Motorcycle editorial

By cap hpi

February 2024

Motorcycle market overview

The UK's economy grew by 0.3% in November helped along by Black Friday retail sales, after a small shrinkage in the previous month. But as there has been little growth over the year, economists are still saying it will be a close call as to whether the UK avoids a downturn.

Recession is typically defined when the economy shrinks for two three-month periods in a row. Although it will be small numbers if there is contraction between October and December, the psychological effect will be significant. It's going to be a close call, as in the three months to November the economy shrank by 0.2%.

Slightly better news on the inflation front. It dropped to 3.9% in the year to November, down from 4.6% in October, but saw a slight increase to 4% in December. A big factor in the drop was a fall in petrol and diesel prices.

The good news for borrowers is that the Bank of England has now held interest rates as inflation has started to reduce overall.

Pay growth has continued, although at a lower rate, falling from 7.3% to 6.6% in the three months to November, and job vacancies still remain above levels seen before the Covid pandemic. There still appears to be a lot of 'fence sitting' from both experts and the public as to what will happen over the coming year with conflicts continuing, and elections on the horizon, which are all going to play their part in world economics.

New market

The latest MCIA new registration figures are for December, concluding the year. Rounding off 2023 we can now see how the year faired as it returns to a more normal model mix seen before the pandemic. The bottom line saw December with 5,236 registrations which was 690 (-11.6%) down from the same month 2022. For the full year of 2023, total registrations of 113,589 were 2,945 (-2.5%) down from the previous year. A small decline that in the great scheme of things, once digging further into the other figures, becomes even less of a worry.

Reference the registration tables below, and separate the EV's from ICE figures, and there is a 37.8% decline in the alternative fuelled bikes that became popular for much discussed reasons over the covid period. The reduction in ICE is 0.4%, that's only 481 less.

One comparison worth a look now we have seen the first full year back to "normal" is 2019 compared to 2023, and 2023 doesn't look that bad when car registrations are considered, which have moved from 2.293 million in 2019, down to 1.903 million in 2023, 17% less than pre pandemic, where our industry has growth in the same period.

Registrations	2023	2019	% Change
Below 125cc	45,100	40,638	11.0%
126cc and over	68,489	66,770	2.6%
Total Registrations	113,589	107,408	5.8%

Moped, for both the reported month and the full year is perhaps little surprise as we move back to a more normal model mix. Although the 5,533 last year was a 22.8% drop from 2022 at 7,164, 2019 saw 6,216, which is in the middle of the two most recent years. Is it a stretch to suggest the amount of used in the market is high, and might be a better prospect for the buyer on a budget.
Motorcycles category had a poor finish in the last month of the year, but in the grand scheme of things over 12 months only lost 1.2%, and again the 107,215 looks positive against the 100,472 of 2019.

Touring as the smallest sector in Motorcycles, suffered the worst change year-on-year with a 12.3% contraction, but still in front of 2019. Perhaps the dedicated tourer is becoming a thing of the past as other classes are capable long distance machines with a bit of luggage fitted?

December 2023 and Year to Date - New Registrations by Style

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Mopeds	Registrations			Market Share (%)		Year to date			Market Share (%)	
	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change	Dec-23	Dec-22	2023	2022	% Change	2023	2022
Naked	24	64	-62.5%	6.8%	15.6%	536	636	-15.7%	9.7%	8.9%
Other	71	83	-14.5%	20.2%	20.3%	1,095	1,202	-8.9%	19.8%	16.8%
Scooter	257	262	-1.9%	73.0%	64.1%	3,902	5,326	-26.7%	70.5%	74.3%
Totals	352	409	-13.9%	100.0%	100.0%	5,533	7,164	-22.8%	100.0%	100.0%

Motorcycles	Registrations			Market Share (%)		Year to date			Market Share (%)	
	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change	Dec-23	Dec-22	2023	2022	% Change	2023	2022
Adventure	1,119	1,015	10.2%	23.1%	18.7%	21,216	20,815	1.9%	19.8%	19.2%
Competition	359	352	2.0%	7.4%	6.5%	6,189	5,780	7.1%	5.8%	5.3%
Custom	227	247	-8.1%	4.7%	4.5%	7,518	7,491	0.4%	7.0%	6.9%
Modern Classic	369	662	-44.3%	7.6%	12.2%	10,938	12,117	-9.7%	10.2%	11.2%
Naked	947	1,178	-19.6%	19.5%	21.7%	24,951	23,641	5.5%	23.3%	21.8%
Road Sport	390	362	7.7%	8.0%	6.7%	9,042	8,704	3.9%	8.4%	8.0%
Scooter	1,333	1,466	-9.1%	27.5%	27.0%	24,577	26,899	-8.6%	22.9%	24.8%
Touring	100	130	-23.1%	2.1%	2.4%	2,580	2,942	-12.3%	2.4%	2.7%
Unspecified	10	23	-56.5%	0.2%	0.4%	204	125	63.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Total Motorcycle	4,854	5,435	-10.7%	100.0%	100.0%	107,215	108,514	-1.2%	100.0%	100.0%

Tricycles	Registrations			Market Share (%)		Year to date			Market Share (%)	
	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change	Dec-23	Dec-22	2023	2022	% Change	2023	2022
Other	9	55	-83.6%	0.2%	1.0%	366	362	1.1%	0.3%	0.3%
Scooter	21	27	-22.2%	0.4%	0.5%	475	494	-3.8%	0.4%	0.5%
Total Tricycles	30	82	-63.4%	0.6%	1.5%	841	856	-1.8%	0.8%	0.8%

Summary	Registrations			Market Share (%)		Year to date		YTD	Market Share (%)	
	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change	Dec-23	Dec-22	2023	2022	% Change	2023	2022
Total Scooter	1,611	1,755	-8.2%	30.8%	29.6%	28,954	32,719	-11.5%	25.5%	28.1%
Total Moped, Motorcycle & Tricycles (exc Scooters)	3,625	4,171	-13.1%	69.2%	70.4%	84,635	83,815	1.0%	74.5%	71.9%
Total Registrations	5,236	5,926	-11.6%	100.0%	100.0%	113,589	116,534	-2.5%	100.0%	100.0%

Trying to focus on a positive once the poor month is out of the way, hopefully the much discussed return to a more recognisable market where Covid affected Electric bikes are not being sold to commuters and delivery riders dragging the totals down. The comparisons made over the course of 2024 should wash out this anomaly, giving a fairer comparison of Y-O-Y market changes.

December 2023 and Year to Date - Powertrain and Capacity

Month

Powertrain	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change
ICE	4,980	5,528	-9.9%
Electric	256	398	-35.7%
Total Registrations	5,236	5,926	-11.6%

YTD

Powertrain	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change
ICE	109,527	110,008	-0.4%
Electric	4,062	6,526	-37.8%
Total Registrations	113,589	116,534	-2.5%

Month

ICE	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change
0-50cc	243	303	-19.8%
51-125cc	1,853	2,090	-11.3%
126-500cc	684	1,007	-32.1%
501-750cc	501	611	-18.0%
751-1000cc	765	649	17.9%
1000cc+	934	868	7.6%
Total Registrations	4,980	5,528	-9.9%

YTD

ICE	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change
0-50cc	3,772	4,255	-11.4%
51-125cc	37,610	40,407	-6.9%
126-500cc	16,594	17,739	-6.5%
501-750cc	13,198	12,698	3.9%
751-1000cc	19,665	15,825	24.3%
1000cc+	18,688	19,084	-2.1%
Total Registrations	109,527	110,008	-0.4%

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Month

ELECTRIC	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change
Moped ≤ 4 kW	109	106	2.8%
Motorcycle ≤ 11 kW	130	225	-42.2%
Motorcycle ≤ 35 kW	2	6	-66.7%
Motorcycle > 35 kW	0	1	-100.0%
Exempt	13	7	0.0%
Unknown	2	53	-96.2%
Total Registrations	256	398	-35.7%

YTD

ELECTRIC	Dec-23	Dec-22	% Change
Moped ≤ 4 kW	1,762	2,909	-39.4%
Motorcycle ≤ 11 kW	1,956	3,090	-36.7%
Motorcycle ≤ 35 kW	69	131	-47.3%
Motorcycle > 35 kW	58	116	-50.0%
Exempt	101	84	20.2%
Unknown	116	196	-40.8%
Total Registrations	4,062	6,526	-37.8%

December 2023 - Highest Registering Model by Style

Moped	Best Selling Models	Dec-23
Naked	Multiple Items	4
Other	Sur-ron LIGHT BEE	27
Scooter	Lexmoto ECHO 50	55

Motorcycle	Best Selling Models	Dec-23
Adventure	BMW R 1300 GS	181
Competition	Sur-ron ULTRA BEE	36
Custom	Keeway SUPERLIGHT	18
Modern Classic	Ducati SCRAMBLER	24
Naked	Honda CBF 125 M	68
Road Sport	Kawasaki NINJA 1000 SX	43
Scooter	Yamaha NMAX 125	264
Touring	BMW R 1250 RT	20

Tricycle	Best Selling Models	Dec-23
Other	Multiple Items	2
Scooter	Yamaha TRICITY 300	12

December 2023 - Highest Registering Model by Engine Size

ICE	Best Selling Models	Dec-23
0-50cc	Lexmoto ECHO 50	55
51-125cc	Yamaha NMAX 125	264
126-500cc	Beta RR 2T 300	27
501-750cc	Yamaha MT-07 ABS	48
751-1000cc	BMW F 750 GS	44
1000cc+	BMW R 1300 GS	181

Electric	Best Selling Models	Dec-23
Moped ≤ 4 kW	Sur-ron LIGHT BEE	27
Motorcycle ≤ 11 kW	Scutum SEAT MO ESCOOTER 125	48
Motorcycle ≤ 35 kW	BMW CE 04 15kW	2
Exempt	Electric Motion EPURE SPORT	6

New Registrations by Brand

Best Selling Brands	Dec-23
Honda	863
Yamaha	651
BMW	604
Triumph	309
KTM	281
Suzuki	257
Kawasaki	239
Lexmoto	210
Piaggio	157
Ducati	137

Used Market

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With the Christmas period out of the way and the world getting back into the swing of a new year, the industry should look forward to the upcoming season. But with the economy in the position it is and all news being bad, and with talk of the recently announced elections that could cause major changes in the UK, there is the perception of treading water until some clarity is available.

As stock moves out of dealerships it is being replaced, but at the closing of the first month of the year, the rush for fresh stock for the upcoming season is yet to be seen at the levels enjoyed over the past decade as availability has been tighter after a long period of exporting. It is more reminiscent of the turn of the century when there was enough to go around and re-stocking could be undertaken at a more leisurely pace in the build up to the new riding season.

One problem that has been observed over the last year or so is the amount of stock still remaining unsold that had been taken in part-exchange or purchased at a time when prices were elevated. They are perhaps a little on the expensive side to dispose of in the trade and certainly generally higher than would be expected to be paid at this moment. This has also been exacerbated by the larger trade price drops in the latter half of 2023 as availability was more than we saw in the previous decade, where observed trade values did not drop as dealers with favourable cash flow availability continued to buy over winter. This situation we are currently in where seasonal changes are more pronounced was the norm, and time will tell if it will return in future.

Until this overage more expensive stock has worked its way through the trade system and has been retailed there is a period of being in limbo while some clarity is seen and the possibility of settling into a more predictable pattern. There has been a sustained situation of lower prices that have continued into the new year, and with little evidence of a change in demand on the horizon, price movements in this month’s data release have been in a downward direction.

Auction

The biggest sale in the country that sees the majority of major finance house entries and big dealer groups entries has started the year off in a similar manner that which has been reflected in dealer sentiment. Of the 132 lotted bikes, only 44 sold, not something normally seen at this time of year. In comparison, the same sale in 2023 had 121 entries of which 83 sold. One noticeable difference this year is a larger amount of dealer group entries which had a poor sale ratio to compared to finance entries. A possible reason as mentioned in the Used Market section above could be the high stand in values.

This year when averaged the result for the whole sale was 95% of CAP reported values and 97% in 2023. Moving back another year, to 2022, we saw significantly less entries as dealers held onto stock, with demand higher, leading to a higher proportion sold, 60 from 81 (75%), and with a return overall of 101% of CAP.

Just even more evidence of the current state of flux in the industry. This is not a suggestion of imminent catastrophe but more an indicator of movement to a different pattern than that seen over the last decade and even a possible return to the previous seasonal changes.

End notes

15th January was National Pothole Day, ……who knew there was such a thing? Well luckily for the general population and particularly two wheel riders the AA has and has now joined forces with the National Motorcyclists Council, British Cycling, IAM Roadsmart, the British Motorcyclists Federation and even JCB.

The AA released its latest figures at the same time which showed its patrols were called out to 631,852 pothole related incidents affecting wheel, tyre, or suspension damage, just in 2023, which is the highest number in five years.

Add to that the number of people who are not AA members, and it is possible around two million to have suffered, with them calculating the damage caused in the year could amount to £474 million. For riders its much more than the cost, as they run the risk of injury or worse I the problem continues .