



POLICE AND GOVERNMENT AUCTIONS E-BOOK

E-BOOK VERSION: 2.0

PUBLISHED: 03 JULY 2020

PRICE: £9.99

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for purchasing the Police and Government Auctions e-book.

The purpose of this educational e-book is to introduce you to various types of auctions including police and government auctions that are available for people to attend in the UK. Within each category we give background information as well as useful advice. For example, there are several pieces of useful advice to assist you when you are looking at cars available at auctions. The material offered is for guidance only, therefore if you are not sure about anything, you should seek professional advice.

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POLICE AUCTIONS

Background Information

When goods are handed in to the police, it is usually possible for the finder to have the goods back if they are not claimed within a certain period of time. However, if the police find goods, then they can be sold or disposed of. This is at the discretion of the Chief Constable. Often, the goods end up being auctioned.

If there is a large quantity of goods to be auctioned, some auction houses will hold specific police auctions meaning that all of the goods in the auction have been entered by the police. If there are not enough goods to warrant an entire auction session, goods entered by the police will be mixed in with goods from other companies or individuals. The police do not necessarily use the same auction house all the time. For this reason, in addition to browsing the specific auction houses that have been found to deal with items on behalf of the police, it is also worth browsing the General Auctions category. You can always contact the auction houses to see if they have any items on offer that have been entered by the police.

Types of Goods Available

Lost and Found Items

Virtually anything can be lost! Therefore virtually anything can be found and subsequently appear at auctions. We find the following products are in decent supply:

- Mobile phones and tablets
- Watches and jewellery
- Bicycles
- Power tools
- Clothing and footwear

Stolen Items

Unfortunately, there is a lot of shop lifting in the UK. When the perpetrators are caught, the police confiscate items either at the time of arrest or after an investigation reveals that items are stolen. Most shops will write off stock that has been stolen and the police will generally send items to auction. We find the following products are commonly stolen and appear at many auctions:

- Clothing and footwear
- Small electronics
- Batteries
- Cosmetics and perfumes
- Alcohol

Police Surplus Assets

On occasions, the police may also send to auction their own surplus assets. This makes perfect sense as they already have relationships with many auction houses. The types of surplus assets can include:

- Office furniture
- IT equipment

We have received a few questions as to whether one can buy truncheons, guns and bullet-proof vests, however we are fairly confident that the answer to that is “no”!

Useful Advice

Choose Carefully

The majority of products are sold as seen which means on higher ticket items, you may be at risk of losing out financially if a product turns out to be faulty. Read the description carefully

to avoid any unwanted surprises. This is especially important with mobile phones where a device could be locked and you may have to pay a phone shop to unlock it.

Look at Resale Value

If you're looking to resell items that you pick up at auction for a profit, do your research before committing to a bid amount so that you can be sure you'll make a profit. Brand new items (mostly coming from shop lifter confiscations) will be easy to check online beforehand. Don't be tempted to continue to bid if the price is going too high.

Relevant Auction Houses

The auction houses listed here have been found to deal with items on behalf of various police forces. Please note that following the pandemic, some are still closed (although many are now back in business with social distancing). Please refer to the weekly summaries that we publish in order to see which are still closed.

- [AMS Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Gloucestershire Constabulary
- [Andrew Hartley](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Merseyside Police
- [Arrow Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Warwickshire Police as well as West Mercia and Wiltshire Constabularies
- [BCVA](#) found to deal with items on behalf of various police forces and airports
- [Biddle and Webb](#) found to deal with items on behalf of West Midlands Police
- [Boldon Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Durham Constabulary and Northumbria Police
- [Central Auction Rooms](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Greater Manchester Police
- [Chapel and Chapel](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Essex Police
- [Charles Taylor](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Greater Manchester Police
- [CLWYD Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Cheshire Constabulary
- [Cottees](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Dorset Police

- [Dynamic Asset Recovery](#) found to deal with items on behalf of various police forces
- [Greasbys](#) found to deal with items on behalf of the City of London and Metropolitan Police forces as well as Surrey and Sussex Police
- [Halfway Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of West Yorkshire Police
- [John Pye](#) found to deal with items on behalf of various police forces and HMRC
- [Morris Leslie](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Scottish Utility Companies
- [Peacock Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of various police forces
- [Pontypridd Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of various police forces and HMRC
- [Shelbys](#) found to deal with items on behalf of West Yorkshire Police
- [Stoodley Vehicle Auctions](#) found to deal with vehicles on behalf of Police Scotland
- [Swale Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Kent Police
- [TSA Auctions](#) found to deal with vehicles on behalf of Police Scotland
- [Wellers](#) found to deal with items on behalf of Hampshire Police and Surrey Police
- [West Oxfordshire Motor Auctions](#) found to deal with ex-emergency services vehicles
- [Wilsons Auctions](#) found to deal with items on behalf of various police forces
- [York Auction Centre](#) found to deal with items on behalf of North Yorkshire Police

For general goods such as electronics and household equipment, certain police forces operate their own Ebay shops where you can obtain lost property and other goods.

- [Leicester Police](#) Ebay shop 1
- [Leicester Police](#) Ebay shop 2
- [Sussex Police](#) Ebay shop

GOVERNMENT AUCTIONS

Background Information

Government ministries and departments make their own arrangements for disposing of items. Some of these are disposed of via auctions, and some are sold by other means, for example by companies who are specialised in this field.

Government auctions may often contain newer items for sale than more traditional auctions. This is because sometimes the government sets up temporary organisations (for example, following a national emergency). After the work is complete, it will often close, leaving computers and other equipment surplus to requirements that needs to be disposed of quickly and cheaply.

Certain departments such as HMRC have the power to seize goods from companies and individuals. This could be for various reasons including non-payment of tax bills and goods imported illegally. In order to recoup the money owed, the confiscated goods will often be sent to auction so that money can be realised from the sale.

Government departments do not necessarily use the same auction house all the time. For this reason, in addition to browsing the specific auction houses that have been found to deal with items on behalf of the government, it is also worth browsing the General Auctions category. You can always contact the auction houses to see if they have any items on offer that have been entered by the government.

Types of Goods Available

Surplus Equipment

- Office furniture
- IT equipment

Seized Goods

When it comes to seizing goods due to, for example, non-payment of tax bills, there is quite a choice. Seized goods available to purchase often include:

- Fine jewellery and watches
- Sports cars
- Designer clothing and handbags
- Fine wines and spirits

Useful Advice

Choose Carefully

The majority of products are sold as seen which means on higher ticket items, you may be at risk of losing out financially if a product turns out to be faulty. Read the description carefully to avoid any unwanted surprises. This is especially important with mobile phones where a device could be locked and you may have to pay a phone shop to unlock it.

Look at Resale Value

If you're looking to resell items that you pick up at auction for a profit, do your research before committing to a bid amount so that you can be sure you'll make a profit. Brand new items will be easy to check online beforehand. Don't be tempted to continue to bid if the price is going too high.

Relevant Auction Houses

The auction houses listed here have been found to deal with items on behalf of various government organisations. Please note that following the pandemic, some are still closed (although many are now back in business with social distancing).

- [Ramco](#) has been found to handle surplus government equipment
- [Wilsons Auctions](#) operates specific government auctions for seized goods and cars most weeks from multiple branches including Belfast, Newcastle and Maidstone
- [The Outdoor](#) is a retailer of genuine new and used British Military kit
- [DVLA](#) holds several auctions each year for exclusive personalised vehicle registrations
- [Brightwells](#) holds auctions on behalf of government departments

PROPERTY AUCTIONS

Background Information

Property auctions are an exciting way to buy a property. It is important to check all the details carefully before you make the decision to buy. As a potential buyer, your first step is to get a copy of the catalogue from the auctioneer. This contains the lots, i.e. the properties to be auctioned. Always deal with the auctioneer direct. This way you can be sure you have the most accurate and up-to-date information. Before you decide whether or not to bid, check the property to make sure the information you've been given is correct. It is worth getting professional advice and a valuation and survey before you buy.

Many properties sold via auction are below market value (BMV). This is often due to a distress sale where, due to personal or financial difficulties, the current owner needs to sell quickly. The benefit to you as a buyer is that the seller is normally prepared to accept an amount significantly under the true market value. You can therefore pick up cheap property to either sell on at your convenience or perhaps begin building a buy-to-let portfolio.

Case Study

Buying a BMV property at auction is a popular way for "buy-to-sell" bidders to make a quick profit. Let's have a look at a case study to see just how quickly a decent profit can be made.

A lady we knew had recently inherited a large sum of money and was able to purchase outright a new house to live in. Previously she had lived in a 2 bedroom flat near Kent which was in a pretty appalling state. Because of the amount of money she inherited and that she just wanted rid of the surplus property, she placed it into an auction for a quick sale. The property was sold for £136,000 in January 2014.

After the sale completed, we didn't hear anything else until the beginning of April 2014 when the lady was browsing Rightmove from the office. She had found her old flat back on

the market with an asking price of £199,950. The buyer (who had purchased the flat at auction) had replaced the carpets, applied fresh paint, refurbished the bathroom and kitchen and gave it a very good clean. We estimate the costs were as follows:

- Purchase price: £136,000
- Legal fees and stamp duty: £2,500
- Kitchen refurbishment: £2,500
- Bathroom refurbishment: £1,500
- New carpets: £1,000
- Painting/decorating/cleaning: £500
- TOTAL COST: £144,000

The new owner sold the property at a bit less than the asking price in May 2014, achieving a sale value of £185,000. That meant a profit of £41,000 over a 4 month period. Not bad!

Types of Properties Available

Some auction houses specialise in certain types of properties, whilst others sell the whole range of properties. In general, there are plenty of auctions for the following properties:

- Houses
- Flats
- Repossessed homes
- Commercial property
- Industrial property
- Garages
- Land

Useful Advice

Make Sure Your Finances are in Order

Unless you have the means to fund it, there's little point bidding on a property at auction. Assuming you're not a cash buyer, you will need to get a mortgage agreement in principal just as if you were buying through the usual route. You will need to pay a 10% deposit when the gavel goes down and then the 90% balance 28 days thereafter.

Instruct a Solicitor and Study the Small Print

The auction house should present you with a legal pack for the property (which will normally be free). This will normally include local searches, title deeds, an information form and a list of fixtures and fittings. The small print in the legal pack is important, therefore now is the time to instruct a solicitor to look at the paperwork on your behalf and make sure all is fine. Being up to speed on the property before the auction takes place means that the solicitor is ready to progress the sale if you are the successful bidder.

At the Auction

Attend the auction with two forms of ID plus evidence that you can afford the 10% deposit (this could be a recent bank statement showing funds available). Leave plenty of time to complete registration for the auction and try to get a seat that gives you a good view of the auctioneer (and the auctioneer a good view of you).

Relevant Auction Houses

The auction houses listed here have been found to specialise in property auctions. Please note that following the pandemic, some are still closed (although many are now back in business with social distancing).

- [Aldridge Lansdell](#) based in Norwich
- [Auction House](#) based in multiple locations
- [Austin Gray](#) based in Brighton
- [Baker Wynne & Wilson](#) based in Cheshire
- [Barnard Marcus](#) based in London
- [Barnett Ross](#) based in London
- [Brightwells](#) based in Herefordshire
- [Clarke Gammon Weller](#) based in Surrey
- [Dee Atkinson & Harrison](#) based in Yorkshire
- [Drivers and Norris](#) based in London
- [Lambert and Foster](#) based in Kent
- [Leonards](#) based in Yorkshire
- [Parsons Son & Basley](#) based in Brighton
- [Reeman Dansie Auctions](#) based in Colchester
- [Romans](#) based in Berkshire
- [SVA Property Auctions](#) based in Edinburgh

CAR AUCTIONS

Background Information

Car auctioneers receive a large amount of stock from many sources, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Local authorities
- Police and government departments
- Bailiffs
- Liquidators
- Finance companies
- Local businesses
- Private sellers
- Car dealers
- Leasing companies

Car auctions are a great way to pick up a bargain motor. There are lots of auctions all over the UK and if you're not sure what you're after, go to a few to see the sort of stock available. Most major car auctioneers also include catalogues online and many are now also offering online and telephone bidding if the car you've seen is available at an auction house far away.

Many car auctions will be specific to the origins of the car. For example, one auction might be entirely part exchange stock whilst another may be repossessed cars being auctioned on behalf of one or more finance companies. These are often interesting auctions because with more and more people falling behind with repayments, finance companies like to get rid of the cars very quickly and as a result they go very cheaply.

It is also possible to buy ex-emergency services vehicles. One of the car auctioneers we list holds two auctions per month that features vehicles such as ex-police cars. Your first thoughts may be that these vehicles have had a hard life, however it's important to remember that whilst they have been used regularly, they have also been taken very good care of. They will have been serviced often and any damage or problems will usually have

been taken care of promptly. How often have you seen a broken-down police car at the side of the road?!

Types of Vehicles Available

Cars

Private cars are the most widely available vehicle. Most makes and models are available across many price ranges and with varying mileages on the clock. On the cheap side you can pick up a decent run-around for a few hundred pounds and on the more expensive side you will find more exotic and newer cars.

Motorcycles

It should be noted that specific motorcycle auctions are not as common as car auctions. You will often find however that a selection of motorcycles is available in conjunction with a scheduled car auction so do have a look at the catalogue.

Vans and Light Commercial Vehicles

There are plenty of vans and light commercial vehicles for sale by auction. Light commercial vehicles include pick-ups, utility vans, Lutons and crew vans and minibuses.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

If you need a heavy goods vehicle for your business, getting one at an auction would be a great way to secure what you need. You'll find buses, lorries and various trailers available.

Useful advice

Look at Vehicles from Leasing Companies

A lot of auction vehicles come from leasing companies who generally only keep the vehicles for three to five years. These can be great buys because a registered dealer will have serviced them on the dot and the car will have been properly maintained regardless of cost.

Widen Your Search Area

Bear in mind that many of the car auctions are now taking place online. For that reason, you might like to look at vehicles outside your home area as you might find a better bargain for a car that you want in a different county or region. The best advice is to keep checking the catalogues for the main auction houses until you find what you want. If your criteria is not available this week, there's always next week!

At the Auction

If you're attending the auction in person, arrive early to give yourself plenty of time to look around the vehicles. There should be an information sheet available that tells you about each vehicle. Take particular note of the number of owners and the mileage. Remember, once bidding starts (either in person or online) it's easy to get carried away so don't be tempted to bid more than you reasonably want to pay.

Relevant Auction Houses

The auction houses listed here have been found to sell a good range of various vehicle types. Please note that following the pandemic, some are still closed (although many are now back in business with social distancing). They have been split into three areas (Scotland and North England, Central England and Wales, South England).

Scotland and North England

- [Manheim Auctions](#) based in Glasgow auctions cars, vans, trucks, plant and more
- [Central Car Auctions](#) based in Glasgow auctions cars and commercial vehicles
- [Bridlington Motor Auction](#) based in East Yorkshire auctions mainly cars
- [Morris Leslie](#) based in Errol auctions light commercial vehicles
- [British Car Auctions](#) based in multiple locations auctions cars, vans, motor homes, motorcycles, light commercial vehicles and more

Central England and Wales

- [Arrow Auctions](#) based in Worcestershire auctions cars and light commercial vehicles
- [CLWYD Auctions](#) based in Flintshire auctions cars on a weekly basis
- [Leominster Car Auctions](#) based in Herefordshire auctions cars on a weekly basis
- [IAA Formerly HBC](#) based in Nottinghamshire auctions accident damaged and theft recovered vehicles
- [Aston Barclay](#) based in Shropshire auctions cars on a weekly basis
- [Swansea Motor Vehicle Auctions](#) auctions cars on a weekly basis

South England

- [Husseys](#) based in Exeter auctions cars, commercial vehicles and plant
- [West Oxfordshire Motor Auctions](#) based in Witney auctions mainly cars twice a week including some ex-emergency services vehicles
- [Manheim](#) based in several locations auctions cars, vans, trucks, plant and more
- [East Anglian Motor Auctions](#) based in Norwich auctions mainly cars

- [Eastbourne Car Auctions](#) based in Eastbourne auctions cars and commercial vehicles
- [Anglia Car auctions](#) based in Norfolk auctions modern and classic cars
- [Letchworth Car Auctions](#) based in Hertfordshire auctions cars and commercial vehicles
- [British Car Auctions](#) based in multiple locations auctions cars, vans, motor homes, motorcycles, light commercial vehicles and more
- [Copart UK](#) based in Essex auctions used and salvaged cars

GENERAL AUCTIONS

Background Information

As mentioned in the Police Auctions section, the police do not necessarily use the same auction house all the time. For this reason, in addition to browsing the specific auction houses that have been found to deal with items on behalf of the police (see the Police Auctions section), it is also worth browsing the auction houses that identify as general auctioneers. You can always contact the auction houses to see if they have any items on offer that have been entered by the police.

General auctions may also be of interest if you are looking for something in particular that may not appear at auction houses used by the police. For example, collectors items, antiques and other specialist goods.

Types of Goods Available

You will find a lot of general household goods at most auctions including furniture, a good few appliances, garden items, tools, toys, bicycles, clothing and footwear and more. In addition, there are certain collections of goods that are predominantly sold by auction houses that you may be interested in. These include:

House Clearance Hauls

Many auction houses also offer a house clearance service. They may offer the service for free in order to be able to sell whatever they remove at auction. Bidders will find some interesting items at bargain prices.

Assets from Liquidated Businesses

When a business fails, in order to pay creditors as soon as possible, assets are usually sold to release cash. The quickest way for this to happen is to hold an auction. Assets from bigger businesses may be sold in a specific auction whilst assets from smaller businesses, as there will be less of them, will often be mixed in with other items appearing in the auction. Expect IT equipment, catering equipment, office furniture, workshop tools and more.

Collectables and Film, Sports and Other Memorabilia

There is a roaring trade in all sorts of collectables areas including toys, magazines, action figures and more. If you can pick these up cheap at a general auction you could consider re-auctioning them at a more specialist auction to make a profit.

Useful Advice

Choose Carefully

The majority of products are sold as seen which means on higher ticket items, you may be at risk of losing out financially if a product turns out to be faulty. Read the description carefully to avoid any unwanted surprises. This is especially important with mobile phones where a device could be locked and you may have to pay a phone shop to unlock it.

Look at Resale Value

If you're looking to resell items that you pick up at auction for a profit, do your research before committing to a bid amount so that you can be sure you'll make a profit. Brand new items will be easy to check online beforehand. Don't be tempted to continue to bid if the price is going too high.

Relevant Auction Houses

The auction houses listed here have been found to hold regular general auctions. Please note that following the pandemic, some are still closed (although many are now back in business with social distancing). They have been split into three areas (Scotland and North England, Central England and Wales, South England).

Scotland and North England

- [Peter Wilson](#) based in Nantwich holds general auctions including jewellery and wine
- [Curr and Dewar](#) based in Dundee holds general auctions including house clearances
- [Thomas Watson](#) based in Darlington holds general auctions including a lot of antiques

Central England and Wales

- [Kidson Trigg](#) based in Swindon holds general auctions including jewellery
- [Golding Young](#) based in Grantham holds general auctions including art
- [Fellows](#) based in Birmingham holds general auctions including jewellery, collectables and fine handbags

South England

- [Gorringes](#) based in Lewes holds general auctions including several specialist areas
- [John Nicholsons](#) based in Haslemere holds general auctions including fine art
- [Bulstrodes](#) based in Christchurch holds general auctions including antiques
- [Semley Auctioneers](#) based in Shaftesbury holds general auctions including art
- [Torridge Auctions](#) based in Bideford holds general auctions including house clearances
- [Chelmsford Auction Rooms](#) based in Chelmsford holds general auctions
- [Bourne End Auction Rooms](#) based in Bourne End holds general auctions including wine and jewellery

SURPLUS STOCK

Background Information

When a retailer goes out of business or declares themselves bankrupt, there is often stock remaining that has not been sold. This is good news for bargain hunters because it will be sold off very cheaply in order to make fast cash for the company that has gone out of business to pay its creditors.

End of line stock is another area where bargains can be found as most shops prefer to get rid of old ranges as quickly as possible when new ranges are launched. Rather than holding endless sales, they may prefer to shift it in bulk. Surplus stock is another good deal. This often consists of end of line stock as well as mail order surplus stock.

Types of Goods Available

There are several companies that specialise in sourcing surplus, end of line and liquidated stock at good prices. As well as buying single items it is often possible to buy full pallets which makes an excellent source of items to sell on platforms such as Ebay. Expect lots of the following:

- Clothing and footwear
- Electronics
- Computers and laptops
- Toys
- Tools and power tools
- Garden products
- Household products
- White goods
- Car accessories

Useful Advice

Look at the Quantity

A lot of stock is sold in bulk, often by the pallet load. If you go down this route (possibly because you are looking to resell single items on platforms such as Ebay) make sure you have the space to store the goods. Once you take everything off a pallet, it may take up more space than you think.

Read the Description

It is important to fully read the description of the goods you are buying. Watch out for the following types of goods that you may need to think about further before buying:

- Returns (goods returned by the original customer, often to mail order houses)
- Seconds (batches of goods where there is a slight, but not major, defect)

Returns and seconds can be fine but unless you are viewing the items in person it could be a bit of a lucky dip.

Research the Resale Value

Most people buy surplus stock in order to resell it on platforms such as Ebay (who needs 12 washing machines?) In this case you need to focus on profit, therefore before you commit to buying a selection of items, do some research to see what the resale market is like. Work out the figures including what you'll need to spend to get the product to your customer. Small items are often a lot more profitable than larger items due to everyday sellers not having access to highly discounted courier fees.

Relevant Surplus Stock Retailers

The retailers listed here have been found to sell a mix of surplus, end of line and liquidated stock in a variety of quantities.

- [Marthill International](#) is a wholesale returns clearance cash and carry
- [Gem Wholesale](#) operates a massive warehouse supplying mainly pallet loads
- [John Pye Trade](#) offers stock sold by the pallet and truck load

CONCLUSIONS

Police and government auctions are a great way to pick up a variety of bargain products either to keep for yourself or to resell to other buyers on various platforms and make a profit. Auctions are also fun whether you attend in person or just participate online. Pay attention to our useful advice to understand possible pitfalls you may encounter.

Thank you for your interest and happy bidding!