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## David Miles' Motoring News Round-up No. 6

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MOT

ORING MILESTONE NEWS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED.

David Miles (Miles Better News Agency) enlightens us...

Another week has gone by and here I am still keeping calm and carrying on despite very mixed messages from our Government about what we can or should do during - now it appears - slightly relaxed semi lock-down period. But no longer is it the same rules in each of our four domestic countries.

With no sign of new models to road test or press launch events happening I'm still sifting through current stories and press releases emails pinging into my Inbox, looking for snippets of motoring information worth passing on.



## VE-75 Day and a look back in motoring time

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day events last week was a positive response by our nation to the current pandemic. It was a brief chance to shrug off our worries but of course still keep a safe distance from others outside our immediate family members.

Interestingly the Daily Mail produced some 'costing it all up' figures for when WW2 ended in 1945. Fuel cost the equivalent of 3p per litre if you could get it under the strict rationing rules. Milk cost 8p a pint, £10 would be worth £434.85 today, the average annual salary was £214, £310 was the price for an average family car and £620 was the average price for a house.

So what was an average UK car? Perhaps a British-built Ford Prefect which initially went on sale in 1938. Production restarted in 1945 and these small sidevalve Fords (including the two door 'Anglia' and 'Popular' models) continued with various updates in 'perpendicular' style until 1959, when the last Popular of this type was discontinued, and in more modern-looking 100E guise until 1961. The Prefect had a 1,172cc side valve four cylinder petrol engine with a three speed manual gearbox and in the late 1940s cost around £400.



Post-war version of Ford's sidevalve four door Prefect family saloon.

It however shouldn't be forgotten, although by and large it appears to have been, this year is also the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Volkswagen car production re-starting again in Germany after the WW2 under British Military guidance.

On 11 April 1945 American troops occupied the home of the KdF-Wagen in Germany and liberated its forced workers and set up a maintenance facility for their military vehicles in the Volkswagen factory.

On 5 June responsibility for Volkswagen was turned over to the British Military Government.



On 22 August the British Military Government instructed Volkswagen to produce 20,000 saloons in order to meet its increased transport needs during the occupation period. UK Army Major Ivan Hirst assumed command of the project and so mass production of the VW saloon (Beetle) began and the rest as we know is history.



VW family car production restarts in 1945 under British Military Control.



[Mass production of the Volkswagen Saloon.](#)

Today the Volkswagen Group is the world's largest manufacturer of passenger cars by volume with their brands of Volkswagen, Audi, SEAT, Skoda, Bentley, Bugatti, Lamborghini, Porsche, Ducati, VW Commercial Vehicles, Scania and MAN. With 124 global production plants, in 2019 they built a total of 10.8 million vehicles just ahead of Toyota who produced 10.74 million units as is the biggest manufacturer by market valuation. Notably both manufacturers are brands from former enemy countries!

## [It's time to get back to work to pay off the country's debts](#)

Economists are forecasting our worst financial recession for 300 years so our industry needs to start earning for GB Plc. The coronavirus lockdown has wiped around £100bn off our



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economy at the rate of £2bn a day. As a stark reminder when WW2 ended in 1945 we were in recession and it took us until 2006 to pay off our debts, mainly to the USA and Canada.

Most automotive plants in the UK are starting limited production from now onwards with Toyota Motor Europe Deeside North Wales engine plant starting this week and their car plant in Burnaston Derbyshire starting soon afterwards. Bentley and others have also started limited production. The UK's car dealership showrooms can now operate a click and collect service with on-line selecting and ordering and then the customer can be dealt with outside a showroom at an appointed time to finalise proceedings and collect the new/used car. After that the plan is for dealerships to self-certify they have showroom social distancing measures in place using on-line Duty of Care certification and spot-checks by health officials will also take place. In these financially dire times it is now essential business as the COVID-19 crisis is forecast to have cost the UK's car industry more than £8bn so far.





UK car production starts again; Bentley shown here.

To get working again we are being asked to limit our use of public transport due to social distancing measures. So it's the car or perhaps the new £2bn package announced by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps to boost cycling and walking will get the wheels of industry turning.



[Back to work traffic this week.](#)

It also appears trials of electric scooters will be fast-tracked as part of a bid to get people moving again. The Department of Transport is in consultation about legalising e-scooters and considering if users should take out insurance cover in case they hit pedestrians as they can travel at speeds up to 15 mph.

The same Mr Shapps also plans to invest £250 million in cycle lanes, some of them pop-up lanes, and to widen pavements for pedestrians and to close some streets and roads to vehicles altogether. How does that work with getting Britain's industry and in the future retail outlets moving again restricting where delivery vans, lorries as well as worker's cars can travel?



London's back to work this week... some people have to use the Tube services.

Lexus in poll position



[Lexus SUV hybrid range.](#)

On-line surveys are proving popular for car owners and certainly beneficial to some brands creating positive independent approval for when the order books start filling up again.

In the latest Auto Express Driver Power survey, Lexus took top honours with a customer satisfaction score of 90.85%. The brand was only slightly ahead of Kia on 90.84% with Subaru in third place with 90.6% followed by Mazda with 90.51%. You won't have missed the point that these are all Asian brands.

Bottom of the heap was the budget brand of Dacia with 85.78% and Vauxhall with 87.58%



but also at the wrong end of the chart were Mercedes with 87.97% and BMW with 88.04%.

Meanwhile over at What Car? magazine their on-line Reliability Survey saw Lexus top the franchised dealer award with 94.1% followed by Subaru 91.8%, Honda 91.3% and Suzuki 90.6% - all Japanese brands. Bottom was Land Rover marginally ahead of Audi and Mercedes-Benz. Lexus also came top in two more of the total four categories with Suzuki taking the Independent Garages title, but by just 0.8% from guess who - Lexus.

## Mercedes-Benz in possible UK legal trouble



Mercedes C-Class Saloon.



Several news outlets have reported that up to half a million cars in Britain could have been affected by the Mercedes emissions scandal and a million owners are potentially eligible for up to £10k, compensation lawyers have claimed. The legal-eagles estimate there are 500,000 affected cars in the UK after the German Federal Motor Transport Authority found Mercedes had used 'cheat software' in diesel engines which limited emission readings.

Daimler, Mercedes parent company, has already been fined £776 million in Germany over the emissions scandal and they recalled 774,000 cars in 2018. So far the UK legal teams have 1,750 drivers signed up as claimants. A test case with 17 claimants was issued in the High Court in Liverpool last Friday. Should they win it is estimated that drivers could receive an average of £10k each. Daimler AG says "We believe that the claims are without merit and will vigorously defend against any group action."

This latest legal move follows that against Volkswagen after their 'dieseldgate' scandal. Last month around 90,000 UK motorists who had bought or leased VW, Audi, SEAT and Skoda diesel cars won their first round of their High Court legal battle.

## New models ready for UK new car customers

Despite the lockdown new or updated passenger car models are ready to be introduced later this year and beyond. These are just a few of the offerings heading our way.

[Toyota](#) has been busy with various new model announcements. The latest is their very large [Highlander](#) 7-seater SUV with a petrol hybrid powertrain and all-wheel drive. It is due to go on sale early next year and forms part of the brand's focus on its strong heritage with both hybrids and SUVs. It will join the new Toyota SUV range of the compact Yaris Cross and the SUV inspired Corolla Trek plus of course their C-HR, RAV4 and Land Cruiser ranges.



[Toyota's new Highlander hybrid 7-seat large SUV.](#)

UK prices for the Highlander will be announced later this year but we know it has a 2.5 litre petrol engine with self charging hybrid support with electric motors front and rear. Power output is 241 bhp with an EV mode with WLTP CO2 emissions of 146 g/km. At 4,950 mm (16.24 ft) in length it has a 658 litre (23.24 cu.ft) boot and a total luggage capacity of 1,909 litres (67.42 cu.ft) with a towing capacity of 2 tonnes.

Also new to the Toyota range and available now is the British built [Corolla Touring Sports Hybrid Trek](#) which has a raised ride height, extra exterior SUV protection and a bespoke active lifestyle interior.



[Toyota's new Corolla Touring Hybrid Sports Trek model.](#)

The vehicle is available with a 1.8 petrol-hybrid drivetrain with 122 hp or the new 2.0 litre petrol-hybrid 184 hp system. Prices start from £29,225 for the 1.8 litre models and £30,950 for the larger power unit.

Available next year will be the Toyota Yaris Cross which appears to be more of a supermini sized proper SUV model rather than a jacked-up supermini hatchback which are the mainstay models in the Yaris range. It will be a competitor for the new Nissan Juke, VW T-Cross and potentially the new Ford Puma. No price details are available yet but the power unit is a 1.5 litre, three-cylinder petrol unit with the same 114 bhp hybrid system as the





Yaris Hatchback. Currently it is planned to offer 2WD and 4WD models but more details and prices, expected to be around mid £20k and upwards, will follow.



[Toyota Yaris Cross.](#)

Meanwhile at [SEAT](#), the Spanish arm of the Volkswagen Group, they have released information regarding their new generation C-segment [Leon](#) models with five door Hatchback and Estate body styles.



**SEAT's all-new Leon range announced.**

Using the same platform as the new VW Golf, Audi A3 and the Skoda Octavia, the engine options are similar with initially 1.0/1.5 litre TSI turbo petrol units for both body styles and the Hatchback only has the option of a 2.0 litre 115 hp TDI turbo diesel unit. More engines and spec levels will follow. Prices range from £19,855 to £26,865 for the Hatchback and £22,455 to £27,895 for the Estate.

**Skoda**, the Czech arm of the VW Group, will open their UK order books for their fourth generation Octavia range of C-segment five door Hatch and Estate models. Deliveries will begin from July. The new Octavia shares the same platform as the new VW Golf, Audi A3 and SEAT Leon but like its previous generation models it excels for the interior space it

offers over its siblings and other sector competitors.



[Skoda's new Octavia Hatchback and Estate models.](#)

Initially there is the choice of three engine options, 1.5 TSI 150 hp petrol, 2.0 TDI 115 hp turbodiesel, both with six speed manual gearboxes and a 2.0 litre TDI 150 hp turbodiesel unit with a standard-fit seven speed DSG auto transmission. Prices range from £22,390 to £28,460 for the Hatch models and £23,370 to £29,515 for the Estate versions

## [SMMT figures show UK used car sales take a hit](#)

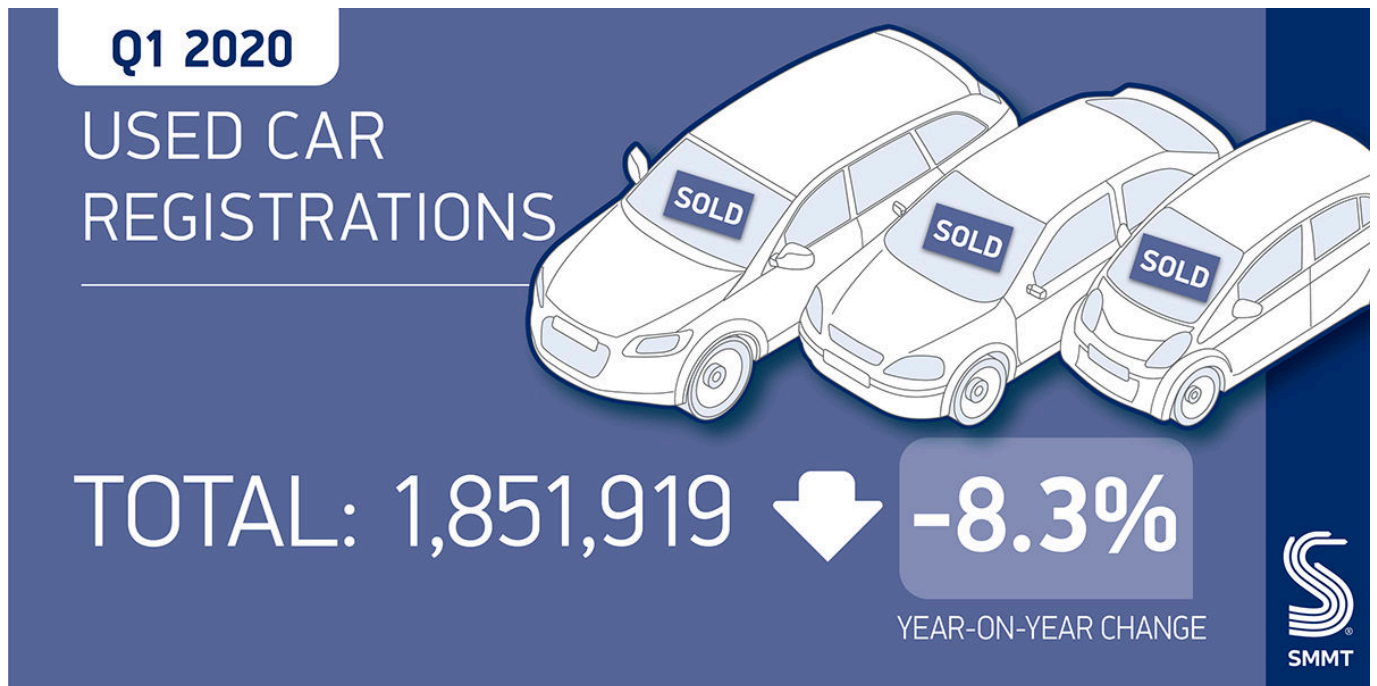
The UK's used car market declined by -8.3% in the first quarter of 2020, according to the latest figures released this week by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Growth in January and February was up by 2.9% and 4.0% respectively but it was all wiped out by a -30.7% fall in March. This made it the lowest March on record as coronavirus



lockdown measures came into effect partway through the month and closed retailers.

Demand for pre-owned plug-in electric vehicles grew 13.6% in the first quarter after a bumper first two months when buyers took advantage of more of these zero and zero-emission capable models appearing on the used market. The number of hybrids changing hands also rose by 11.5% taking the total number of used alternatively fuelled vehicle (AFV) sales to 36,493. Meanwhile, petrol and diesel car transactions decreased -9.3% and -7.8% respectively though combined they still accounted for 97.9% of all used sales in the quarter, equivalent to 1,814,598 cars.



SMMT quarterly Used Cars sales figure fall.



## Top 10 colours in Q1 2020

Colour	No. transactions
1 Black	394,177
2 Silver/Aluminium	338,408
3 Blue	316,566
4 Grey	272,889
5 White	239,127
6 Red	188,747
7 Green	37,103
8 Orange	12,214
9 Beige/Buff	10,885
10 Yellow	9,747

## Top 10 models in Q1 2020

Model	No. transactions
1 Ford Fiesta	81,371
2 Vauxhall Corsa	69,847
3 Ford Focus	68,000
4 Volkswagen Golf	60,113
5 Vauxhall Astra	53,693
6 BMW 3 Series	42,603
7 MINI	40,996
8 Volkswagen Polo	35,353
9 Audi A3	28,963
10 Renault Clio	28,170

David concludes by saying:

“Stay safe now driving restrictions are somewhat lifted in some places. Hopefully we are on the road to health and financial recovery”.