe.

As mentioned before, the model is, in essence, a 570S GT4 race car that has been made road-legal. It's the most powerful car to join the brand's Sports Series line-up – 612bhp allows the car to get from 0-60mph in under three seconds – and

also the most expensive, starting at £250,000 before options.

What kind of customer is the 620R aimed at? Tom Hanson, sales manager at McLaren New Forest, said: 'It's definitely aimed at people who enjoy their track driving. It is very, very much track focused and is a very bespoke, niche car.'

'Air conditioning is an option and there's no stereo as standard. It's really for people to hone their skills on track.'

Around midday, the dealership started to fill with more and more visitors keen to check out the cars on show – the 620R being the centre of attention. Some were owners, while others were simply McLaren enthusiasts excited to see a few of the manufacturer's latest and greatest machines, and overall the 620R met with a pretty

great response, with visitors more than happy to offer their opinion.

Peter Greaves, of the Petrol Ped YouTube channel, said: 'It's the first time I've seen it in the flesh. I can see it being for clients who do really hard-core track days and effectively want a racing car that you can drive home at the end of the day. You can't go wrong really. It's beautiful.'

Graham Smart, also a YouTuber with his channel For The Drive, who was there with the Four Marks Supercar Club, said: 'It's very bold. I do think it's a very nice-looking car and it's nice to get up close and personal with it. I'm not a huge fan of the wing if I'm honest, but I do like it.'

Another attendee, Matthew Brown, said: 'I think it looks really cool. The carbon fibre looks amazing. It's probably an absolute track weapon.'

I asked Hanson what the dealer hoped to achieve by inviting customers and fans. 'It's just about exposure. We want to be open; we want to be approachable; we don't want to be seen as being pretentious in any way.'

'We love where we're based, and we love people coming to visit us.'

McLaren New Forest is very much in its early days, having only opened its showroom doors last year. Since then, Hanson told me, everything has been going swimmingly.

He mentioned that the dealer's aftersales

The McLaren New Forest showroom





The showroom was a riot of colour with the McLarens on display



'It's definitely aimed at people who enjoy their track driving.'

Tom Hanson



The 620R is certainly a car to watch...

facility in particular was going from strength to strength, and that having started with two technicians, it now employed three.

The 620R event proved to be a big success, with a great turnout considering Storm Ciara was in full swing outside.

Not only did it give owners, potential customers and enthusiasts the chance to check out the limited-production 620R as well as other tasty McLarens, it also meant they were able to take in the glamorous showroom with its McLaren-centric decor, such as scale-model cars and McLaren Special Operations kit, all while meeting others with a similar fondness for the brand.

Truly a McLaren showcase for all seasons...



McLaren Special Operations kit on display



No arachnophobia around the 600LT Spider!

PICTURES: OLIVER YOUNG

Q&A

**Tom Hanson,
sales manager**



What's it like having the 620R in the showroom?

It's nice to have it here with us. It's good for people to see it. It's a big draw. We've got lots of people here today to have a look at it. People are always interested in new products and the 620R is pushing the boundaries of what's available as a road car and what McLaren can do.

What's it like for you working here?

It's a lovely place to come to work. We are in the middle of nowhere and we have all the highlights of the New Forest – it's a phenomenal place.

It's great to be surrounded by the cars, to drive them and to interact with the brand. The brand is unique, like no other – they're very approachable, obviously based an hour and a half up the road. It's amazing.

What are your thoughts on being not too far away from Meriden Modena?

We don't see a huge amount of crossover with Ferrari. I think the McLaren customer is typically a bit more of a driver of cars. They're more likely to use them on track regularly.

Owning a McLaren is more of a lifestyle. There are lots of benefits to ownership. We have a very good McLaren owners' club in the UK. So no, we don't see a huge amount of crossover.

**Glenn Field,
technician**



What's it like to work on cars such as these?

Great fun, very enjoyable, exciting. It's a great brand. Not every day's the same. Every job is different. So yeah, good fun. I really enjoy it.

It was a massive learning curve at first – very steep. I had to learn the product, from not knowing much to almost knowing everything.

The work we do is so varied. Every day is a new day, no two faults are the same, no two cars are the same. McLaren is a satisfying brand just for pride, and when you're working on a car, it's good to know we can work on them and can fix them.

Now that you've seen it, what do you think of the 620R?

Very exciting. It's a new product, a fantastic-looking car and it's good for the future of McLaren.

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Autoglym's Ryan Bowden, a technical specialist at the company, gives tips on how to make a smoker's car showroom-ready.

Back in the Seventies and Eighties, a car that smelled of cigarette smoke was as common as one with a dusty dashboard.

Society was different then, and those who enjoyed a cigarette were not seen as pariahs, because practically everyone did it.

However, in today's world, things are different. Fewer than one in five adults smoke and those who do will see the residual values of their used cars hit pretty hard, as no non-smoker wants to buy an ex-smoker's car. But there is an answer, and it lies in treating the very root of the problem.

To prove it, we took a 2005 Land Rover Discovery to Autoglym's HQ in Letchworth, where all its products are developed and made, to see how. The car was an extreme example, owned by the same person since it was six months old and smoked in every single day. The seats were filthy, the headlining sticky and the steering wheel mottled with tar residue.

'This is actually a pretty bad example,' said Ryan. 'Usually, you can clear out a couple of years' worth of cigarette smell by cleaning down to the root of the problem. But 14 years of cigarette smell will be deeply embedded in the car's fabrics. But yeah, we'll give it a go.'

First up, Ryan starts with the vacuum cleaner. If nothing else because, in his view, if you can make it look immediately better it gives you more of a vision towards the quality of the final job. But there's a lot of work still to do.

'A lot of people will squirt in air fresheners or other things that only serve to mask the smell,' said Ryan. 'But after a while these wear off and the underlying source of the smell is still there. You won't get rid of it completely.'

'Instead, you need to get rid of what's causing it, and in the case of a car with fabric seats like this one you need to properly deep-clean it.'

'If the source isn't there, the smell won't be

there - that's the simple science behind it.'

With the car fully vacuumed, Ryan moves on to cleaning the surfaces of the car's interior using Autoglym's Super Interior Clean, which breaks down the dirt with a mild acidic detergent that doesn't harm fabrics or cause discolouration.

Accompanied by the Autoglym Professional 'Magic Sponge', the two trade-specific products make light work of breaking down the filth-ridden door cards and dash, and while the sticky steering wheel requires a bit of patience, Ryan soon has it shiny and smooth again - something we thought was never going to happen.

The seats and headlining are a bigger challenge and call for Autoglym Professional's Fabric Stain Remover in addition to the Super Interior Cleaner.

'The key here is to work on small areas at a time and work it in deep,' said Ryan. It's not a quick job, needing both absorbent cloths and a wet'n'dry vac, but the results are a transformation, with the seats and headlining of the Land Rover taking on a completely different colour by the time Ryan has finished.

As, indeed, does the water in his bucket, which has gone from clear to almost black. 'That's a good thing,' says Ryan as he tips it away. 'That's the car's smell going down the drain.'

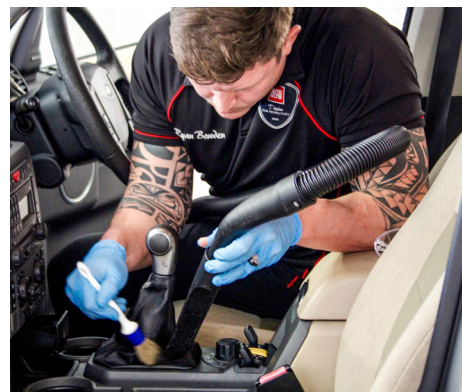
As a finishing touch, Ryan covers all of the fabrics with Autoglym Professional Odour Eliminator, which is an active product made of micro-crystals that sit on the car's surfaces.

'They stay there for a long time,' says Ryan, 'and every time you sit on one or apply pressure to it, it releases a little bit of its odour-eliminating fragrance, which is ideal for cars that have been subject to cigarettes, damp or pet smells.'

As it leaves the Autoglym Academy, our Discovery smells fresher than it has done in years. Good job Ryan - and Autoglym!



The car being treated was an extreme example. It



Ryan gets to work restoring the interior

LifeShine 

Life on the road can be tough, LifeShine is tougher

filthy to fabulous!



had been owned by the same person since it was six months old and smoked in every single day



The results can be seen immediately



You have to hand it to Autoglym!



'That's the smell going down the drain...'



An incredible transformation inside the car

About Autoglym Professional



Autoglym Professional is Autoglym's premium vehicle care range for the professional valeting market. Designed by the expert, for the expert, its products have been specially engineered to meet the varying needs of trade customers in the UK and beyond. To find out more about Autoglym's Professional range, visit autoglymprofessional.com



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Can we reduce threat of chargebacks?

Q For some reason, we are getting quite a number of chargebacks at present. Can we do anything to protect our position and prevent this happening? Is there any defence?

A The first thing to note is that chargebacks are not statutory consumer rights; their nature is contractual. Both MasterCard and Visa, the two largest card payment schemes, entitle the cardholder to dispute a card transaction for one of the specified reasons, known as a chargeback, although after a recent revision Visa calls them disputes.

When a trader contracts with a bank or a payment processing company to take payment by card, part of the terms and conditions is normally that the trader agrees to be bound by the rules of the relevant card scheme, which include chargebacks.

In summary, when a cardholder is disputing a card transaction, he gets in touch with the bank or finance company which issued the card

– the issuer. The issuer checks if the complaint falls under the designated chargeback reasons and should ask the cardholder for details of the dispute and documents in support of the chargeback. If the issuer decides there is enough evidence, it will issue a chargeback on the

transaction and notify the bank or card processing company of the trader, known as the acquirer. The acquirer will then notify the trader of the chargeback and will normally reserve the disputed transaction amount. The trader will be asked to describe the circumstances of the

transaction and provide supporting documents in the defence. If the trader responds and provides the required information and documents, the acquirer will consider whether the chargeback can be refuted and, if so, will present the original transaction to the issuer for payment again – know as the second presentment.

The issuer then decides whether to accept the second presentment for payment or whether the

chargeback should stand. After this stage, if the issuer refuses to remove the chargeback, then there is a possibility of arbitration within either Visa or MasterCard scheme, at a fee.

There are many reasons why a chargeback may be raised. Most relevant to a car sale would be various types of fraud, goods cancelled, not received, defective or not as described.

The cardholder has a very generous time limit to raise a chargeback with the issuer – normally 120 days.

A chargeback can be raised on any card transaction – both debit and credit cards. In practice, a credit card company would prefer to raise a dispute with a trader relying on Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974, rather than raising a chargeback. A claim under Section 75 puts the credit card company in a more advantageous position on cost and potential compensation and cuts out the acquirer, as the claim is raised directly against the trader.

More on this topic in the next issue



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* Subject to vetting

Offers will be running until the end of 2020



WHY I LOVE LAWGISTICS

Tribute to a company 'at the top of their game'

WHEN it comes to dealing with complaints from customers, time is key, and that's certainly true for Southern Commercial Sales, which is based in Eastbourne.

Tom Ware, manager at the firm, said: 'When you have a customer with a problem, they want an answer immediately.'

'Other companies that I've dealt with have struggled with this. They're too slow on their replies and dealing with situations. The customer then gets irate, which only

causes more problems. Lawgistics, however, are completely at the top of their game.'

Southern Commercial Sales has been with Lawgistics for four years.

The dealer had an issue last year with a customer who bought a new Peugeot Boxer from it, but they had covered 20,000 miles in less than six months when the ECU went.

It was covered by the manufacturer's warranty, but the customer was trying to say it was unfit for purpose.

Ware said: 'The customer had obtained legal advice, but it wasn't the right legal advice.'

'Lawgistics picked it to bits and proved that he did not have a leg to stand on, with the vehicle getting repaired by the main dealer, just as it always should have been.'

Ware added: 'Once the customer got their vehicle back, they were happy – but had Lawgistics not been involved, I would have really struggled. It really smoothed over the whole situation.'

WANT TO UPGRADE?

LAWGISTICS' Basic membership – which you receive as a member of Car Dealer Club – is a cracking deal, but what if you need something that has extra clout? Larger dealer groups or a dealer embroiled in a big legal battle may require some more firepower, and the good news is that club members get discounts on Lawgistics' other packages. You'll receive a £100 discount off the Small Business package (normally £795) – perfect for sole traders, a partnership or a small dealer group – and £250 off the Professional package (normally £1,595). This is ideal for franchises, a dealer group or a car supermarket and covers all relevant legal areas and documentation. There really is a package for everyone with Lawgistics.

Part-ex error has left us out of pocket

Q Our dealership often agrees to part-exchange customers' cars towards the sale price.

Unfortunately, following a sale, it has transpired that we mistakenly overvalued the part-exchange vehicle by thousands of pounds. Do we have any redress?

A Traders often use computers to value vehicles and mistakes do sometimes occur.

Incorrect details can be entered or you may forget to hit the enter button, resulting in you offering the customer a valuation that

doesn't represent the true worth of the vehicle.

In this situation, a trader may be entitled to rescind the contract by relying on the common law rule of unilateral mistake.

This arises where one party is mistaken and the other party is aware of the mistake or ought to have known of the mistake and the mistake relates to a fundamental aspect of the contract.

In the case of Hartog v Colin & Shields (1939) where the price of hare skins was mistakenly quoted

for sale by the pound rather than by the piece, the court held that one party shouldn't be allowed to take advantage of a mistake made by the other and, as such, the contract was void.

The appropriate remedy is to rescind the contract, meaning all actions taken under it must be undone. The car sold should therefore be returned and the part-exchange vehicle given back.

As an alternative, traders may seek to recover the difference in value from the customer.

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Discount on software and free health check app from Dragon2000

Dragon2000's dealer management system is one of the most versatile and easy-to-use products on the market. The software can help manage supplier and customer details, help you keep on top of your costs, and ensure that your business is running as smoothly and as profitably as possible. Car Dealer Club members are eligible for a 10 per cent discount on their first year of a Dragon2000 software subscription – and they get the free Vehicle Health Check app too.

Dragon2000

Personalised promotional warranty material from The WMS Group

WMS Group are one of the UK's leading business-to-business car warranty suppliers, providing extended warranty cover and other motoring protection to more than 3,500 dealerships across the UK. Club members who sign up to our flagship used car scheme Safe and Sound (endorsed by former Stig and Hollywood stunt driver Ben Collins) will receive a promotional warranty video, starring Ben and tailored round your dealer's needs, at zero cost. We'll even come out to your dealership to film it!

WMSGroup

Fifty per cent off your first video shoot or PR package

Video has become a must-have for dealers, with branded, broadcast-quality video for corporate messaging and social media outlets now the industry standard. Automotive PR and video expert OnCue Comms, which works with the likes of Glyn Hopkin, Nissan, Mitsubishi, Skoda and Motors.co.uk, is offering club members 50 per cent off their first video shoot or PR package. For more information, please call 023 9252 2434.



The statistics

/ SMMT SALES DATA / TAKING STOCK /

SMMT
sales data

Jan/year to date

UNCERTAINTY CONTINUES

Confidence still lacking as another month of decline kicks off 2020

Any hopes of a positive start to 2020 in terms of new car sales were dashed when the SMMT revealed its registration stats for January.

They revealed that the UK new car market declined 7.3 per cent in the first month of the year, with a total of 149,279 vehicles leaving showrooms.

Once again, confusion surrounding diesel and clean air zones and ongoing low levels of confidence continued to affect demand.

Registrations by private buyers were down 13.9 per cent, while fleet registrations also fell but by a less significant 2.2 per cent. Registrations of new diesel cars fell for the 34th month, by 36 per cent, to record the weakest performance since 2000 and claim just a 19.8 per cent share of the market, while petrol demand also declined, by 9.5 per cent. Alternatively-fuelled cars, however, continued to grow in popularity. Hybrid electric cars (HEVs) increased by 20.6 per cent, with 8,941 hitting British roads, and plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) demand more than doubled, up 111.1 per cent to 4,788 units.

Battery electric vehicle (BEV) registrations, meanwhile, continued to

surge, up 203.9 per cent to 4,054 units and claiming a 2.7 per cent market share.

Combined, alternatively-fuelled vehicle registrations reached 11.9 per cent of the market in January – the highest on record, up from 6.8 per cent in the same month last year.

The figures came a day after the government announced its ambition to end the sale of all new vehicles with an internal combustion engine, including HEVs and PHEVs, by 2035. Mike Hawes, SMMT chief executive, pictured, said: 'The new car market is a key driver of the UK's overall economy, so another month of decline is unsettling. Consumer confidence is not returning to the market and will not be helped by the government's decision to add further confusion and instability by moving the goalposts on the end of sales of internal combustion engine cars.'

'While ambition is understandable, as we must address climate change and air-quality concerns, blanket bans do not help short-term consumer confidence.'

'To be successful, the government must lead the transition with an extensive and appropriately-funded

package of fiscal incentives, policies and investment to drive demand.'

Sue Robinson, director of the National Franchised Dealers' Association, described the January figures as 'disappointing' but added: 'Positively, sales of pure electric vehicles rose significantly and the upward trend is likely to continue. However, the government's clean air policies must be

consistent, and motorists need to receive further support, especially if the UK is to meet the 2035 deadline for the sales of new petrol, diesel cars and hybrids.'

'This includes maintaining the plug-in car grant.'

'When planning future policies, it is crucial that the government recognises the investments that will be required by franchised retailers and those that have already been made to meet fast-changing consumer demand.'

'Additionally, we urge the government to reconsider its plans to ban the sales of new plug-in hybrids by 2035 considering the growth that this segment is experiencing.'

January's best-sellers, p10



Top 5

Most-improved manufacturers in January

MG	+144%
Lexus	+44%
Bentley	+36%
Lotus	+28%
Jeep	+26%



Bottom 5

Worst-performing manufacturers in January

Smart	-94%
Subaru	-71%
Dacia	-50.6%
SsangYong	-50.4%
Suzuki	-40%



MG set to open more dealerships to cope with demand

MG Motor UK is celebrating an exceptional start to the year, delivering record-breaking sales volume in January.

The iconic British brand sold a record 1,846 cars in January, securing its highest ever monthly market share at 1.24 per cent. Boasting its 27th consecutive month of sales and share growth, MG's exceptional performance continues to

be fronted by the all-electric ZS EV SUV, which is helping the manufacturer outperform its ambitious objectives. The UK's first truly affordable, family-friendly electric car, ZS EV has been a key player in bringing zero-emissions motoring to drivers across the UK.

Daniel Gregorious, head of sales and marketing at MG Motor UK, said: 'Following an exceptional

2019, we're delighted to have started 2020 with such significant growth. With more new dealerships set to open over the coming weeks, we're bringing our brand even closer to UK consumers all the time.'

'With a high-quality range of affordable cars, including our fully electric ZS EV SUV, we really do have something for everyone.'



Honda
-13%



Nissan
+18%

Marque	January 2020		January 2019		% change	Year-to-date (YTD)				
	2020	% market share	2019	% market share		2020	% market share	2019	% market share	% change
Abarth	220	0.15	260	0.16	-15.38	220	0.15	260	0.16	-15.38
Alfa Romeo	202	0.14	299	0.19	-32.44	202	0.14	299	0.19	-32.44
Alpine	10	0.01	16	0.01	-37.50	10	0.01	16	0.01	-37.50
Audi	9,760	6.54	8,632	5.36	13.07	9,760	6.54	8,632	5.36	13.07
Bentley	178	0.12	130	0.08	36.92	178	0.12	130	0.08	36.92
BMW	10,078	6.75	9,553	5.93	5.50	10,078	6.75	9,553	5.93	5.50
Chevrolet	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Citroen	3,050	2.04	3,887	2.41	-21.53	3,050	2.04	3,887	2.41	-21.53
Dacia	1,222	0.82	2,475	1.54	-50.63	1,222	0.82	2,475	1.54	-50.63
DS	285	0.19	253	0.16	12.65	285	0.19	253	0.16	12.65
Fiat	1,711	1.15	1,676	1.04	2.09	1,711	1.15	1,676	1.04	2.09
Ford	16,377	10.97	16,629	10.33	-1.52	16,377	10.97	16,629	10.33	-1.52
Honda	3,190	2.14	3,700	2.30	-13.78	3,190	2.14	3,700	2.30	-13.78
Hyundai	4,005	2.68	5,778	3.59	-30.69	4,005	2.68	5,778	3.59	-30.69
Infiniti	0	0.00	32	0.02	0.00	0	0.00	32	0.02	0.00
Jaguar	2,325	1.56	2,121	1.32	9.62	2,325	1.56	2,121	1.32	9.62
Jeep	472	0.32	372	0.23	26.88	472	0.32	372	0.23	26.88
Kia	6,284	4.21	8,328	5.17	-24.54	6,284	4.21	8,328	5.17	-24.54
Land Rover	5,613	3.76	5,601	3.48	0.21	5,613	3.76	5,601	3.48	0.21
Lexus	1,454	0.97	1,007	0.63	44.39	1,454	0.97	1,007	0.63	44.39
Lotus	9	0.01	7	0.00	28.57	9	0.01	7	0.00	28.57
Maserati	71	0.05	83	0.05	-14.46	71	0.05	83	0.05	-14.46
Mazda	2,025	1.36	2,724	1.69	-25.66	2,025	1.36	2,724	1.69	-25.66
Mercedes-Benz	11,130	7.46	12,249	7.61	-9.14	11,130	7.46	12,249	7.61	-9.14
MG	1,846	1.24	754	0.47	144.83	1,846	1.24	754	0.47	144.83
Mini	2,232	1.50	3,251	2.02	-31.34	2,232	1.50	3,251	2.02	-31.34
Mitsubishi	1,413	0.95	1,213	0.75	16.49	1,413	0.95	1,213	0.75	16.49
Nissan	8,251	5.53	6,969	4.33	18.40	8,251	5.53	6,969	4.33	18.40
Peugeot	5,129	3.44	5,653	3.51	-9.27	5,129	3.44	5,653	3.51	-9.27
Porsche	639	0.43	581	0.36	9.98	639	0.43	581	0.36	9.98
Renault	2,904	1.95	3,365	2.09	-13.70	2,904	1.95	3,365	2.09	-13.70
Seat	5,201	3.48	5,522	3.43	-5.81	5,201	3.48	5,522	3.43	-5.81
Skoda	4,966	3.33	5,402	3.36	-8.07	4,966	3.33	5,402	3.36	-8.07
Smart	25	0.02	490	0.30	-94.90	25	0.02	490	0.30	-94.90
SsangYong	103	0.07	208	0.13	-50.48	103	0.07	208	0.13	-50.48
Subaru	49	0.03	174	0.11	-71.84	49	0.03	174	0.11	-71.84
Suzuki	1,794	1.20	3,006	1.87	-40.32	1,794	1.20	3,006	1.87	-40.32
Toyota	7,903	5.29	8,575	5.33	-7.84	7,903	5.29	8,575	5.33	-7.84
Vauxhall	9,236	6.19	12,250	7.61	-24.60	9,236	6.19	12,250	7.61	-24.60
Volkswagen	13,197	8.84	13,224	8.21	-0.20	13,197	8.84	13,224	8.21	-0.20
Volvo	4,107	2.75	4,079	2.53	0.69	4,107	2.75	4,079	2.53	0.69
Other British	217	0.15	278	0.17	-21.94	217	0.15	278	0.17	-21.94
Other imports	396	0.27	207	0.13	91.30	396	0.27	207	0.13	91.30
Total	149,279		161,013		-7.29	149,279		161,013		-7.29

Figures supplied by SMMT

Fullyloaded

/ LIGHT COMMERCIAL VEHICLES / FLEET / SMMT STATS /

FUEL

Ford approves renewable diesel for new Transits



FORD has approved the use of hydrotreated vegetable oil in its Transit vans.

The renewable diesel fuel – HVO – is based on waste oils, including used cooking oil from restaurants, takeaways and kitchens at home.

The use of HVO in place of conventional fossil fuels can contribute to improvements in air quality, said Ford. Greenhouse gases can be reduced by up to 90 per cent compared with regular diesel, and vehicles that run on HVO emit less NOx and particulates than other diesel vehicles because the fuel contains no sulphur or oxygen.

Ford said it had thoroughly tested HVO in its 2.0-litre EcoBlue engine to make sure no modifications would be needed and that it didn't affect servicing.

No further development of the fuel was needed before it could be used in Ford's latest Transit vans, it added.

HVO is on sale at selected fuel stations in Europe, mainly in Scandinavia and the Baltic states, where it can be offered in a pure form, or as a blend with regular diesel. If a vehicle runs low on HVO in an area where it isn't sold, the driver can fill up with conventional diesel, as the fuels can mix in the tank without causing problems. It can also be delivered by specialist suppliers to a company's on-site fuelling facility.

LANDMARK DEAL

Nissan delivers 300 e-NV200 vans to DPD



by **DAVE BROWN**

dave@blackballmedia.co.uk

Delivery and logistics firm DPD has signed a landmark deal with Nissan Motor GB for 300 of its e-NV200 vans.

The order will more than triple DPD's current total EV tally, taking it to 450 by May.

It is aiming for 10 per cent of vehicles at all of its 68 UK depots to be electric by the end of the year as part of its strategy to be the most responsible and sustainable city centre delivery company and the leader in electric vehicles in the UK.

The e-NV200 already makes up the majority of DPD's fleet, with 91 successfully delivering parcels over the past 18 months.

The new vehicles will be dispatched to DPD depots across the country in the coming weeks, where they will be used for local multi-drop deliveries, travelling up to 100 miles a day.

Feedback from drivers so far has been very positive, thanks to the quiet and relaxing drive, and the company has also spent time training its employees on how to adapt to driving an EV, with comprehensive handover sessions.



DPD expects to charge the vehicles overnight at its depots, and will decide where to use the EVs each day using its in-house route calculation and vehicle optimisation systems.

The Nissan e-NV200 can cover a WLTP-approved 124 to 187 miles on one charge (combined/city cycle) and can be rapid-charged to 80 per cent in around 60 minutes or to full in less than eight hours with a wall box. Dwain McDonald, DPD's chief executive, said: 'This is a real landmark day in the move to a more

sustainable future for the parcel industry.'

Peter McDonald, fleet director at Nissan Motor GB, said: 'It's exciting to see a company built on delivering on time and to schedule proving that an electric vehicle can work for them while also making such a large commitment to reducing their carbon footprint.'

'We're seeing increased demand for the e-NV200 as more businesses look for an all-electric alternative. Nissan is able to deliver a fantastic product for them and fast.'

Top-selling LCVs in January



Source: SMMT

Ford Transit Custom	3,117	Peugeot Partner	1,202
Ford Transit	1,897	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter	1,196
Vauxhall Vivaro	1,549	Volkswagen Transporter	1,080
Ford Transit Connect	1,364	Ford Ranger	1,034
Citroen Berlingo	1,245	Vauxhall Combo	963

LCV registrations, p66



'The D-Max XTR may be an old-school pick-up but it bristles with a charm that's hard to ignore.'



Jack Evans tries Isuzu's lifestyle-orientated vehicle for size, p67

Sliding doors

WITH CRAIG CHEETHAM

A look at the world of buying and selling vans and pick-ups

Arrival's UPS deal is an electrifying bolt out of the blue for the sector

I wondered when Arrival was finally going to arrive, and it seems that with January's news that the Anglo-Russian EV venture had secured a 10,000-vehicle deal with UPS, it finally made its entrance. It's a company I've been watching for a while as, unlike other electric van makers, it wasn't interested in rushing to market and competing with others.

Launched in 2014 as Charge Automotive, with its headquarters on an industrial estate in Banbury, Oxfordshire, the company quietly but confidently set about making an EV that it said would represent 'Generation 2.0' for electric vehicles, with prices that would be entirely accessible and aligned with conventionally fuelled vans.

All the while, with Britain's economy teetering on the brink, Charge quietly got on with the job in hand. In 2016, it gave us the first glimpse of its EV, which is about the same size as a large-bodied Transit but, thanks to its EV drivetrain, isn't in need of a bonnet. Ergo, it can be nice and square, which is really quite useful for a van.

It's not great for aerodynamics though, so the original Charge had a smooth, curvy and rounded front. It was both useful and displayed that one thing all too frequently lacking in modern vehicles, especially LCVs – character. But it was a chat with company boss Denis Sverdlov at the Cenex show at Millbrook that really sealed it for me. He told me in no uncertain terms that by 2020 his company would be a household name. I admired his optimism but wasn't 100 per cent convinced. After all, opening a new van factory under the spectre of a no-deal Brexit and torrid times for the UK's automotive supply chain appeared to make little sense.

Then, in 2018, Arrival (as it had become) announced that both Royal Mail and UPS were trying out its vans. For urban multi-drop use, an affordable EV with a large load bay, relatively compact body plus a range of more than 200 miles made every bit of sense, and I started to believe in Sverdlov's hype.

After all, commercial vehicles offer

a compelling rationale for electrification, often with pre-planned routes and mileage, charging that could be installed in depots between shifts, and tightening emissions regulations, meaning that diesel vans are becoming unviable in cities such as London. And while Arrival hasn't named a 'price' for the van yet, it has frequently said it would cost about £35,000 at retail level. That's Sprinter money and well within the budget of many fleet managers.

How does it do this? Well, unlike any other vehicle manufacturer, Arrival has developed an entirely new way of making vehicles. It's the first volume vehicle since the Ford Model 'T' to not be built on a linear production line. Instead, various 'cells' of the van are made in different parts of the plant and all come together at the end to be assembled like a giant Duplo kit. It doesn't sound efficient but it is, and the vehicle's 'skateboard' platform could well be the basis for future vehicles, assembled in a modular manner.

'It's doesn't have much to do with the way things are done today,' Sverdlov told me. 'It's a blank sheet – more Silicon Valley than Detroit in terms of manufacturing.'

His confidence has attracted investors. Hyundai has put in 100 million euros for access to the systems, while Blackberry is providing its QNX technology at cost to help develop the van's autonomous systems. It was only a matter of time before big news came along, and it arrived in January 2020, just as Sverdlov had confidently predicted. Arrival went from being little-known to national news overnight after the world's second largest parcel delivery firm, UPS, confirmed it had entered a deal to buy a fleet of vans from it. And we're not talking 50 or 100. We're talking 10,000, which is about a seventh of the production of Vauxhall's Luton van factory. It's a huge vote of confidence not just for Arrival but for electric vans as well, and is a big enough deal for Arrival to start proper mass production – its own way. Arrival has arrived. And so has the viable, accessible and inexpensive electric van.



Craig Cheetham is an experienced automotive journalist with specialist knowledge of the LCV sector.

Turn over the page for the latest LCV registrations

Positive start to 2020 as market rises by 5.9 per cent

THE UK new light commercial vehicle market enjoyed growth in the first month of the year, according to the latest figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Registrations rose by 5.9 per cent in January – the second consecutive month of growth after three months of decline towards the end of 2019 – caused by pent-up demand because of regulatory changes, as well as operators taking advantage of some compelling deals on the latest models. Mike Hawes, SMMT chief executive,

said: 'January's growth is welcome news for the commercial vehicle sector.

'Especially welcome is the increased uptake of alternatively fuelled commercial vehicles – essential if we are to address both climate change and air quality goals. The fastest way to do this is by encouraging uptake of the latest low-emission vehicles, regardless of fuel type, and business confidence remains vital for this transition.'

Sue Robinson, director of the National Franchised Dealers' Association, commented:

'The increase of light commercial vehicle registrations by 5.9 per cent this January has shown confidence has returned to the market after recent political and economic uncertainties.

'There is optimism in light commercial dealerships that the demand for clean, efficient and reliable business transport puts this sector in good stead for 2020.'

She added that the jump in registrations for service vans indicated confidence from buyers in future business prosperity.

Registrations of new commercial vehicles less than 3.5 tonnes

Figures supplied by SMMT

Marque	January 2020		January 2019		% change	Year-to-date figures				
	2020	% market share	2019	% market share		2020	% market share	2019	% market share	% change
Ford	8,331	35.37	7,065	31.77	17.92	8,331	35.37	7,065	31.77	17.92
Vauxhall	2,896	12.29	1,586	7.13	82.60	2,896	12.29	1,586	7.13	82.60
Volkswagen	2,172	9.22	2,609	11.73	-16.75	2,172	9.22	2,609	11.73	-16.75
Peugeot	2,003	8.50	2,111	9.49	-5.12	2,003	8.50	2,111	9.49	-5.12
Citroen	1,997	8.48	1,950	8.77	2.41	1,997	8.48	1,950	8.77	2.41
Mercedes	1,558	6.61	1,789	8.05	-12.91	1,558	6.61	1,789	8.05	-12.91
Nissan	1,019	4.33	805	3.62	26.58	1,019	4.33	805	3.62	26.58
Toyota	818	3.47	664	2.99	23.19	818	3.47	664	2.99	23.19
Mitsubishi	691	2.93	1,249	5.62	-44.68	691	2.93	1,249	5.62	-44.68
Renault	662	2.81	1,010	4.54	-34.46	662	2.81	1,010	4.54	-34.46
Fiat	523	2.22	545	2.45	-4.04	523	2.22	545	2.45	-4.04
Isuzu	277	1.18	194	0.87	42.78	277	1.18	194	0.87	42.78
Iveco	156	0.66	251	1.13	-37.85	156	0.66	251	1.13	-37.85
Land Rover	113	0.48	111	0.50	1.80	113	0.48	111	0.50	1.80
MAN	95	0.40	68	0.31	39.71	95	0.40	68	0.31	39.71
Renault Trucks	77	0.33	75	0.34	2.67	77	0.33	75	0.34	2.67
LDV	55	0.23	40	0.18	37.50	55	0.23	40	0.18	37.50
SsangYong	51	0.22	41	0.18	24.39	51	0.22	41	0.18	24.39
Isuzu Trucks	49	0.21	53	0.24	-7.55	49	0.21	53	0.24	-7.55
Fuso	14	0.06	10	0.04	40.00	14	0.06	10	0.04	40.00
Hyundai	0	0.00	10	0.04	0.00	0	0.00	10	0.04	0.00
Total light CV	23,557	100.00	22,236	100.00	5.94	23,557	100.00	22,236	100.00	5.94

Registrations of new commercial vehicles 3.5 tonnes to 6.0 tonnes

Figures supplied by SMMT

Marque	January 2020		January 2019		% change	Year-to-date figures				
	2020	% market share	2019	% market share		2020	% market share	2019	% market share	% change
Mercedes	189	37.95	81	22.63	133.33	189	37.95	81	22.63	133.33
Peugeot	123	24.70	74	20.67	66.22	123	24.70	74	20.67	66.22
Ford	68	13.65	22	6.15	209.09	68	13.65	22	6.15	209.09
Fiat	51	10.24	102	28.49	-50.00	51	10.24	102	28.49	-50.00
Citroen	45	9.04	9	2.51	400.00	45	9.04	9	2.51	400.00
Iveco	18	3.61	47	13.13	-61.70	18	3.61	47	13.13	-61.70
MAN	3	0.60	0	0.00	0.00	3	0.60	0	0.00	0.00
Volkswagen	1	0.20	7	1.96	-85.71	1	0.20	7	1.96	-85.71
Renault	0	0.00	5	1.40	0.00	0	0.00	5	1.40	0.00
Vauxhall	0	0.00	11	3.07	0.00	0	0.00	11	3.07	0.00
Total heavy CV	498	100.00	358	100.00	39.11	498	100.00	358	100.00	39.11



FIRST DRIVE

Isuzu D-Max XTR

The XTR is a lifestyle-orientated vehicle designed to take on the likes of Ford's Ranger Raptor. Jack Evans finds out if it's up to it.

What is it?

The D-Max XTR is a tougher, more look-at-me version of Isuzu's rugged pick-up and boasts a variety of beefed-up extras, as the manufacturer eyes the lifestyle vehicle segment.

What's new?

The suspension set-up is brought to the truck courtesy of off-road specialists Pedders. The brakes are also new to provide better performance, while knobbly Pirelli Scorpion tyres sit on all four corners.

The exterior has been given a serious amount of extra protection with bigger bumpers, wider arches and large, matt-finished sidesteps. There's also the hard-to-miss (and removeable) decal set.

What's under the bonnet?

The XTR boasts no power upgrades over the standard D-Max, meaning the rather agricultural 1.9-litre turbocharged diesel produces just 162bhp. However, it does kick out a useable 360Nm of torque.

What's it like to drive?

'Rudimentary' is probably the best word to describe it. First and second gears are extremely short, and the engine's reasonably low output

ensures you're unlikely to outpace anything on the road.

At low speeds, the suspension is harsh, but surprisingly at higher speeds this evens out. The steering is heavy but direct, so low-speed changes of direction need a lot of effort from the driver.

How does it look?

Big, brash and in your face, the D-Max XTR looks just like you'd want a larger-than-life pick-up to look. It's imposing and it's a vehicle that turns heads wherever it goes. Whether it's tasteful is down to the individual, but it'll certainly get a conversation started.

The green highlights may not be for everyone, but the application of this jazzy paint on areas such as the suspension and brakes only helps to differentiate this truck from the rest of the D-Max range.

What's it like inside?

The XTR gains a series of notable additions over the standard D-Max when it comes to the cabin, with the most noticeable being the Alcantara-trimmed steering wheel and seats.

The rest of the cabin features a series of harsher but hard-wearing plastics, which may not feel as high quality as the ones you'll find

on rival trucks, but offer better protection and will be far easier to clean when things get muddy.

What's the spec like?

Prices for the XTR kick off from around £35,000 which comprehensively undercuts the Ford Ranger Raptor. That doesn't mean it's a spartan affair inside, however, with air conditioning, cruise control and Bluetooth all standard.

One upgrade we'd recommend is the option for a nine-inch multifunction colour touchscreen at £2,155 before VAT. It brings with it sat nav and Apple CarPlay.

Then there's a light bar, which at £755 ex-VAT is another great option, providing an astounding amount of light when switched on.

Something also worth bearing in mind is that because the D-Max is classed as a commercial vehicle, the VAT on the truck can be claimed back, whereas the same can't be said for the Raptor.

What do the press think?

CAR called it 'a very appealing package for serious off-road users who want a refined on-road experience too', while Auto Express said: 'The Isuzu D-Max XTR looks the part and by and large it feels the part too.'

THE KNOWLEDGE

Model:	Isuzu D-Max XTR
Price (as tested):	£33,999 (ex-VAT)
Engine:	1.9-litre turbodiesel
Power:	162bhp
Torque:	360Nm
Max speed:	112 mph
0-60mph:	12.5 secs
MPG (combined):	40.4
Emissions:	183g/km CO₂

TARGET BUYERS:

Those who want a rugged pick-up with unmissable looks.

THE RIVALS:

Ford Ranger Raptor, Mitsubishi L200, Volkswagen Amarok.

KEY SELLING POINTS:

1. Superb off-road handling.
2. High level of standard equipment.
3. Strong exterior design.

DEAL CLINCHER:

Arguably one of the D-Max's best iterations, making it a more compelling pick-up choice than ever.

What do we think?

The D-Max XTR may be an old-school pick-up but it bristles with a charm that's hard to ignore. Yes, it might not be as refined or as quick as rivals, but if you're after a truck with genuine off-road capability bolstered by enhanced looks and good levels of equipment, then it could be the one for you. Add in that it undercuts rivals on cost by some margin and it's likely that it'll justify its shortcomings elsewhere as the years and miles pass by.

Aftermarket

SERVICING & REPAIRS / PRODUCT NEWS / PEOPLE & PLACES

NEW ROLE

AutoProtect says hello again to Tara



COMPLIANCE expert Tara Williams will be rejoining AutoProtect Group at the start of March, filling the newly created role of chief risk and compliance officer.

She will also become managing director of i-Comply Online – the business she headed up following its acquisition by AutoProtect in 2014. Her appointment comes at a crucial time for dealer F&I as successive Financial Conduct Authority reports – published in October and November 2019 – signal changes to the established operating model.

Williams was previously at AutoProtect Group between 2014 and 2018, leaving to join motor retailer Group 1 Automotive as F&I and compliance director.

'I am delighted to be rejoining AutoProtect Group,' she said.

'It will be wonderful to work with many of the people I know from my previous time within the company.

'However, I recognise that the market has moved on and that embracing the developments in regulatory compliance is business-critical to the motor retail community. In my new role, I aim to work across the group with AutoProtect, DealTrak and Shine! to develop a new standard of compliance support for dealers.'

COMPETITION

Lucky Kathryn scoops Lanzarote holiday prize



by **DAVE BROWN**
@CarDealerDave

National garage network Servicesure has named Kathryn Spencer of East Grinstead as the lucky winner of a competition to relax in the sun on a luxury Villa Plus family holiday.

The competition gave entrants the chance to win a week-long break up to the value of £3,000 in Majorca, Menorca, Lanzarote, Fuerteventura or mainland Spain.

Kathryn said she was prompted to enter after seeing the competition advertised on Facebook.

'It seemed like an incredible prize, and I really hoped that I would win as the locations were perfect for a nice family holiday,' she said.

Running from September until December last year, the contest encouraged Servicesure customers to enter online or at their local branch.

Kathryn, who uses Pat's Garage, which was established in the town in 1959, added: 'I was actually on holiday with my partner, Al, when I found out that I'd won. They'd notified me by email as I had no phone signal at the time, and my first thought was that this can't be real!'

'When I returned home, I spoke to Servicesure over the phone to confirm that I'd won. I couldn't believe it – I was so happy!'

Her family have already decided that they will be spending the week in a villa in Lanzarote during the summer holidays.



From left: Pat's Garage co-partner Lloyd Rose, Servicesure sales manager Sarah Franklin, competition winner Kathryn Spencer and Servicesure regional business director John Anderson

'The villa looks lovely and my three children are all so excited, especially my youngest, Jasmine, as she loves swimming.'

Paul Dineen, head of garage programmes at Servicesure, said: 'A huge congratulations to Kathryn and her family for taking home such a sought-after prize.'

'Competitions like this allow us to give a little something back to regular customers of the Servicesure network and say a big "thank you" for their loyalty, while creating brand awareness for the network.'

Investigation launched into workshop blaze

ABOUT 70 firefighters tackled a fire at a car workshop in north-east London.

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) said it was called to the blaze at MD Motors in Hoe Street, Walthamstow, shortly before 5pm on February 3.

Ten fire engines from Walthamstow, Tottenham, Leyton, Homerton and Woodford were sent to the scene, where the two-floor car workshop and garages were alight. Videos of the fire shared on social media showed flames and smoke rising into the sky, and people could be seen watching the blaze near Ye Olde Rose and Crown pub as they stood behind a cordon.

Tweeting an update shortly before 8pm, the LFB said

crews were still at the scene of the fire, where part of the ground floor, first floor and roof remained alight.

Hoe Street was closed and motorists were advised to avoid the area.

Station commander Jon Holt, who was at the scene, said: 'Crews have worked hard to protect the surrounding shops and businesses and stop the fire spreading.'

At 8.20pm, the LFB tweeted that the fire had been brought under control and that there had been no reports of injuries. The cause is under investigation.

Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy tweeted her thanks to the emergency service, as well as helping affected businesses at the scene.

AWARD

Ford names Andy as top technician

A TECHNICIAN at Ford Birmingham has been named Ford Technician of the Year.

Andy O'Grady, who has worked at the Bristol Street Motors dealership for 17 years, was previously at Hamer Ford, which closed its doors in 2002, before joining Ford Birmingham in Bristol Street.

In 2017, he came second in the Ford Technician of the Year contest and vowed to work to the best of his ability to secure the first-place prize, which he did in the 2019 awards.

To be eligible, applicants must hold Ford-qualified senior or master technician status and be up to date with training.

The final took place at the



Henry Ford Academy, where the six finalists completed a series of assessments for first, second and third place.

O'Grady, 40, said: 'I feel very proud to have achieved this award, particularly with coming second previously.'

'It's great to be recognised for the hard work that I put in on a daily basis and I'm very grateful to have been nominated.'

Martin Leach, general manager of Ford Birmingham, said: 'Andy is a perfectionist and his attention to detail in his day-to-day work is an example to the workshop.'

'I have no doubt that this will inspire others to try to achieve what Andy has managed, and I know he is looking forward to defending his title next year!'



Nichola Mallon spoke to reporters at the Balmoral MOT centre in Belfast after the full suspension of tests was brought in

SUSPENSION

No definite date for end of MOT lifts 'crisis'

Northern Ireland infrastructure minister Nichola Mallon has said she can't give a date for when MOT testing centres will return to business as usual.

MOT tests for cars and light vehicles were suspended on January 27 after concerns over lift equipment. Cracks in vehicle lifts were first detected in November but the problem rapidly escalated in January, and Driver and Vehicle Agency chief executive Paul Duffy subsequently announced the suspension of the tests at its 15 centres – the only places in Northern Ireland where MOT tests can be carried out.

Cars are due their first MOT there after four years and taxis from when they are first used. Owners of cars and light vehicles that



by **JOHN BOWMAN**
john@blackballmedia.co.uk

are five years old or more will be eligible for a temporary exemption certificate, and younger cars and taxis were being prioritised for tests as replacement lifts were gradually brought in to clear the backlog.

Giving evidence to the infrastructure committee at Stormont, Mallon said work was under way but she wasn't willing to speculate on dates for full resumption yet.

'I have appointed as one of the two independent reviews an engineering expert company.

'They have been tasked with providing to me independent expert advice on business recovery.

'That will include contingency

arrangements in the here and now to maximise capacity but also the steps required to get our MOT centres back fully operable as quickly as possible.

'But... at this moment in time, I cannot give a date as to when we will have the MOT centres fully and safely operable.'

Asked by committee chairwoman Michelle McIlveen if a decision had been taken to buy new lift equipment, Mallon said she had asked officials to gather information for her on a range of options, adding: 'It's around repair, it's around hiring if it is a possibility and also the purchase of equipment.'

'I want to assure the committee that my focus here is not just on firefighting and getting over this crisis, it's about having to take a look at the entire system and service.'

Dealers 'missing out on lucrative opportunities'

AUTOMOTIVE retailers are ignoring lucrative aftersales opportunities with more than a third of car owners never hearing from their dealer again post-sale.

That's according to a new report from dealership software provider CDK Global, which polled 9,107 car buyers across nine countries for what is believed to be one of the largest studies of automotive aftersales.

Its 'Consumer Focus on Global Automotive Aftersales' report revealed that 35 per cent of car buyers never hear from their car dealership again once the car is sold, 10 per cent of the information received by owners from

dealers is irrelevant, 43 per cent of owners don't return to the point of sale to get their car serviced, and less than six per cent of dealers use digital channels (social media and/or apps) to communicate with customers.

The report also revealed key points dealers must focus on to make the most of the aftersales market:

- After the deal is done, customers are forgotten.
- Digital as a channel should be commonplace.
- Brand name is still king for sales but not when it comes to maintenance.

The survey was conducted last August and September.

Will dealerships have to reinvent themselves in a challenging year?

Leon Bosch shares his insight on 2020 and beyond, along with the risk management implications.

Both the new and used vehicle sales segments will have their own sets of challenges in 2020. In recent years, initiatives like vehicle scrappage schemes and PCP deals have helped boost new vehicle sales, which is likely to have had an adverse effect on used/pre-owned vehicle sales.

However, with the shift in purchasing behaviours, evolving ownership requirements, and changing perceptions on combustion engine-powered vehicles, there is now a change in trend.

So with this in mind, it looks like this segment of the automotive sector is most likely to see the most disruption in 2020, given the challenges that it faces. These include:

- Increased demand for greener vehicles, which are more expensive, given the new technology
- Fewer vehicle owners purchasing vehicles, given the

'sharing economy' where people only want a car for a short period of time, at a time convenient to them – giving rise to more car-sharing firms

- Less attractive finance options for consumers, so they are holding on to their vehicles for longer.

This means dealerships may have to reinvent themselves in order to stay relevant with changing consumer behaviour.

Changes in the used vehicle market

We're seeing that many businesses in the used vehicle space are upscaling their premises to house an abundance of stock, affording their customers a wider choice when out viewing vehicles. They have also extended operating hours, and many are also open seven days a week to better cater for their customers' needs.

They have dovetailed this with an increased online presence, utilising their own websites as well as various social media channels to promote to their customers.

Changes in the new vehicle market model

More and more, we are seeing similar patterns emerging within the new vehicle sales side, as businesses adapt to better serve customers. In addition to this, we are seeing that consumers are buying more and more online, and there is an increased online presence too via dealers' own websites, social media and other online outlets.

Factoring this in, as well as similar trends occurring across retail as a whole, some are of the opinion that the dealer landscape may change altogether, mirroring what some call the 'Amazon model', which entails:

- An online shopfront
- A sales office in a shopping mall (or similar) for customers to touch and see the colour palettes, upholstery and such
- A central vehicle storage warehouse for stock, with vehicles delivered to the customer's door, and approved repair networks across the country to maintain the vehicle post-sale.

This way, dealers are able to counteract declining footfall and sales by saving on the real estate

costs. Whilst this is all speculative, given the way consumers' buying behaviours have changed, some argue that it's already happening across other areas in the retail space so are vehicles any different?

Risk management implications

From a risk management and insurance perspective, dealers need to be mindful that adopting some of these new models may have an impact on their current programmes. They need to be speaking to their insurance broker to ensure their cover remains adequate should they change their operating models in any way.

Examples of changing operating models include:

- Spending more time online, presenting greater exposure to cyber risks. So, businesses need to consider greater investment in IT systems, anti-virus software, crisis resilience and business continuity plans, coupled with a robust cyber insurance policy
- Having a higher number of vehicles at a single location means that more damage could be done from a single incident such as a fire or flood. This presents a higher risk to insurers as they are susceptible to higher claims amounts, as the vehicles are no longer spread over multiple locations where the risk of all vehicles being damaged by one incident was more remote
- Longer trading hours means more customers, and employees, on the site for longer periods of time, presenting an increased exposure under the Public and Employer's Liability sections
- Increased involvement of collection and delivery of vehicles on transporters presents a higher exposure to goods in transit risk
- With the growth in dealers' own 'subscription services' to satisfy customers' on-demand vehicle usage requirements, this presents its own challenges in that you don't always know who is getting in the vehicles – insurers won't know their driving experience, so cannot rate appropriately.

It can be done, but working with your insurance broker to determine the subscription criteria is key.

• Would you like to talk? For more information, please get in touch. Call 0800 612 2284 or email automotive_enquiries@ajg.com

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Slow start to 2020 with most listed retailers showing falls

Movements relatively small as markets await final performance details for 2019, reports **Mike Jones**.

After the turmoil of 2019, with significant share price falls at **Lookers** and **Pendragon**, 2020 has started much more quietly – on the stock market at least.

While we have seen small falls in the share prices of four of the listed retailers, the movements have been relatively small, with the markets awaiting final performance details on 2019 and an indication of how the vital March market looks like panning out. We have seen a number of acquisitions among the listed retailers as they continue to refine their portfolios and take advantage of acquisition opportunities.

Financial performance

At the end of January, we received a brief trading update from Pendragon on its performance for 2019.

Performance improved 'significantly' during the second half of 2019, with underlying profit before tax 'expected to be around the bottom end of current expectations'.

Given that Pendragon does not brief as extensively on profit expectations as other retailers, this is a relatively wide band.

	Share price movement during Jan 2020	Share price movement during 2019
Pendragon	-4.8%	-42.7%
Vertu	-2.4%	5.8%
Lookers	-2.5%	-38.7%
Inchcape	-6.9%	28.0%
Cambria	0.0%	25.7%
Caffyns	0.0%	6.7%
Marshall	0.0%	1.0%
Motorpoint	7.1%	45.7%
Auto Trader	-5.5%	30.7%
FTSE 100	-3.4%	12.0%

Other announcements

Vertu started the year on the acquisition trail with the purchase of four VW dealerships from Sytner Group, taking its total number of VW sites to nine.

The purchase included the payment of £1.35m for goodwill on a business that made a profit before tax in 2019 of £0.6m. In January, Vertu also opened two new Hyundai dealerships in the north-east of England.

Cambria announced the acquisition of part of the Leven Cars Group, which had fallen into administration in January. Cambria bought the Aston Martin and Rolls-Royce franchises in Edinburgh.

This takes Cambria to four Aston Martin dealerships and represents its first partnership with Rolls-Royce, further expanding its high-luxury segment.

Inchcape announced the acquisition of the MB passenger car and vans distribution business in Colombia for an enterprise value approximately eight times its EBIT.

This acquisition, following earlier purchases in Ecuador and Uruguay, provides regional scale for the company with Daimler.

One of Pendragon's largest shareholders, Odey Asset Management, increased its stake in the business marginally during January to 15.01 per cent.





Beyond finance

"I'm more like a consultant, taking time to understand the dealership so that we can add real value to their business."

Watch Aimee's video to see how:
blackhorse.co.uk/beyondfinance

Aimee Winder
Account Manager
North East Region

A better way of doing business

blackhorse 

New EU CO₂ emissions targets set to hit OEM earnings in 2020

Traka Automotive director **Paul Smith** says there's a lot of work to do in a disruptive period of transition.

Last month, I alluded to the new EU 'Post-2020 emission performance standards for cars and vans' which come out of the Clean Air for Europe (CAFE) programme. OEMs need to comply with new CAFE emissions standard from the start of this year, so I wanted to use this month's column to take a closer look at the potential impact of these new targets.

Fines for not meeting the new emissions limit will affect 95 per cent of OEMs' least-emitting new cars this year and all newly registered cars from 2021. The new 95g/km CO₂ emissions target for newly registered cars is quite a drop from the outgoing 130g/km CO₂ target set way back in 2015, even before the Paris Agreement on climate change had been hammered out.

So, despite the strides that have been made to improve emissions levels over the past four years, EU-based OEMs still have a long way to go, as the average emission level of all new cars sold in the EU in 2018 was just over 121g/km.

It's worth taking a quick look at how fines for non-compliance are being calculated and which brands will be most heavily affected in terms of these fines and resulting falls in earnings.

The EU will now impose a €95 fine for every g/km over the emission limit a new car is.

However, larger vehicles are allowed higher emissions levels, while smaller vehicles must meet lower limits. So, a lighter small car will need to meet a target of 91g/km whereas Daimler (which generally makes bigger and heavier cars) has a predicted target of 102g/km of CO₂.

In addition to that complexity, the EU is offering a 'super credit' system in which every new car produced that emits less than 50g/km is double-counted in the fleet average.



In addition to super credits, there is currently scope to trade negative emissions with electric or hybrid-led OEMs. This explains why Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) agreed to pay an estimated \$1 billion to Tesla for 'pooling' – ie, using Tesla's positive emission super credits to reduce FCA's fines by as much as 80 per cent.

We are already beginning to see some projected fines coming through. VW apparently originally faced the largest of all – a predicted €1.4bn fine in 2021 – but it has been making a great many changes in its range to reduce that figure.

Before those changes, PA Consulting predicted that VW will have a fleet average emission level of 97.7g/km. So, in 2021, at that level, VW is looking at an average CAFE-linked fine of €256 for every vehicle it produces. And just last year, meeting emission targets was made tougher by the new Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP), which introduced more realistic and accurate testing conditions for calculating fuel consumption under normal driving conditions EU-wide (created following 2015's 'dieselgate' scandal).

Late last year, analyst Evercore ISI published some projected earnings falls for European manufacturers as a result of emissions fines.

PSA Group is set to be worst hit with a 25 per cent drop in earnings per share. VW is set to see a 13 per cent reduction in earnings and BMW could see earnings seven per cent down in the 2020/2021 financial year.

A different report I read from PA Consulting projected that Jaguar Land Rover would be the furthest away from meeting the new emissions standard of all.

PA Consulting's 2021 average emissions forecast for the Tata-owned group is 130.1g/km, although admittedly many of its cars are heavy and will therefore only have to hit the 102g/km target.

It will have to sell a whole lot more Jaguar I-Paces (pictured) to offset those fines.

Many manufacturers are attempting to combat these imminent fines by rushing headlong into launching new battery-only electric vehicles (BEVs). One car mag I read recently listed 19 BEVs due to hit the market in the next six months.

But we also know all too well that only 1.5 per cent of total new car sales in the UK last year were BEVs, and even if you take all alternative-fuel new car sales combined, it represented under 10 per cent of all 2019 sales.

Dealerships' 2020 sales targets for new electric models are still worryingly low as most OEMs realise that consumer demand is not there yet.

Manufacturers run the risk of selling excess new electric stock at a loss via dealerships or stumping up even larger bills for missing overall fleet emission targets over the next year or two.

There are no clear ways through this disruptive period of transition, especially as new car sales were already heading south from a UK new car registrations peak in 2017.

Paul Smith heads Traka Automotive, part of the Assa Abloy Group brand Traka. Assa Abloy bought the electronic key management software provider eTag Solutions, which was founded by him. Traka is a leader in intelligent access control, key management control solutions and keyless electronic lockers.



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CD AUCTION GROUP

New app enables dealers to buy cars straight away

CD Auction Group has launched a new app for buyers in response to the changing habits of dealers.

The company said it had seen the numbers of dealers accessing its digital online-only sales from mobile devices double in the past 12 months to 35 per cent of all bids.

The new app provides additional functions that can't be delivered through a browser and, said the company, was designed to make the buying process easier. People can use the 'buy it now' function to purchase a vehicle as soon as it is added to the live database.

The 'CD Buyer' app gives dealers access to an extensive range of cars and commercial vehicles sourced from fleets, daily rental and leasing companies across the United Kingdom.

Andy Brown, managing director of CD Auction Group, said: 'Increasingly, dealers want to be able to make stocking decisions on the move.'

'Our new app allows buyers to purchase a vehicle wherever and whenever they want. The app launch is the start of an accelerated digital development



programme that will make CD Auction Group the easiest company to do business with in the UK.'

Users of the app can search by location and can choose to receive alerts on cars they've bid on, before the end of the sale.

A buying and bid history can also be viewed at any time to provide management information.

CD Auction recently said the remarketing process was changing, as fleets and dealers demand fewer vehicle movements for environmental reasons and to achieve greater efficiency.

The auction company predicts volumes of vehicles bought off-site will soar to 50 per cent of vehicles sold in 2020.

Carco buddies up with Aston Barclay

CARCO Group has agreed a solus remarketing deal with Aston Barclay.

The business, trading as City Motors and S J Cook & Sons, operates franchises for Volvo, Renault, Dacia and Citroen. It also has a large used vehicle operation.

The family-run Bristol-based company will dispose of more than 1,000 used cars each year through Aston Barclay's Westbury site in Wiltshire.

Carco general sales manager James Webb said he was impressed with Aston Barclay's

customer service. 'The first dealer sale delivered a 100 per cent conversion rate on 60 used cars at 99.92 per cent of CAP Clean. We were delighted with this result.'

'We have built our successful franchised dealer business over many decades, providing excellent service, and that is what we look for from our key suppliers.'

Richard Cross, Aston Barclay's group sales director, said: 'Westbury looks forward to a long and fruitful partnership with the Carco Group.'

Pearson

AUCTION STATIONS

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Partner Finance has seen lending grow significantly over the past year, as dealers increasingly seek flexible funding to help drive operational efficiencies and maximise profits.

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The service funds the whole auction purchase exclusively at BCA, including fees and VAT where applicable, with both cars and LCVs eligible for funding using the scheme.

New investment in technology has enhanced the service at auction centres around the UK and Partner Finance is designed around the needs of the dealer.

The dedicated, branded BCA Partner Finance sales programme has expanded to help dealers maximise stock turn on vehicles that fall outside of their stocking profile.

Partner Finance has enhanced its integration with BCA's Dealer Pro platform allowing users to appraise part-exchange vehicles and determine whether they want to retain and fund vehicles for retail stock or remarket them at the push of a button.

Dealers also benefit from accelerated payments. Partner Finance now provides next-day payments whereas the usual BACS method can take up to three days.

BCA Partner Finance supports more than 1,100 franchised and independent dealers of all sizes with up to 120 days funding on vehicles purchased at BCA auction centres or part-exchange.

It was the first finance product to launch that is specifically designed for the UK remarketing sector.

Stuart Pearson is BCA UK's chief operating officer for remarketing. Visit bca.co.uk or call 0345 600 6644.



'Partner Finance is designed around the needs of the dealer.'

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Remarketing specialist BCA analyses its latest Pulse report to give its thoughts on matters that dealers need to consider in the months ahead.



Values rise to record levels as more dealer part-ex cars sold



Stuart Pearson, chief operating officer for BCA's UK remarketing operation, says strong demand has continued lately with significant activity across the board.

Average values for fleet & lease and dealer part-exchange vehicles rose to record levels at BCA in December 2019, as the company reported sustained demand and competitive bidding across the board.

Following on from the improving values seen in November, December saw a strong month's trading close out the year. Buyer demand remained positive for good-quality stock, while seasonal market trends contributed to a shift in model mix. This impacted the headline figure, with an increased percentage of dealer part-ex vehicles sold during the month. Even so, the average value of £10,015 for December 2019 was the fourth highest on record. Values were down by just £126 (1.2 per cent) year-on-year, despite average age and mileage rising by 3.4 months and nearly 2,500 miles respectively.

Professional buyers were very active throughout December, building forecourt stock for the new year and this strong demand carried on over the

festive season. Retail conditions for used vehicles remained very positive throughout December and as a result, BCA staged a very successful programme of incremental sales between

Christmas and the new year at Blackbushe, Manchester, Nottingham, Measham and Brighouse, along with a number of specialist digital events.

With both in-lane and online sales being staged, buyers had the opportunity to purchase from a wide selection of vehicles through the choice of channel that met their needs – physical, online, BCA Buyer app and Bid Now, Buy Now. We gave our customers a truly personalised buying experience that supported their business needs over the festive season.

Strong demand has continued at BCA into 2020 with significant activity across the board for the widest range of stock during the early days of the new year and our customers are

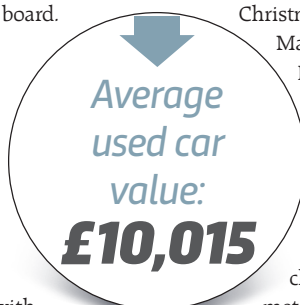
reporting positive levels of retail activity.

Fleet & lease values averaged £12,437 at BCA in December 2019, the third time in four months that BCA has reported a record value for fleet stock. Year-on-year values were up by £647 (5.5 per cent) with both average age and mileage continuing to rise. The retained value against original MRP (Manufacturer's Retail Price) averaged 42.4 per cent, down by 1.8 percentage points, year-on-year.

Dealer part-exchange values also rose to record levels at BCA during December 2019, increasing by a substantial £132 (2.5 per cent) over the month to reach £5,321. Average values for part-exchange vehicles were up by £46 (0.9 per cent) compared to the same month last year with stock showing a lower profile of age and mileage.

Values for nearly-new vehicles at BCA averaged £25,021 in December 2019, with year-on-year values up by £361 (1.5 per cent).

Model mix has a significant effect in this sector, with brand-specific winners and losers.



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Suzuki Swift Attitude

Small but perfectly formed, our most diminutive long-termer is proving a reliable runabout.



by **DAVE BROWN**
@CarDealerDave

What would be the best kind of car to drive during the depths of a great British winter? Something nice and high-riding perhaps? Maybe with 4x4 capability and ready for anything the coldest months of the year could throw at it?

That's exactly what I had in mind when I had to say goodbye to my previous long-term loan car, a Ford Focus Vignale, a few weeks ago.

In its place, I was given the keys to a rather smaller member of the fleet – a Suzuki Swift Attitude – perhaps not a model that would be many people's first choice for tackling treacherous conditions.

At this point, you might be expecting me to say how disappointed I was – but that was far from the case. For a start, it looks as though winter on the south coast could be a wet and windy one rather than snowy and icy, and the car will easily be able to cope.

The other point is that the days of ferrying my kids around are long gone now they're both approaching 30 and have flown the nest for the last time.

Therefore, 95 per cent of journeys I undertake are solo trips and I knew the compact Swift would be ideal for this and deliver excellent levels of comfort and fuel economy at the same time.

So, after initially being very happy at being allocated the car, how do I feel three or four weeks later?

The answer to that question is – pretty pleased. It's just the ticket and meets my needs perfectly. As a little reminder of its key statistics, the car is equipped with a 1.2-litre Dualjet petrol engine that's paired with a five-speed manual gearbox.

The car develops 89bhp and 120Nm of torque and can get from 0-60mph in 11.7 seconds. Fuel economy so far has been around the 57mpg mark.

It's a sporty-looking little thing, with 16-inch polished alloy wheels, a rear spoiler, black A and B pillars (in contrast to its Fervent Red paint job), a mesh front grille with chrome trim and body-coloured outside door handles.

Inside, there are plenty of creature comforts and the cabin is a pleasant place to be. The in-car entertainment is easy to operate and navigate but I'd mention one tiny gripe here. I quite often



There are plenty of creature comforts and the cabin is a pleasant place to be, says Dave

THE KNOWLEDGE

Model:	Suzuki Swift Attitude
Price (as tested):	£15,484
Engine:	1.2-litre Dualjet petrol
Power:	89bhp
Torque:	120Nm
0-60mph:	11.7 seconds
Top speed:	111mph
Fuel economy:	51.4mpg – achieving 57.1mpg
Emissions:	124g/km CO₂
Mileage:	6,971

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHT:

Saving the pennies thanks to the fact KJ19 AEW is so economical to run.

drive with the radio switched off. However, exiting the car to grab a coffee on the way to work, I jump back in to find the radio always very much on, despite the fact I haven't touched any of the controls. File under first-world problems though, I guess.

So far, my time with KJ19 AEW has largely been spent doing the 20-mile round trip to the office, which hasn't exactly put the car through its paces too rigorously, but occasional trips to London from our base in Gosport have given it a bit more of a workout.

Of course, the Swift's modest dimensions make it ideal for driving in our congested capital. It's great for making quick getaways at junctions and can squeeze into the tiniest of spaces when it comes to parking for a few hours. The rear-view camera is a feature that really comes into its own in such circumstances.

I hesitate to mention the festive season as it's now so long ago – but KJ19 AEW easily accommodated a 6ft Christmas tree in the run-



up to the big day, and although I've mentioned that I tend to travel by myself most of the time, I still do provide the odd lift here and there and accommodating four other adults in the Swift was no problem at all, although you might not want to embark on a particularly long journey with five on board.

(Plenty of legroom but a little bit of road noise was the verdict from those in the back.)

All in all then, life is good – and frugal – with our Suzuki Swift and I'll definitely be doing my best to hang on to the keys. In a crowded small car market, it's certainly worth checking out, and with Suzuki's reputation for quality and reliability – and undoubted expertise when it comes to manufacturing small cars – it could prove to be a very good choice.



LATEST FROM THE FLEET...

Honda CR-V EX

One of our long-termers is taken on a drive around southern England – a fitness drive!



by **TED WELFORD**
@TedWelford

It's safe to say January isn't my favourite month. Nor does it happen to be many other people's favourite either. The joy and festivities of Christmas are soon over, and before you know it you're back at work with seemingly little to look forward to.

And then there are the joys of new year resolutions. Yes, that old chestnut. Whether it's going vegan, learning something new or quitting smoking, these can often be fake promises to yourself that last all of three weeks.

I've always been in the mindset that there's just no point even setting any, but in the spirit of 'New Decade, New Me' (cringe, I know) I thought I'd set a goal to lose weight and actually do some more exercise. So here's where our long-term Honda CR-V steps in...

Never one to fancy going to the gym or pop out for a jog, I've settled on biking as the new exercise. Remarkably, this pledge has lasted throughout January with the help of mountain and road bikes, and RY19 XRP.

Living in a busy town, biking around traffic that seemingly wants to get as close to you as possible never appeals, so I've taken to driving to more enticing places to go for rides instead. It's also where the Honda CR-V proves to be incredibly useful, too.

While I've been impressed with our long-termer's load-lugging ability in the past, I hadn't realised just how vast its boot was. While the Honda is a mid-size SUV, it seems to enjoy the space of larger models. Having a completely flat floor and a large 1,756 litres to play with, it can fit a bike in without even needing to release the front wheel. This means that bikes can lie completely flat.

With the help of a £10 Homebase blanket for the bikes to sit on, it also saves any of the plastic in the boot getting scuffed, as well as avoiding the need to get the vacuum out after every ride.

Being a creature of habit, I've taken to the deep south's New Forest for the road biking (it's largely flat, quiet and very picturesque) and near Arundel, West Sussex, for the mountain biking.

Given I live almost slap bang in the middle of the two places, it means the CR-V has spent plenty of time on the motorway recently –



Ted's been heading out to the countryside to do a bit of exercising and exploring on two wheels

THE KNOWLEDGE

Model:	Honda CR-V EX
Price (as tested):	£39,175
Engine:	1.5-litre turbocharged petrol
Power:	171 bhp
Torque:	220Nm
Top speed:	130mph
0-60mph:	9.8 seconds
MPG:	42.8
Emissions:	151g/km CO₂
Mileage (to date):	6,893

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHT:

Using this capable and spacious SUV to explore the countryside as part of a new year health kick.

somewhere it excels in terms of comfort, fuel economy and ease of driving. That last aspect is provided courtesy of the CR-V's large number of driver assistance features, with the excellent adaptive cruise control system and blind-spot monitoring proving to be particularly useful.

Spending plenty of time in the CR-V, admittedly largely at weekends, has also given me further time to discover more kit on the model. While already being seriously impressed with what our top-spec EX version comes equipped with (a panoramic sunroof, a head-up display and a full leather interior being personal highlights), I've managed to discover even more features on it – a heated windscreen and heated rear seats being two of the latest surprises. The fact that you can discover kit fitted to the CR-V nearly six months after it first arrived on the fleet is testament to just how well equipped it is.

Heated front seats and a heated steering wheel can also be a godsend after a cold ride out.

There are only a couple of things that get on my nerves about the CR-V. The first is the high-

beam assist (HBA), something which I think is a truly pointless feature at the best of times, but the Honda's seems to be especially infuriating. I usually try to remember to flick it off 'auto' lights when the HBA comes into action. But if I don't, it seems to love blinding cyclists by sticking it on, which is something I've been on the receiving end of since taking up biking.

It's not just cyclists it doesn't seem able to pick up either; if you're on a straighter piece of empty road but have a car in front of you in the distance, the high-beam assist is again put on – much to the annoyance of those motorists ahead. I find it a touch ironic, too, given that's what HBA is meant to prevent.

The touchscreen also continues to be poor, and it's best if you get your pre-sets sorted before setting off so that you don't have to use it for the rest of the journey. But these really are small inconveniences that don't detract from what is an exceptionally useful and spacious SUV.

OTHER CARS WE'RE DRIVING



Mazda 3 Skyactiv-X

Mileage: **5,361**

Custodian Ryan has been left a bit disappointed by a drop-off in efficiency when sticking to city streets in VX69 HKH. Average MPG dropped from 50mpg to 42mpg after a few short hops lately.

Ford S-Max Vignale

Despite the SUV craze, cars such as this from the Blue Oval show that there are other options.



by **JACK EVANS**
@jackrober

I feel a bit sorry for the humble MPV, if I'm honest. At one point, they were the go-to family option, transporting people across the country in great comfort and with the ability to bring all of their bags along too. New and shiny, they found favour throughout the UK.

Then the SUV craze hit, and sadly MPVs just weren't 'cool' any more. People wanted to sit up high, to be big and imposing and to have the ability to go off-road – even though barely any do. It's a bit like Woody from Toy Story being ousted by Buzz Lightyear as the favourite toy.

But sometimes I struggle to get my head around this. Take our long-term S-Max. It's a big, spacious seven-seater which, when needed, provides more than 2,000 litres of boot space. When you're done transporting old wardrobes (which I did with it recently), there's seating for seven passengers and a selection of their bags. With both rearmost rows in place, the boot is 285 litres in capacity, which ain't all that big, but it's enough for several soft weekend bags.

Although those people sitting in the third row are likely to feel a little cramped, there is just about the right amount of legroom. Kids will have no issue back there. Meanwhile, those sitting in the middle have plenty of space, decent door bins for all manner of odds and ends, and even a folding tray table in front of them. It's like a



EF69 XMA has made quite an impression on Jack during its time on the fleet so far



business class British Airways flight. Sort of.

Then there's the pilot and co-pilot up front. Both pews are heated and ventilated (although you can't do this at the same time) and there's a massage function, too. Even the steering wheel is heated, which has been a welcome feature with the recent fall in temperature.

Would you be getting this much spaciousness and comfort in an SUV? Unlikely. I'll admit that our top-of-the-range Vignale S-Max does get all of the bells and whistles – as well as a price tag north of £40,000 – but to get a similar standard of equipment and practicality would cost far more

in the SUV segment. But it's behind the wheel where the S-Max makes sense.

Okay, an MPV will never match a saloon or an estate car for driver involvement, nor is keeping a keener driver truly happy the outright objective of a car such as this, but there's a good degree more fun to be had helming the S-Max than you'd expect. It corners keenly, manages body roll well and is reasonably accurate too – despite the slightly rubbery steering. Finding these traits in a well-priced SUV without a premium badge? It'd be a tricky task.

I get the craze for SUVs. They make you feel confident behind the wheel and, despite the fact that almost all modern cars are packed with safety equipment, a lot of people feel a certain amount of comfort from having more 'car' around them. I like driving Caterhams – which have the crash protection of a damp paper bag – more than anything, so I can't say I agree with this feeling, but I understand it.

But to dismiss the S-Max because of its more car-like tendencies is a shame. The MPV might not be 'cool', and it might lack the kerb appeal of an SUV, but it gets the job done – and done well.

THE KNOWLEDGE

Model:	Ford S-Max 2.0 EcoBlue Auto Vignale
Base price:	£40,660
Price as tested:	£42,560
Engine:	2.0-litre diesel
Power:	187bhp
Torque:	400Nm
0-60mph:	10.3 seconds
Top speed:	128mph
Fuel economy:	47.9mpg
Emissions:	151g/km CO₂
Mileage:	2,972

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHT:

Discovering that driving the S-Max is actually pretty good fun!



Seat Tarraco

Mileage: **1,679**

The Tarraco has been putting in a big shift over recent weeks, travelling far and wide. It's proving an excellent long-distance companion, thanks to its comfortable ride and supportive seats.



Volvo V60

Mileage: **4,874**

Our resident northerner Ted managed to get his hands on the boss's stunning Volvo V60 for a recent weekend – giving it a much-needed valet to bring the shine back to its Maple Brown paintwork.



The last word

JAMES BAGGOTT

Against our better judgment, we give our CEO the final say each month

The knockout blows that have forced one dealer to throw in the towel

Every now and then I'm hit with an email that takes me aback – one that makes me stop other distractions around me and simply concentrate on reading it. Now, while I'm not going to publish the email from this dealer in its entirety or name him, I have asked the man in question if he'd be happy for me to use the sentiments of his message here.

So, some context: The email arrived after I'd completed some admin work, contacting our lapsed Car Dealer Club members and asking them if they wanted to renew their membership. Full details on the club – which includes a guaranteed subscription to Car Dealer Magazine, don't you know – appear on page 60. Anyway, I digress... Most of those I emailed were shocked that it was from me, most thinking I was an autobot, but when I replied and assured them I wasn't, they often gave me some interesting insight into what they think of the magazine and the industry.

Some renewed, some said they were no longer in business – and a few lucky ones had sold out to the big boys, with one telling me he was 'enjoying retirement out of the country for six months a year'.

All right for some! But for our man in question, things were a little different...

'I have very much enjoyed my last 10 years as a Car Dealer Club member and always felt I could glean some information each month to help assist me with what I'm doing,' he wrote.

'Running your own ship can be a lonely place sometimes, so to get a feel of what's going on and see examples of good practice really helped.

'However, it's with sadness that I say I'm actively looking to leave the industry after the best part of 25 years man and boy (literally, as I'm only 38) and the last 10 years having run my own business as successfully as I feel I can, with absolute attention to detail and decency.'

The independent car dealer said he believed the days of small businesses, like his, retailing circa 150 cars a year, were numbered, and went on to explain the pressures that had driven him to make the toughest decision of his life.

'The volume players are using the car as a vehicle to gain the fruits of F&I income, thus there's less emphasis on chassis profit and instead they are relying on the pure model of large numbers,' he explained. 'Sure, if you can make around £750 a car net on 5,000 units a year it makes for a large number, but as a percentage retained it's a very fine line between getting it right and wrong. An industry with a one per cent retained margin is nothing less than brain damage.'

He's not wrong. Competing with the big boys who have scale, bank balances and the teams to keep these large numbers churning is getting very hard indeed. In fact, just around Gosport I've seen two

similar-sized dealers shut up shop for good in the past year.

Our man also blamed auction houses for aggressively seeking stock from all avenues, making it harder and harder for smaller dealers to buy at the right price, and he said the profitability from private sellers has 'all but gone'. He was also fed up with being given advice from 'so-called experts' who would 'have a shock to their system if they really knew what was going on'.

'We're constantly told it's all about data, about 60 pictures on our adverts when estate agents sell a £600k house with 15, but I'd love to see how these "experts" get on in the real world.

'I think you and I both know they would be staggered at the battle to buy it, the battle to prepare a five-year-old car that's probably only been sold due to a hidden problem only apparent after driving it for 200 miles, then advertise that car, deal with the retail buyer who "knows buying and selling cars is the easiest job in the world" and then stand by it for the next six months. They

would be running back to their open-plan offices with comfy sofas and table football faster than you could say "Usain Bolt". These people are absolutely clueless and it's very, very sad.'

But he lays his biggest criticism at the door of manufacturers who have a total lack of interest in engaging with smaller, independent, family-run businesses like his.

'Independent dealers are hated by manufacturers compared to large corporates with perhaps five to 10 outlets representing that manufacturer. The level of service from an independently owned dealer where, if you've got a problem, you can go in to see the man with his name above the door is night and day different.

'I'm sure the motor trade will continue to evolve and produce great things. Huge turnovers will still be bandied around as success stories and a pecker like me disappearing will not be missed. I do hope, though, that I can find something more fruitful for my efforts and perhaps one day sit on the other side of the desk buying a car while the sales exec desperately tries to pump me into a PCP, admin fee, service plan, paint

protection, extended warranty, wheel and key insurance in the hope that if he ticks every box and gets his CSI score right he may earn his £75 and stave off a shoeing and heart attack while looking forward to his day off every other week.'

Times are tough and there's no doubt the industry is changing, but I don't know about you, losing people like this is a travesty.

Although he no longer needed his Car Dealer subscription, I've offered to add him to my VIP list anyway – maybe one day, with a bit of encouragement and a break, he'll be back. I hope a copy of Car Dealer every month will give him that inspiration to return.

'An industry with a one per cent retained margin is nothing less than brain damage.'



James Baggott is the founder of Car Dealer Magazine and chief executive officer of parent company @BaizeGroup, an automotive services provider. He now spends most of his time on Twitter @CarDealerEd and annoying the rest of us.

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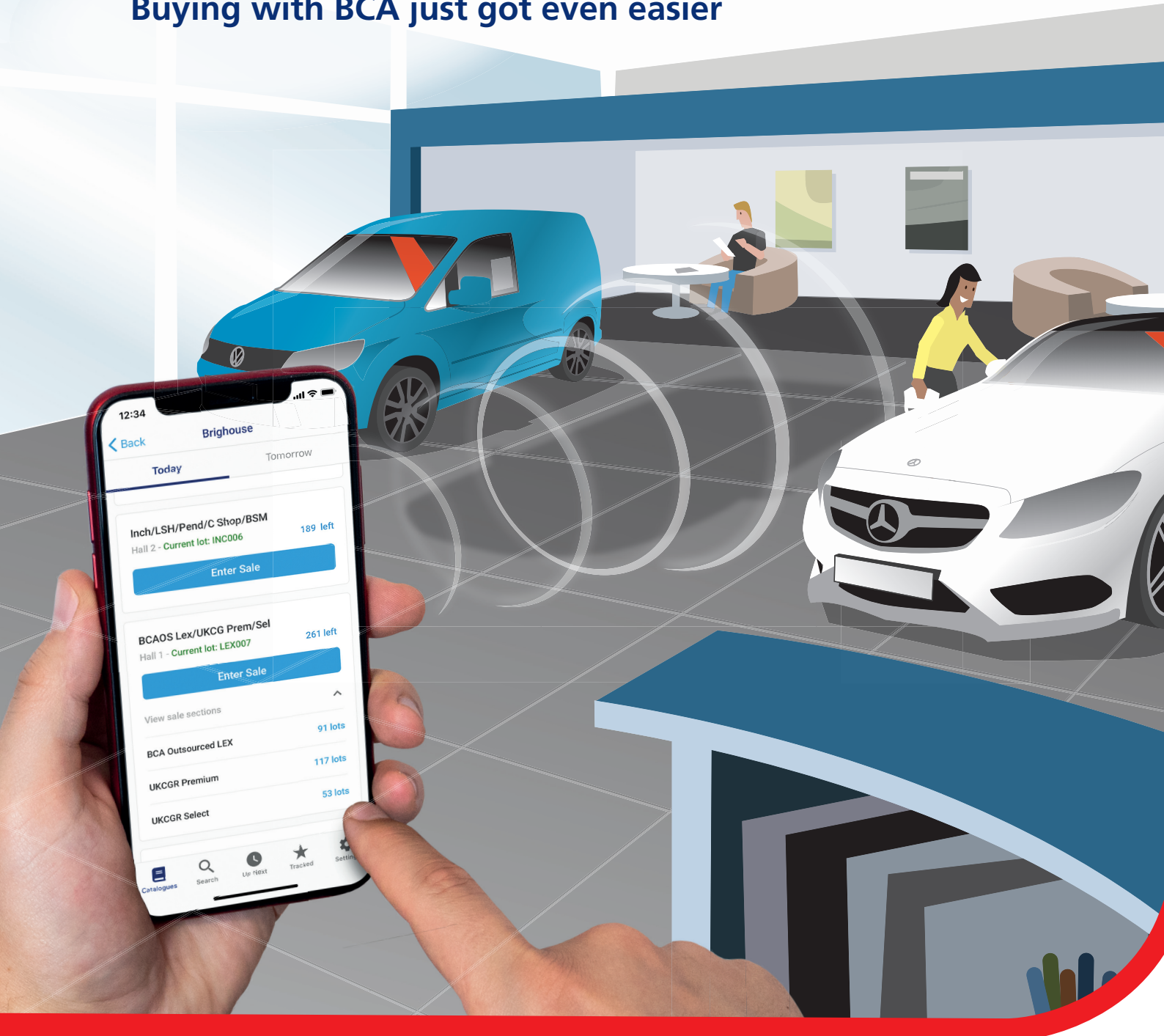
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