

CLASSIC CAR WEEKLY

BUYING ■ SELLING ■ NEWS

'THE BIG ENDS HAD GONE AND IT HAD NO BRAKES!'

How a reader turned a wreck into a car show winner

SALES SURGE AS DEALERS GO VIRTUAL

Classic specialist pulls in record results after using 'walkaround' videos to sell cars - we investigate if it's safe to buy unseen

Specialists selling classic cars have said that buyers are happy to buy on the strength of online videos produced during the lockdown, including one that's enjoyed a record month for sales due to their popularity.

The Classic & Sports Car Centre in North Yorkshire says that it's hit a sales record of around £2m in stock sold since the lockdown started,

something that it has attributed to classic fans buying online on the strength of 'walkaround' films.

Founder, Nick Szkiler, said: 'You do a video on a car, it can then go out around the world. Transporters come and collect from us every day. There's a network of customers sitting at home with time and money, ready to buy cars.'

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PLUS SANTA POD UNDER THREAT HOW YOU CAN SAVE VENUE, P2

CLASSIC VIDEOS LEA

Online 'walk-arounds' are giving buyers confidence

Historic vehicle traders are being urged to invest in video equipment after a North Yorkshire specialist broke its all-time sales record by selling cars remotely.

The Classic and Sports Car Centre in Malton has cleared £2m of classic sales during the past two months of lockdown and staff are saying that its sales record was achieved through thorough walkaround videos shot on site.

Founder, Nick Szkiler, said: 'We're having an amazing time. Dealers willing to invest in remote selling techniques will get back what they put in.'

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Chief executive, James Szkiler, added: 'I've handled the sales enquiries from home. We are used to selling unseen, probably around 50 per cent normally but during

April and May it's been almost 100 per cent unseen.'

Hampshire specialist, Bradley James Classics, also said that it had been able to continue trading thanks to similar techniques – and that it was making revenue from the videos themselves.

Manager, Danny O'Keefe, said: 'Since the pandemic, people have really been flooding on to the channel. It's kept us going. Pre-lockdown I'd be selling one to three cars a week; now, I'm still selling at least one, but there's been an increase in deposits arriving after people have watched videos waiting to conclude sales when they're allowed to view the car in person.'

'How people buy cars has shifted. About 80 per cent of sales from videos now result in a deposit and a purchase, with about 20 per cent still wanting a test drive before sending money. We can leave cars out under distancing guidelines – though I've advised over 70s to stay away until guidelines change. We'll happily shoot specific footage and put the car on the ramp in

our garage so buyers can see the underside.'

Danny added that, from the success of the Bradley James' YouTube channel, he was happy to advise other traders on what equipment to buy and how to put films together. He said: 'Keeping it relevant and honest is enough if people like what they see. In the times we're living, I can't speak highly enough of the video sale.'

James Agger, of TVR specialist, James Agger Motorsport, was aware of the potential of video walkarounds even before lockdown. He said: 'They make a massive difference. So long as you're genuine and getting across what the car is like, people will buy on reputation. Even before this began, a video that we had made sold a Grantura to a collector from France who paid full asking price for the car a week after the video went live; he admitted to us that he'd watched it more than 120 times.' **Jon Burgess**

■ All the latest from our Support the Specialists campaign, page 8

THE
COVER
STORY



D TO RECORD SALES



Buyers might not be able to test-drive cars being sold by The Classic and Sports Car Centre, but online videos are helping to give them confidence.

'IT GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO BUY UNSEEN'

'One of the questions I've been asked most since the lockdown began is: who's going to buy a classic right now, without being able to see or drive it? Lots of us, it seems, and it's getting the right information that's helping to keep deals on the table. Even before the lockdown I bought my Scimitar unseen, and a big part of having the confidence to do was being able to see scores of pictures and its service history. Remember that your consumer rights haven't changed, either – it's up to the seller to describe it accurately, and the more information they give, the more likely you are to get a good deal.'

DAVID SIMISTER
EDITOR

