

Bleeding radiators

Apr 09, p34

Before bleeding a radiator, it is common practice to turn off your boiler. You can still bleed it with the boiler on but, if it is on, you may suck air into the system, which makes the process more difficult. JIM DIBDIN, DEVIZES

To add to your advice on how to bleed radiators, you'll need to adjust the pressure of your boiler after you've done the job. If you don't do this the boiler will not be at the correct pressure and will run inefficiently. ROGER HARSTE, ESSEX



Jim Dibdin has advice on bleeding a radiator

Mobile broadband

Apr 09, p81

Your letter about using a mobile phone as a laptop modem makes a good point, but it fails to mention that most mobile phone firms exclude using an external device such as a laptop from data bundles and certain capped rates. If someone has a bundle of unlimited use but the out-of-bundle rate is £1 per MB, this can lead to huge bills if they are not aware of this exclusion. MICHAEL TURNER, LONDON

Low-energy goods

Mar 09, p58

Your dishwashers report didn't include energy ratings. I'm looking for an A++ model, so this would have been useful. Also, the fridge-freezers report in the same issue had a couple of A+ models but no higher-rated ones. ISOBEL HART, SHEFFIELD

WHICH? SAYS We don't always include claimed energy ratings because we do our own tests on energy use (see 'energy use' star ratings in the report's table). Only refrigeration has the + system, the maximum for other products is A. We've tested seven A+ rated fridge-freezers so far (see www.which.co.uk/fridgefreezers) but there are few A++ models around. We plan to include some in future.

Sky card charge

Apr 09, p80

Like John Robson, I was unhappy about the 50p a month charge Sky introduced for paying by credit card. I threatened to cancel my account, for which I pay £696 a year, and Sky credited my account with £6, equivalent to a year's credit card fees. If people reacted to poor service by voting with their feet, firms would think twice before fleecing consumers. HERBERT STYLES, LINCOLNSHIRE

Ask our experts

Your consumer questions answered by our experts

Delayed flight rights

My parents had a holiday in Jersey. They were due to fly home on a Wednesday but there were no flights because of severe weather. The bad weather continued until Thursday, but the airline didn't have a flight until the Sunday. My parents had to pay extra accommodation costs and the airline refused their claim for compensation, saying that severe weather is an exceptional circumstance. Is this right? ANNE FREEMAN, CHISWICK

Your parents were flying in to an EC airport on an airline based in the EC, so Denied Boarding Regulations apply. These state that

if your flight is cancelled you may be entitled to compensation and that while you're stuck at the airport, the airline should give help, including two phone calls or emails, refreshments and overnight accommodation if a replacement flight doesn't leave until the next day or later.

The airline doesn't have to pay extra compensation beyond this as the flight was cancelled because of 'extraordinary circumstances'. Your



The Freemans were stranded by bad weather

parents were entitled to the cost of extra accommodation and travel and so should seek the costs back from the airline. Alternatively, they would have been entitled to a refund of the flight costs and could then have made their way home, by ferry.

Slideshow effects

I've seen a DVD recording of still photos where each shot is flipped, peeled back, or some other effect is used, rather than a straightforward slide show. Can you recommend software to do this? KEN OVERY, GORLESTON-ON-SEA

An easy way to do this is via Windows Movie Maker, which

comes free with Windows Vista and can be downloaded free for Windows XP. This lets you add images in the order you want, then you can choose transitions to go between each image.

When you're done, you can burn your masterpiece to DVD, though you'll need DVD burning software. This is included with some versions of Windows – Windows DVD Maker for Vista users, for instance – or may come with your DVD burner.

If you're using a Mac, the iLife package includes iMovie – which is good for creating slideshows with effects – and iDVD which lets you burn the results onto a DVD.

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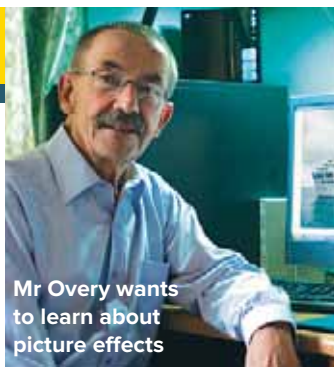
European train tips

Mar 09, p16

I recently found cheaper web-only fares on the Spanish Renfe website, as you recommend – but I also found a section offering them in English. Also, be aware that using a rail pass can be more expensive – high-speed trains in Spain incur a surcharge and a compulsory seat reservation and costs rise even more if a travel agents' fee is added. I agree an upgrade to first class is worth considering as you get free meals on Spanish AVE trains. ROBERT ROYALL, CUMBRIA
WHICH? SAYS It can be difficult to find web-only fares in English. Go to www.renfe.es, set your language as English, click 'Buy tickets' at the top of the page, and then set your language as English again.

I was astonished at the £286 train fare to Amsterdam via Eurostar you quoted – much higher than my experience. I'd have thought it shouldn't be much more than £100. Also, a Eurostar ticket to Brussels lets you travel on to any Belgium station. To get to Amsterdam, buy an extra ticket from the last station in Belgium, Essen. This can be done in Brussels, there's no need to stop at Essen. BARRY THOMAS, YORK
WHICH? SAYS Cheaper rail return tickets can be found to Amsterdam, but then cheaper air fares can also be found instead of the British Airways examples used. The Amsterdam journey was costlier than expected, but it was based on fixed dates, time of day, ticket type and service providers. The article was a snapshot and didn't aim to cover budget travel.

Barry Thomas has ideas for finding cheaper fares



Mr Overy wants to learn about picture effects

Financial compensation

When claiming under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), a person can claim up to £50,000 when their bank or building society fails. Are small businesses and charities counted as persons? JACK COROMANDEL, CHELTENHAM

In most cases. For businesses, only small firms are protected by the FSCS – whether you qualify as a small business depends on how many employees you have, your turnover and balance sheet.

For charities, the same rules apply if they're set up as a limited company or an unincorporated association if net assets are below £1.4m. Go to www.fscs.org.uk/ consumer and click 'Latest news' for details on the criteria that have to be met to qualify for the FSCS.

Bespoke goods

I have always embraced internet purchasing, but a friend told me that if a product was considered bespoke, it wouldn't be subject

to Distance Selling Regulations. If this is true, what is the legal definition of bespoke so I can identify which of my purchases will fall into this category?

DAVID BARTER, COLCHESTER

Distance Selling Regulations allow for contracts made at a distance to be cancelled, but there are some exceptions. A contract for bespoke goods is one. The regulations say that 'goods made to a consumer's specifications or clearly personalised' can't be returned. For example, choosing one of four set colours for a sofa won't make the item bespoke, but choosing from hundreds of fabrics and opting for a highly specific print, would.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Taken for a ride, Aug 08 p24

We reported that Lily Everitt told us she was sold an unsuitable stairlift by Contact for Electrical. Mrs Everitt brought a legal claim against Contact for Electrical claiming she hadn't been assessed properly and that the stairlift wasn't fit for its purpose. The judge found Contact for Electrical had assessed Mrs Everitt properly, and the judge found that the stairlift was not fit for its purpose because of a badly made joint on the stairlift rail made by Thyssen Krupp Access Limited. Remedial offers made by Contact for Electrical were declined and Contact for Electrical successfully defended the claim.

Razors, April 09, p42

Gillette Fusion Power Stealth should have five stars for durability, not four.

Tyres, April 09, p53

Uniroyal's website is www.uniroyal-online.co.uk.