



Your letters

**Star
letter**

Your comments on what you've read in Which?

Paying on holiday

Which?, July 06, p18

My experience backs up your advice to pay in local currency rather than sterling if paying on a card. In May I used my Nationwide debit card to buy a tie in a Spanish store. The slip had prices in sterling, calculated at the Banco Santander exchange rate and including commission of 2 per cent. When I questioned the cashier, she told me I could have paid in euros if I'd wanted. The shop just hadn't bothered to ask me.

My bank statements show the

difference. The tie was €25 and I'd been charged £17.72. Had I paid in euros, I would have been charged £17.16, so the extra was 56p, or just over 3 per cent. If I'd paid in sterling for everything I bought on holiday, it would have come to between £50 and £75 extra.

People using UK cards abroad should check what currency they're being charged in and ask to switch to local currency if it's a better deal.

BENEDICT REGAN, ISLINGTON

Washing machines

Which?, June 06, p52

I was surprised you didn't include American-style top loaders in your report on machines with larger-capacity drums. Our machine costs about the same in water and power as a British one, washes up to 24lb in one go and completes the task in a fraction of the time a front loader takes. Why didn't you test them?

STEPHEN BUZDYGAN, CAMBERLEY

WHICH? SAYS There are three reasons. Top loaders aren't popular in the UK: they account for only 2 per cent of new machines sold. Their design makes them impractical for most people's kitchens – they're better suited to utility rooms or large bathrooms. And in our past tests, as well as in more recent ones by our European partners, they haven't done as well as front loaders. But we are looking at including more about them in the future, as our research shows that some people find them easier to load.

Driven to reply

Which?, June 06, p84

The Transport Minister says the government subsidises the railways but our local operator, First Capital Connect, doesn't see any of the subsidy, as it goes on infrastructure. And with new ticket restrictions, the price of some journeys is almost doubling. Meanwhile, the government finds billions to widen the M1. For all the rhetoric, it's clear which route to London MPs are really telling us to use, despite cars' impact on climate change.

BEN FOLEY, BEDFORD

GET IN TOUCH

'Your letters' is your chance to have your say on something in Which?. Email or write to the address below. If your letter is printed, you can choose a free Which? book as a thank you. We reserve the right to edit letters or use only an extract.

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Peter: hybrid cars too costly

Green cars

Which?, June 2006, p84

The Transport Minister mentions the benefits of green cars. Hybrid cars reduce emissions and I'd gladly buy one if they didn't cost more than equivalent-sized petrol cars. If the government is serious about reducing pollution, it should cut tax and eliminate the price difference.

PETER CHIDZEY, TWICKENHAM

WHICH? SAYS This would still amount to a tax break for buyers, whereas the government is trying to steer us to alternatives, such as public transport. The government says it won't now be giving grants for cars with low carbon dioxide emissions – a missed opportunity to reduce financial barriers to buying 'greener'.

Next month in Which?

Phone companies

Which companies give the best service plus new Best Buy mobile phones

Rip-off Britain?

Is life in Britain as expensive as people think? We investigate

Road congestion

Don't get stuck in a jam – we test sat-nav systems

Meter readings

What you can do if you think your utility company is charging you the wrong amount

Savings accounts

Revealed: tricks of the trade used by poor-paying accounts

PLUS

Your free copy of *Which? Car*, including reviews of 170+ cars

On test

Boilers

Our first test of high-efficiency condensing boilers, plus a look at service contracts

Digital cameras

The best models for everyday snapshots

Cordless phones

The latest feature-packed digital home phones

Plus

✓ Digital TV recorders ✓ Plughole unblockers

