

David Miles' Motoring News Round-up No. 5

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Hundreds of new cars forlornly awaiting owners, at Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire...
Photo courtesy of Chris Gorman/Daily Mail.

MOTORING MILESTONE NEWS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED...

...By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

I'm still keeping calm and carrying on sifting through the latest automotive news items and press releases pinging into my Inbox. Whilst the COVIC-19 news is not good there are some brighter worthwhile snippets of information worth passing on.



New life goes on – Toyota Corolla proves reliant for Robins

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

We motoring journalists during the lockdown period are without test cars to evaluate and we cannot drive anywhere anyway. Many manufacturers such as Toyota have loaned out demonstration and media test cars to help the NHS Trust and similar welfare organisations during this critical coronavirus time.

However one test car, which had been returned to the Toyota Press Fleet garage in Crawley and was awaiting preparation just as the lockdown was applied, was a Toyota Corolla Excel 2.0-litre.



A family of Robins has chosen the rear wheel arch of the car to build a nest in to raise its young. The silver coloured Corolla hatchback had returned to the press fleet from long term loan with Autocar magazine and was in a quiet corner of the outdoor car park of the press garage.

The nest was spotted by Toyota GB Press Fleet Manager, Graham Bothamley, who said: 'I noticed a pile of leaves around the base of the rear wheel arch of the Corolla on the 12 April and discovered a nest full of eggs balanced on the top of the wheel. You'd have thought the birds might have chosen one of our more famous cars such as the Lexus LFA or Toyota Supra but instead they chose the world's best-selling model, the Corolla.'



Facing up to the task of re-starting vehicle production

Most vehicle manufacturers are busy getting ready to restart much needed revenue generating production.

Ford is producing face masks in the U.K. and face shields at other Ford sites in Europe as part of initiatives to deliver a safe working environment for employees performing essential roles at Ford facilities in Europe during the COVID-19 crisis.

Production of personal protective equipment is already underway at Ford facilities in the U.K., Germany, Spain and Romania. This is designed to ensure that Ford's intention to restart initial production at most of its main continental European vehicle and engine plants this week does not add to worldwide demand for such personal protective equipment.

Nissan's Sunderland Plant, the UK's largest car production facility suspended work on 17 March and they have just announced that production will not start in May but they aim to have a phased resumption in June. However for now volunteer employees at the facility have been busy making face masks and visors and Nissan has used their distribution network to distribute them to various NHS Trusts and other needy facilities.



[Nissan GB provides charging packs for NHS staff.](#)

[Nissan Motor GB](#), the sales and marketing arm of the business, is supporting Lifeline-To-The-Frontline, a new initiative by British company Lifesaver to provide free portable and rechargeable power packs to NHS staff and frontline workers. The pocket-sized devices, charged with 100% renewable energy, help keep smartphones powered up and connected during worker shifts. Lifesaver has already provided 1,000 power packs from the first round of fundraising, with devices delivered to hospitals in London, Surrey, Hampshire, Yorkshire and Cheshire.

[MINI](#) is restarting production at their Plant Oxford facility they call 'Home of MINI' and one



of the models coming off the production line will be the long awaited new MINI Electric priced from £24,400 after the Government's Plug-In Grant has been applied. This is one of the many news cars I was scheduled to evaluate before the lockdown came into force. Hopefully I'll catch up with it before too long.



[MINI to restart production at its Plant Oxford home.](#)

Volume car makers such as [JLR](#), [Honda](#), [MINI](#), [Toyota](#), [Nissan](#), [Aston Martin](#), [Vauxhall](#) and [the BMW/MINI](#) engine plants are all preparing in degrees of readiness to restart production with [Bentley](#) already starting limited production this week. The UK needs it to happen fast as there will be an estimated loss of at least £8.2bn to the industry if factories remain closed beyond May.



UK's automotive industry at standstill – April new vehicle sales very low

Background information from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) shows the automotive industry is a vital part of the UK economy worth £101 billion annually in global trade. With some 168,000 people employed directly in manufacturing and 823,000 across the wider automotive industry, it accounts for 14.4% of total UK export of goods and invests £3.75 billion each year in automotive R&D. More than 30 manufacturers build some 70 models of vehicle in the UK supported by 2,500 component providers and some of the world's most skilled engineers.

Following steep falls in car, van and engine production in the UK in March came news this week from the SMMT that just 4,321 new cars were registered in April, the lowest monthly total since 1946. This was a 97.3% fall compared to April last year. Some of these new cars will have been registered by the industry as dealer and company car demonstration vehicles with new 20 registration plates. They will replace support vehicles released to the NHS Trusts, the Police and other frontline workers. Top car model in April was the all-electric Tesla 3 with 658 registrations followed by the Jaguar I-Pace electric SUV and the new Vauxhall Corsa supermini sized hatchback. For the year to date the Ford Fiesta remains the top selling new car followed by the new VW Golf and Ford Focus.

**BEST SELLERS**

APRIL 2020			YEAR-TO-DATE		
1	Tesla Model 3	658	1	Ford Fiesta	15,952
2	Jaguar I-Pace	367	2	Volkswagen Golf	14,627
3	Vauxhall Corsa	264	3	Ford Focus	14,092
4	Vauxhall Crossland X	143	4	Vauxhall Corsa	12,328
5	Ford Tourneo Custom	108	5	Nissan Qashqai	11,857
6	Peugeot Rifter	94	6	Mercedes-Benz A-Class	10,285
7	SEAT León	80	7	MINI	8,617
8	Mercedes-Benz A-Class	72	8	Kia Sportage	8,429
9	Nissan Leaf	72	9	BMW 3 Series	7,900
10	Peugeot 308	67	10	Volkswagen Polo	7,355

[April 2020 \(and year to date\) best selling cars in the UK.](#)

However the UK's light commercial vehicle registrations for April were even worse than cars with an 86.2% fall to just 3,387 units. But a quirky result was the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van became the UK's best-selling vehicle for the month with 814 vehicle registrations. This was the first time a van has outsold the most popular passenger car in a single month since June 1990 when the new Ford Transit outsold the Ford Escort.



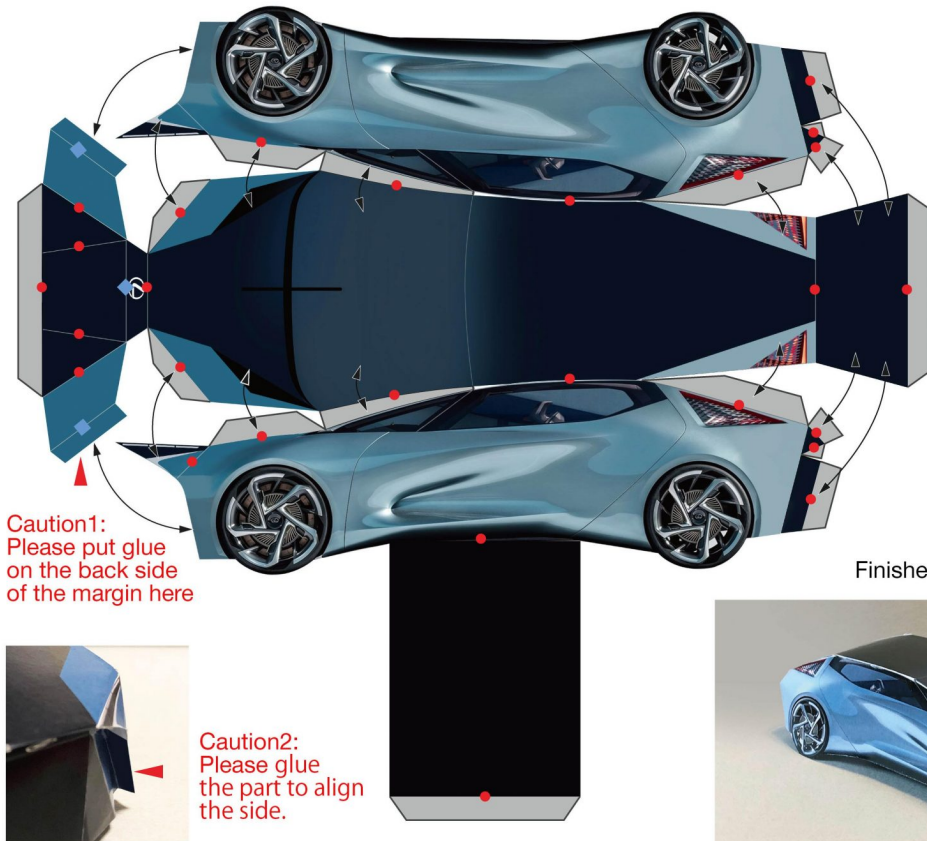
The Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van, the UK's best-selling vehicle in April.

Meanwhile there are new cars stockpiled on former airfields throughout the country waiting to be delivered to dealerships and onwards to customers. Our picture, courtesy of Chris Gorman/Daily Mail shows stored cars parked up at the former airfield at Upper Heyford near Bicester.

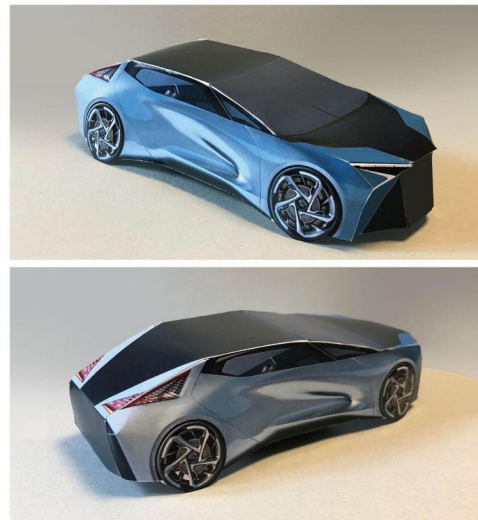


£35 million worth of cars parked in storage at a former airfield near Bicester.

Keeping Calm and Carrying On From Lexus



Finished Model



道具 What you need

Paper (Cardborad) Glue (Or double-side tape) Scissors Cutter Ruler

作り方 How to make

1. Cut out the shape of LF-30 with the grey margin tabs.
2. Fold the gray margin tabs. Then fold ● (Mountain hold) ◆ (Valley Hold). If you use a ruler to fold the paper, you can make a perfectly folded edge.
3. Apply glue or double sided tapes on the margins and stick together starting from 1 to 10.



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[Lexus template instructions.](#)

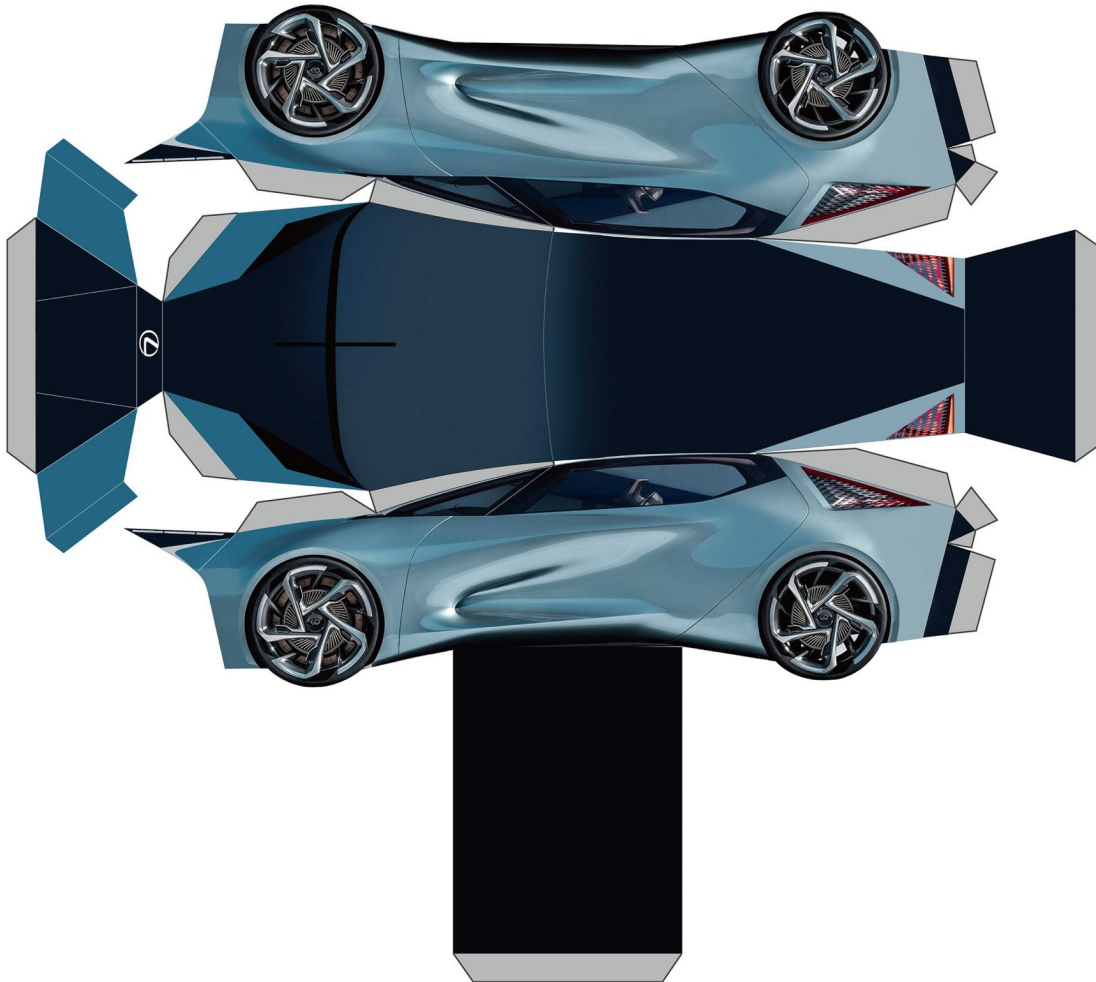


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LF-30 ELECTRIFIED





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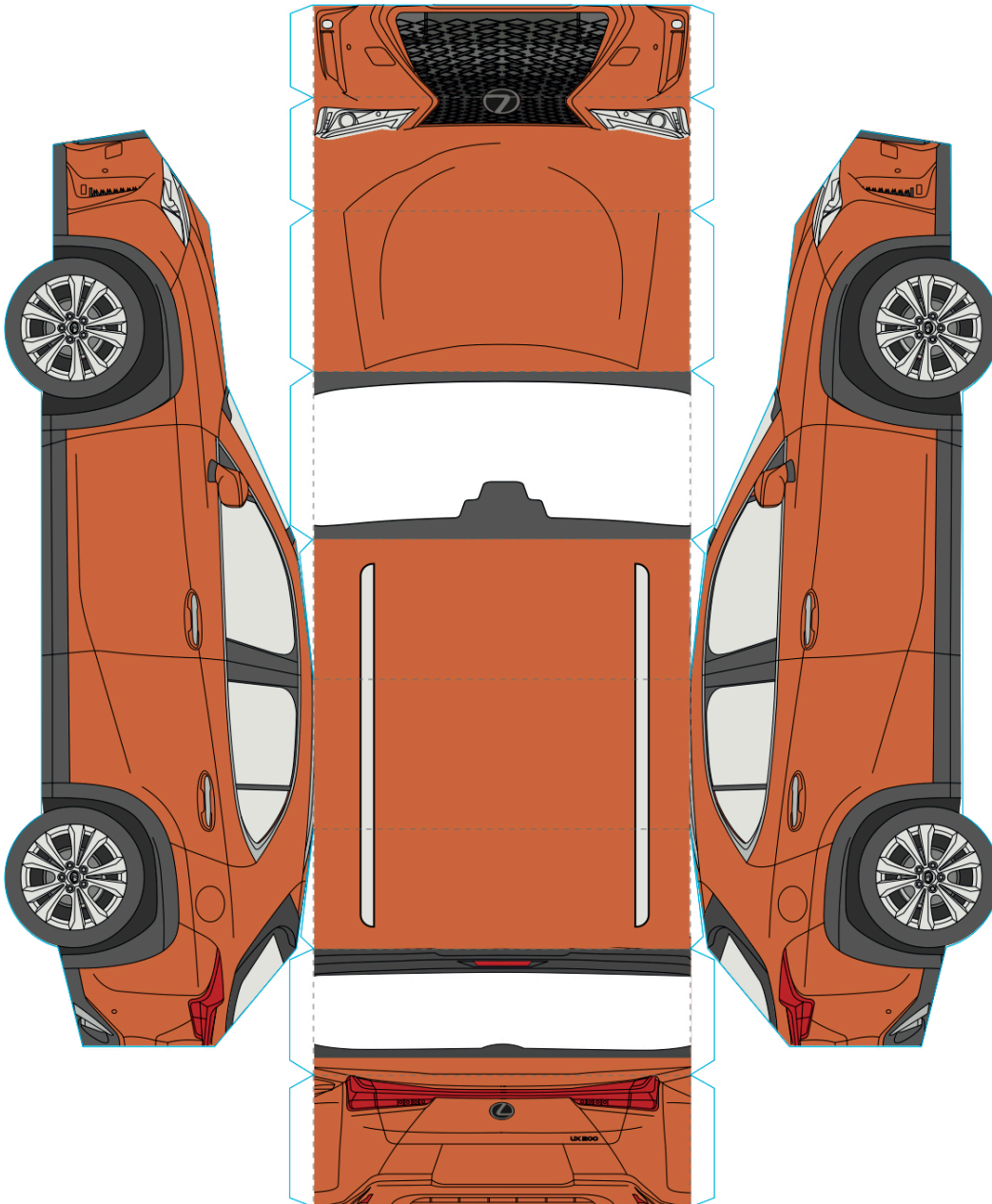
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Lexus LF-30 cut out template.



LEXUS UX 250h

— línea de corte
- - - - línea de plegado





[Lexus UX 250h cut out template.](#)

To help keep children and adults entertained during the lockdown Lexus UK has released two more templates to create paper models. This time they are of the Lexus LF-30 Electrified concept that was revealed at the Tokyo Motor Show in 2019 and the latest Lexus UX 250h compact SUV as well. So stop cutting your hair and use the scissors for something more creative. Here is how to build your paper model

You'll need access to a colour printer, some paper glue or double-sided tape, and a pair of scissors. This activity is recommended for older children; it should take about an hour to carefully put your model together.

First, download and print the high-resolution PDF of the instruction sheet and your chosen Lexus paper model using the images attached to this news item.

You could print the pdf document on A3 paper rather than A4, to make the building a little less fiddly with a larger model at the end.

1. Using scissors, carefully cut out the template, being especially careful not to cut off the grey tabs (these are white on the UX version).
2. Fold and glue all of these tabs so they adhere to the underside of the adjacent panel - doing so will pull the car into the three-dimensional shape that *should* resemble your chosen Lexus.

Using a ruler when folding will help ensure a perfectly straight folded edge.

Lexus UK invites people to share images of their paper models on its social media channels:

Twitter: @LexusUK, Facebook: @LexusUK and Instagram: @LexusUK.

UK tops EU Lexus sales markets



[Lexus range; UK best market in the EU for Lexus hybrid sales.](#)

More news from Lexus, the UK is the strongest market in Europe for their self-charging hybrid electric cars. The UK's customers have bought 123,700 of them since the introduction of the first RX 400h in 2004. That figure is more than a quarter of the total 431,372 Lexus models sold in the EU since then.

Around the world almost 1.75-million Lexus hybrids have been sold, part of the 15-million sales of Toyota's global hybrid models which started in 1997 with the Prius.

At the end of this year Lexus will introduce their first all-electric model - the UX 300e.

More on-line services for buying a new car

At the time of writing car dealership's showrooms remain shut although there are several companies offering real-time on-line virtual tours of new models with the facility to ask questions and then order and pay functions plus some delivery services.

[Renault UK](#) has now added to their www.renault.co.uk website Virtual Tour facility an On-Line Stock Reservation feature for all their passenger car models and Pro+ commercial vehicles.



Customers simply log-on, select the model and specification from the vehicles available in stock and then they are put in touch with their chosen dealer to complete the purchase through to delivery.



Renault launch their click and reserve on-line buying tool.

Meanwhile at [Mitsubishi Motors](#) it's virtual business as usual with their Mitsubishi Buy on Line facility. Customers can browse the model range, specify their exact model of choice, trade in their current vehicle and arrange finance all from the comfort and health and safety of their own home.



£99 Deposit and FREE Home Delivery on all Mitsubishi models

You can pop it on your lockdown list.



[Mitsubishi's £99 deposit and free home delivery on-line offer.](#)

With the showroom lock-down likely to continue for a while longer Mitsubishi until the end of June are offering customers a chance to reserve their model for a £99 fee. This is reduced from their normal on-line cost of £350 and includes free home delivery of the new vehicle and collection of the trade-in.

These latest on-line facilities are a quick fix to the car sales process but in the longer term, if they pull in punters will they become the preferred long-term way to buy a new or used vehicle? Manufacturers might see their dealer network outlets of the future mainly only being involved in the delivery and servicing processes.

Finally Paws for Thought



SEAT's dog-gone travel advice.

Dogs these days tend to be pampered pets. In the past dogs were still pets but they were also useful doing anything from herding sheep to helping the Police. Now we have families, or couplers/singles with loads of dogs, some it has to be said are no more than fashion accessories.

SEAT in the UK have just undertaken a 2,000 respondent survey of dog owning motorists.

According to their replies dogs help us Brits to be better drivers. We take more care driving with a dog in our car said 54% of all respondents, and it was even higher at 69% for drivers aged 18-24 years. But for older drivers of 55 years of age and above - it was only 42%.



But for all age groups nine out of 10 dog-owning drivers didn't know about laws potentially covering travelling with dogs in a car or the maximum penalty was £5,000 and nine points on their licence. The law comes under Rule 57 of the Highway Code, Driving Without Due Care and Attention, so you could be pulled over if an animal is not secure within a car. This is more likely to be applied if your dog has caused or contributed to you having an accident. A belt harness which uses the seat belt anchorage points, a pet carrier, dog cage or dog guard are suggested ways to travel safely with your pampered pooches and of course SEAT's accessory department has all those items for sale.



SEAT's dog-gone travel advice - "Do I look good in this?"

David concludes by saying, "Stay safe, stay locked in if you can but hopefully we are now on the road to recovery".



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