



Fuel calculator

Dec 08, p40

The Which? online fuel calculator (www.which.co.uk/fuelcalculator) is an excellent aid to establishing accurate fuel consumption and cost.

I've run a spreadsheet on this basis for some years, and try not to be fooled by the 'fuel consumption computer' on modern vehicles. My VW Golf diesel, for example, is dramatically inaccurate, telling me that I achieve between 50 and 55mpg, while I actually get 42 to 46mpg.

I referred this to a VW dealer, who dismissed the matter, saying that the computer figure is only a guide. A very misleading guide, I suggest.

MICHAEL BOND, HAMPSHIRE

Mince pies

Dec 08, p18

In your test of mince pies, you state that Oliver Cromwell outlawed mince pies in 1657 – I think you'll find that he and the Puritans actually banned Christmas totally between 1647 and 1660, so there wouldn't have been a Christmas Day in 1657.

LESLEY HUMPHREYS, CANTERBURY

Cheap Christmas calls

Dec 08, p7

In your article on calling people abroad, you didn't mention pre-pay Sim cards that offer cheap calls abroad from your mobile.

The Carphone Warehouse's Mobile World is one example, with a call to the US costing 5p, and Australia costing just 6p.

TIM ROBERSON, CROYDON

Ask our experts

TV screen distortion

I bought a new Panasonic TV and DVD recorder about nine months ago, but the TV regularly suffers from screen distortion – mainly square shapes appearing and the screen freezing. Virgin Media has replaced several set-top boxes, but the problem persists. What should I do?

LEN CLARK, HERTFORDSHIRE

You need to identify where the problem lies. See if the TV works when it's hooked up to an analogue aerial. If it does, it's a problem with Virgin Media, the DVD recorder or the connections.

It probably won't be the set-top box, as Virgin Media has replaced several, but it could be the cables, so check these too. Remove the DVD recorder, and if the problem disappears you know it's faulty. To see if it's the connections, try using alternative Scart inputs on the



Len is having problems with screen distortion

DVD recorder and TV, and try new leads. If it's a problem with the TV or DVD recorder, get the retailer to fix or replace it – you're entitled to this under the Sale of Goods Act 1979.

Sales calls

I'm on the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) register, which usually keeps the amount of cold calling down, but I've recently

received three evening sales and marketing calls. Isn't this illegal? JOHN STOKES, SOUTHAMPTON

It's a legal requirement for UK organisations to not make unsolicited sales calls to numbers registered with the TPS, unless they have your consent to do so.

You may have inadvertently consented to be called by a company or its partners – by not ticking a box to opt-out when you signed up, for example. If so, let them know you no longer want to receive sales and marketing calls.

You can register a complaint on the Telephone Preference Service website (www.tpsonline.org.uk). The TPS doesn't stop sales and marketing calls from overseas.

Rover spares

My Rover's electronic control unit (ECU) needs replacing, but my

garage says it can't supply one.

Where can I get Rover spares?

DON FAIRLEY, COUNTY DURHAM

The Rover Group went into administration in 2005, but spares are still available through independent suppliers. Your garage should be able to get hold of an ECU, but if they insist they can't, you could supply one yourself and get your garage to fit it. Find an ECU specialist online (try www.ecuclinic.com) which will either repair your ECU or supply a suitable replacement on an exchange basis.

Most Rover spare parts are also available through www.xpart.com but, if it can't help, there are specialists for all parts of the car that should be able to.

Changing dates

I recently booked a parking space at Stansted Airport for £40.40.

Credit cards

Dec 08, p27

In your credit cards report, you say that protection is provided under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act (CCA) for items costing between £100 and £30,000.

I recently bought an item online costing £15.90, which didn't arrive due to the retailer going into administration.

I decided to contact my card issuer, even though the CCA wouldn't cover this, and the sum was refunded.

It would be useful to let others know that it may be possible to recover sums less than £100.

TIMOTHY COOK, COLEVILLE

WHICH? SAYS Excellent point. You can reclaim amounts under £100 using chargeback. See *Which?* September 2008, p78.

Utility bills

Dec 08, p80

Just like Tony Anderson, I complained to Eon when I received a letter informing me of a gas price rise almost seven weeks after it became effective.

I asked Eon to charge me the higher price only from the date I received notification, but it said that it had notified me within the required notice period, and Eon staff weren't even told of the changes until the day they were released, due to the sensitive nature of the information.

Too right, it was sensitive – around a 37% increase for me. With the help of Switch with *Which?*, I'm in the process of changing supplier, and anticipate a 10% reduction on my next bill.

DEREK THOMAS, HULL

I booked the wrong dates, but I was told they couldn't be amended as it was a discount price, so had to pay £48.80 to book again. Am I entitled to change dates at no cost?

MARIE ROBSON,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Providing the contract stated that it was non-refundable and non-transferable, you're not entitled to change the date free of charge.

These clauses can be in all contracts, though they're more likely to apply to discounted goods and services, as you often

pay less for little or no flexibility. Always double check key details when you're making a booking.

Send videos online

How can I send a 2GB video to friends and relatives?

DON RAM BISHNANI, LONDON

That's a large video, and it's too big to send in an email, so try uploading it to a website and telling people where it is. This could take a long time, though.

On www.yousendit.com you can send files up to 2GB, and your intended recipient can access the file and keep it on their computer. The site offers a free 14-day trial.

Consider using YouTube (www.youtube.com) for shorter videos. It's free and lets you upload videos up to 1GB in size, or 10 minutes long. If you want only your friends and family to see it, use the privacy settings.

Marie doesn't like being charged for a booking mistake



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Tyre pressure gauges

Nov 08, p73

In your review of tyre pressure gauges, the Michelin Digital Tyre Gauge 959809 is listed at the price of £9 at Halfords.

When I checked, Halfords was charging around £26 online. When I shopped around, I found it for about £19.

ERIC MOORE, ALTRINGHAM

WHICH? SAYS We apologize for any inconvenience caused. We always check prices as we go to press. This model was available from Halfords for £8.49 at this time, and it wasn't marked as a special offer.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

Best Buy presents, Dec 08, p12

The bluetooth headset pictured is a Bluetrek G2+, not the Best Buy Jabra BT5020.

Better bulbs, Dec 08, p57

All light bulbs listed as being suitable for use with a timer are not, and vice versa.

Satnavs, December 08, p70

The Garmin Nuvi 205W comes with UK and Ireland maps but not European maps.

Protect your savings, Dec 08, p36

We stated that Bradford & Bingley (B&B) is separately authorised under the FSCS. In fact, savings with B&B are included within Abbey's authorisation.



Credit reference agencies

Nov 08, p14

Your report on credit reference agencies (CRAs) reinforced my experience of being rejected by a credit card company on spurious grounds – for not having a history of debt and not being on the electoral register.

Firms wanting easy credit checks should realise that they may be turning away good business by acting on the superficial methods currently used by the CRAs.

I think the practice of making individuals responsible for contacting multiple CRAs, paying each of them £2, and then having to check the accuracy of information is a reversal of natural justice.

CRAs should have a duty to check every piece of information they put into their systems for accuracy with the affected individual.

DR MARIANNE THORESEN, BRISTOL