



# Consumer news

## We want you

### Are train fares fair?

Is it easy to get hold of a cheap train ticket or has the cost and complexity of train travel driven you off the rails? Have you ever been sold the wrong ticket or been given poor advice? Tell James Tallack.

### Digital radios

Considering buying a digital radio but unsure whether they're worth the extra cost? We'd like a family who love radio to try some current Best Buys. Contact Lizzy Payne.



### Misleading ads

Have you spotted a financial advert that you found misleading? Whether it was on TV, radio or the internet, on a poster or leaflet, in a newspaper or magazine, or even via email, tell Alison Watson.

### Buying a mobile phone



Bought a mobile recently? Did you get the advice you needed? Were you talked into buying a pricey model when you wanted a basic phone? Tell Jon Barrow.

### Inflation

Do you think many items are overpriced, impacting unduly on your finances? If you're interested in us assessing your personal rate of inflation, contact Ian Robinson.

Send full contact details and a daytime phone number to [helpwanted@which.co.uk](mailto:helpwanted@which.co.uk) or write to Help Wanted, PO Box 44, Hertford X SG14 1SH

There are more requests online at [www.which.co.uk/helpwanted](http://www.which.co.uk/helpwanted)  
(We regret that we cannot respond personally to all your replies)

Airports say passengers are unaware of security rules

## Liquid alert

### AIR TRAVEL

An estimated five tonnes of liquids, from hair gel to toothpaste, are being confiscated each day at the UK's major airports, as passengers struggle with tougher security rules.

Since last August's terrorist alerts, passengers have not been allowed to take any container with more than 100ml of liquid or gel through security checks. Anyone who does has either to return to check-in to put items in their hold luggage or to surrender them to security staff. You are required to carry any liquids you plan to take on board in a resealable transparent plastic bag through security.

But there appears to be little sign that the message is getting across as airports gear up for the busy summer season. At Birmingham airport just under one tonne of liquids is confiscated each day – including 200 litres of soft drinks, ten litres of hair gel and eight litres of toothpaste. That's enough material to fill 18 baths.

Meanwhile, at Manchester airport, up to two tonnes of confiscated liquid are being dumped in skips every 24 hours. 'It's a huge problem,' said airport spokeswoman Zoë Ensor. 'The last thing you want to do is take £40 worth of perfume off a passenger who has just bought it.'

While some airports, such as Newcastle, recycle the drinks containers they con-



Manchester airport incinerates all confiscated bottles

**'There is a real risk – we are not doing this for the fun of it'**

fiscate, BAA, which owns Gatwick and Heathrow, prohibits this. It argues that any containers discarded by terrorists might explode when opened and says it disposes of them 'in a secure manner'. Manchester airport incinerates all such waste, while Belfast International gives unopened and unclaimed toiletries to charity.

All of the airports we spoke to said they had brought in additional staff to deal with the problem, including queue-combers who inform people of the rules as they wait for checks. But lack of awareness has led to delays, which have been made worse by the random testing of liquids that was introduced in May.

At Manchester it's estimated that only half of all passengers are aware of the rules when they arrive at the airport, and delays are expected to continue. Zoë Ensor added: 'Unfortunately, there is still a real and present risk to passengers – we're not doing this for the fun of it.'

#### TAKE ACTION!

##### How to avoid problems with liquids

■ You can take containers that hold less than 100ml of liquid in your hand luggage. Soups, lotions, mascara, shaving foam, soups and yogurts all count as liquids under the rules brought in last November.

■ Pack your containers in a small resealable transparent plastic bag before arriving

at the airport to aid security checks. For more advice, go to [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

■ Essential medicines of more than 100ml may be permitted with the prior agreement of the airline. If you have a baby you can also carry enough food or sterilised water to cover your journey.

**6.5 inches**

how much the average female waist has grown since 1952

SIZE UK

**24%**

supermarket own labels' share of the jeans market

MINTEL

**£1.75**

price of a sweatshirt in the Asda '£10 school uniform' deal

ASDA



Are faulty handbrakes to blame for spate of Vauxhall 'roll-away' accidents?

# Vauxhall under fire

## MOTORING

**F**urious motorists are demanding that Vauxhall takes action after a spate of incidents in which parked cars have simply rolled away. Drivers are blaming the car's handbrake, which they say has released itself after they have left their vehicle.

Which? knows of more than a dozen cases involving both Vauxhall Vectras and Signums that have careered into other cars, trees and houses.

Caroline Pearce from Northern Ireland (pictured right) had had her new Vectra for only eight weeks when it rolled away and wrote off a neighbour's car.

'My driveway is at a steep 45-degree angle so I was careful to put on the handbrake. From the time of my setting the handbrake to the stage when it rolled down my drive it was about 15 minutes,' she said.

'When I got to the car the handbrake was disengaged. There are lots of young children who live around my home and it was lucky that most were in their own houses having their tea. If this had happened any later there would surely have been terrible results. This thought has haunted me ever since.'

The government's car safety watchdog, the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (Vosa), says it is investigating several cases but to date has found no problem with the design or construction of handbrakes.

Vauxhall told Which? it was aware of a small number of incidents. A company spokesman said that it had carried out 'rigorous reviews' and tests in co-operation with Vosa but had found no fault with the handbrake mechanism. However, the company is now planning to inform all Vectra and Signum owners about the correct way to put on the handbrake.

**'I heard the handbrake click and release – by sheer luck I was not killed'**

## READERS TELL THEIR VAUXHALL HORROR STORIES

### Graham Cadwallader

Graham had extensive bruising after being dragged 15 metres down the drive of his Derbyshire home before his Vectra stopped on the edge of a 10ft drop. 'I was getting something off the back seat when I heard the handbrake click and release. By sheer luck I was not killed,' Graham told us.

### Rhys Davies

Rhys' Vauxhall Signum Elite sustained almost £3,000 worth of damage and wrote off a BMW when it rolled down the road into two parked cars. Witnesses saw the car roll away of its own accord and when Rhys got to the smashed car, the handbrake was off. He added: 'The handbrake was on because the car was

parked on a hill for at least 15 minutes before it rolled away. Vauxhall needs to acknowledge this problem and ensure it doesn't happen to others.'

### Ray Holmes

Ray's car had been parked outside his home in Kent for more than an hour before it rolled away and hit the house opposite. The parking brake 'had released itself to the off position,' Ray said.

### Barry Lord

Barry applied both his Vectra handbrake and the handbrake on the caravan he was towing when he got stuck on a slope. He went for help but the car and caravan rolled away five minutes later. His wife, who was in the car at the time, saw the handbrake lever dropping down into

the 'off' position. Fortunately, the caravan's handbrake stopped the car on the edge of a 40ft drop.

### Steve Scott

Steve's Vectra had been parked for at least an hour outside his Leicester home when it rolled into a tree in a neighbour's garden. His Vauxhall dealership agreed the handbrake unit was making an unusual clicking noise and replaced it.



## TAKE ACTION!

### Tell us your problems

If you've had similar handbrake problems with a Vauxhall Vectra or Signum, write to us at [news@which.co.uk](mailto:news@which.co.uk)



Vauxhall owner Caroline Pearce: 'If this had happened later, there would have been terrible results'