

Tracking down lost property

Our test of lost property offices reveals some that didn't contact owners of items handed in

More than a quarter of train stations in our latest rail lost property investigation failed to contact owners to tell them that their property had been handed in.

In July, we visited 16 train stations and handed in a coat and wallet containing £22, which we said we'd found on a train. Each wallet was clearly labelled with the owner's name and phone number.

Staff members are supposed to call owners if contact details are with an item. But five out of 16 stations hadn't contacted us two weeks after our researchers handed our property in. They were Manchester Piccadilly, Sheffield, Glasgow Central, London Kings Cross and London Waterloo.

These results do show an improvement – only five got in touch when we conducted the same investigation last year (see Which?, November 2008, p4).

At the time, the Association of Train Operation Companies (Atoc), told us that it was still working out how to create a central database of lost property, which

was first reported in 2003. An Atoc spokesman confirmed that no progress had been made on the idea this year.

He added: 'I'm pleased to see that your research shows a greater number of items were returned to their owners than was the case in your last survey.'

However, we had other concerns about some stations visited. When collecting the coat from Luton Station, the wallet and £22 were missing. Staff were unable to explain what had happened.

We contacted First Capital Connect, which runs Luton Station. A spokesman told us that it took lost property 'very seriously' and that it would be investigating the case. He added: 'We endeavour to reunite items with owners as quickly and completely as possible.'

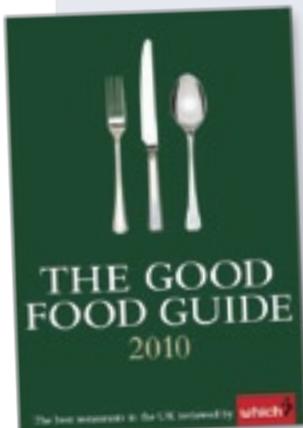
At other stations, lost property offices were unexpectedly closed and staff members were confused as to where our lost property was even though we'd been asked to collect it – one researcher even found a member of station staff asleep at his desk.



TAKE ACTION!

■ If you lose an item while travelling by train, visit www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations to find lost property office contact details for stations where your property may have been handed in.

Stations we visited: Brighton, Bromley South, Cambridge, Cardiff Central, Colchester North, Crewe, Edinburgh Waverley, Glasgow Central, Gloucester, Leicester, London King's Cross, London Waterloo, Luton, Manchester Piccadilly, Plymouth and Sheffield.



The Good Food Guide 2010

Our new restaurant guide lists great-value eateries whether you're fine dining or relaxing in the pub

The latest version of Britain's best selling restaurant guide, *The Good Food Guide*, will be published in early September (see p78 to order your discounted copy).

The launch will coincide with news of *The Good Food Guide* Editors' Awards – including best new entry, best chef, best pub newcomer and best value-for-

money entry. Visit www.which.co.uk/gfg to find out more.

The 2010 edition has 1,200 reviews of the best dining experiences in the UK. There's a huge range of restaurants, pubs and cafés so you're bound to find the perfect venue, whether it's for a once-in-a-lifetime meal, a pub for Sunday lunch or a great-value

option for a weekday supper. There's also £50 of money-off vouchers to get you started.

The guide is also packed with foodie features including our recommendations for best-value eateries. You'll find interviews with top chefs including Jason Atherton, Marcus Wareing and Michel Roux Jnr.

Ocado gripe

Watch out for the small print when signing up to an online trial

ONLINE SHOPPING

Which? members have complained about Ocado's cancellation policies after almost finding themselves locked in to lengthy delivery contracts

Ocado was rated the top online supermarket by members in June (p34), but some have contacted us about emails offering a two-week free trial of its On Demand service, with money off their shopping. On Demand lets shoppers pay £9.99 a month to cover delivery fees but, if you don't cancel during the trial, you're enrolled into a 12-month contract.

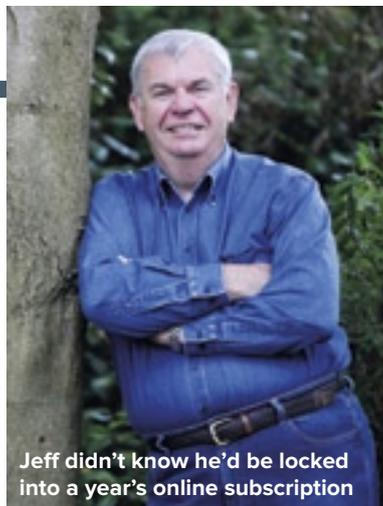
Jeff Body tried to cancel after concluding that he and his wife didn't shop enough at Ocado to make a saving. He spent ages searching Ocado's website to find the number to call but, when he got through, he was told he was locked into a 12-month contract. His wife hadn't noticed the lengthy tie-in period in the email small print. Jeff managed to cancel after complaining to Ocado in writing.

He said: 'I didn't like how difficult it was to cancel. It's contractual and not

WHICH.CO.UK

Find out Which? members' favourite haunts on the high street

www.which.co.uk/highstreetstores



Jeff didn't know he'd be locked into a year's online subscription

illegal, but I feel this is a sharp practice.'

An Ocado spokesman said: 'One or two customers came to us explaining that they didn't read the terms or realise they'd entered into a subscription obligation, and we refunded their money without argument.' He added that its terms are now clearer in emails and there are prompts online.

We think that consumers who sign up for trials that convert into subscriptions should be able to cancel at any point.

TAKE ACTION!

- If you're interested in an online service trial, read the terms and conditions fully before signing up.
- Prepare an email in advance if you may cancel once the trial ends.

- If you miss Ocado's free trial deadline, you still have seven working days from the day after your subscription starts to cancel, providing you don't use it after the free trial ends.

In brief

DIAL 111 FOR DOCTOR

■ Which? has welcomed government proposals for an easy-to-remember phone number – 111 – to get information about non-emergency healthcare in local areas. We hope that 111 – if it's implemented – will cost no more than standard 01, 02 or 03 numbers.



GAS BOILER CONCERN

■ The gas safety watchdog has launched an investigation into three gas service engineers we reported over safety concerns following our latest undercover probe (see p56). The Gas Safe Register said the engineers' actions were 'negligent'. We sent in footage from our secret filming, which revealed incompetence.

BABY MILK CRITICISED

■ The Advertising Standards Authority has ruled in favour of complaints about claims made by two baby milk manufacturers. It said Cow & Gate's claim that its follow-on milk supports a baby's 'natural immune system' was unsubstantiated, and that Aptamil's claim of being the 'best follow-on milk' was unfounded.



COSMETIC CREAM PROBE

■ Trading standards is investigating the safety of Dr Brandt Lineless Cream, following concerns raised by Which?. The product contains carbon fullerenes – a type of insoluble nanoparticle – that some experts fear may be toxic if able to penetrate the skin. We'll let you know the outcome. This cream is not the Dr Brandt Lineless Eye Cream (which doesn't contain fullerenes) featured on p50.

No Best Buys for mobile broadband

Which? members express their dissatisfaction with all providers

Not one mobile broadband company is a Which? Best Buy, according to our broadband satisfaction survey of more than 11,000 Which? online panel members (see www.which.co.uk/mobilebroadband).

Even top-scoring T-Mobile had just 49% overall. Behind were BT, O2, Vodafone, Orange and then 3, which scored just 34%.

Mobile broadband works via a USB internet modem (often called a dongle) plugged into a

computer. Using the technology that offers fast internet on mobiles phones, it requires a 3G signal in the area.

In contrast to the disappointing mobile broadband results, Zen Internet topped our fixed-line broadband table (see p60) with an impressive 87%. O2's

fixed-line broadband service came a close second with 85%, a stark comparison with its mobile broadband score of 44%.

Which? members rated mobile broadband particularly badly for connection reliability – only BT achieved more than two stars out of five.

