



home · email us
17 May 2005

Events

Facilities

Interest Groups

Site Archives

FAQs

Links

Maxey Community Web Site > Mr Toad's Motoring Questions

Mr Toad Archives

See our archive section for previous Motoring questions.

[Click Here...](#)

Mr Toad's Motoring Questions

You Ask, He Answers...



Maxey.co.uk is pleased to bring you the latest in our series of question and answer features from Maxey's own 'Mr. Toad'. For legal reasons (and his own safety!), Mr. Toad will remain anonymous for now.

You can contact him here: maxeytoad@hotmail.com
Don't be shy, send all your questions to the expert.

WINTER 2004/05

Dear Toad

Q. I've had my BMW broken into four times over the last two years, always by having the door locks forced. Are manufacturers going to do anything about their ineffective security?

Fiona, High Street

A. A number of car makers are testing card entry systems currently Fiona. They work on a similar technology to phone cards and will automatically transmit a signal to aerials hidden around the car. Having correctly identified a card as the right one the system will permit entry when the driver presses a button on the door. A similar procedure starts the engine. No door locks to drill or force but still windows to break unfortunately!

Toad

+ + + +

Dear Mr Toad

Q. My husband is due for a new company car and we've been offered the chance to buy his old one. He's had it from new and it's been regularly serviced but it is a very high mileage, do you think it would be a good idea.

Glenda, Eton.

A. How long is the proverbial, Glenda? Without knowing what it is, how old and what mileage I can't really comment. Generally though, if it's well maintained and driven carefully a modern car will function well for several hundreds of thousands of miles. Your husband presumably has confidence in the vehicle and I would have thought, at the right price, it could be a sensible buy. Safety items to have checked before you buy would be shock absorbers, brake disc thickness, brake cylinders and suspension joints.

Toad

+ + + +

[Back to Top](#) ↕

Attn Toad

Q. I have been offered an elderly BMW 316 that was apparently once owned by Freddie Mercury, of Queen fame. As a big fan of his music I would very much like to own the car but I think the dealer is asking way over the top. How can I be sure that it is what he says it is?

Maggie, Tuckers Nook

A. I bought a Rolls Royce years ago Maggie that was once owned by Keith Moon (Who?) I actually used that fact to get the price down! The point I'm making is that the value of celebrities' possessions is variable and subjective. Mega-star Rock Hudson's Hollywood home, you will remember, was unsaleable and had to be demolished and yet a piece of toast half eaten by George Harrison sold for thousands.

If Freddie did indeed own a lowly 316 it's doubtful he actually drove it himself, more likely it was a runabout for one of his flunkies and about as valuable by association as one of his LP's.

For your information the registered keeper of a vehicle can check it's previous ownership by writing to: Fee Paying Section, DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1AL enclosing a cheque for £5.

Toad

+ + + +

Dear Toad

Q. How accurate are the Highway Code safe stopping distances Toad? My husband always drives too close to cars in front (especially when driven by women) saying that the recommended distances are outdated and not applicable to modern cars.

Angela, West End Road

A. He's right about that Angela, the distances were calculated in the 1930's and will certainly have reduced in light of modern road surfaces and braking systems. I disagree however with him using this rationale to drive too close to the vehicle in front. What he apparently fails to consider is a reaction time of at least half a second (17 yards at 70mph) and more like two seconds (68 yards) if he was on the phone or fiddling with his radio.

You should always leave a safe distance between you and the car in front and extend the gap if you are being followed too closely, to minimise the risk of a rear-end shunt from somebody like your husband.

Toad

+ + + +

Dear Toad

Q. What is a 'Personal Contract Plan', all manufacturers seem to offer one, as an easy way to afford their new cars. Are they risk free and which is the best one to go for?

Valerie, Woodnewton.

A. Sounds like a marriage agreement doesn't it Valerie. A PCP is actually quite a simple way of financing a motorcar. It works by having a lump sum (GMEV) Guaranteed Minimum End Value, paid at the end of the term. This deferral of part of the purchase price has the effect of not only lowering the monthly payments but also keeping your future purchase options open. The manufacturer predicts the minimum value of your new car after two or three years and calculates the monthly payments accordingly. At the end of the term you can either select another car under a new PCP, buy the car you have by paying the GMEV or just hand in the keys and walk away.

There isn't really a best or worst one Valerie, but generally lower depreciating cars like BMW, Audi and VW can be as affordable as the 'lower status' mass-produced models on offer, even with their big discounts!

Toad

+ + + +

[Back to Top](#) 

Help please Toad

Q. I am looking for a cheap and reliable car just to get me to the station and back every day. I don't want to spend more than £1000 but the people I've met who deal in this price range are so dodgy - Arthur Daleys without the humour. I went with a girlfriend to a local car auction but we were jostled and leered at by grubby men in greasy anoraks who were

more interested in our condition than that of the cars going through. Where do I go Toad and where do I buy this book that they all seem to have?

Veronica, Stamford.

A. Some franchised car dealerships and most non-franchised sell cars that are 'too good to trade'. These are normally part-exchanges that have come in to the garages against new models and are quite literally too good to just move on quickly to the type of traders you've obviously come across in your search so far. Although by virtue of their age and mileage they can't put warranties on the cars, they normally have full service histories and would be ideal for the type of use you outline.

The alternatives are less appealing, classified adverts in the newspapers or motor publications are always hit and miss and full of cars with dubious histories and bodged repairs. Auction halls, or 'the block', can be intimidating to the uninitiated and my advice would be to steer clear unless you know exactly what you're doing.

The 'book' you refer to is Glasses Guide. It's the trade 'bible' and should really only be used if you know how to interpret the values therein. You can't actually buy it as a member of the public and for your price range would be little use anyway.

See you next time...

[contact us](#) · [site help](#) · [terms & conditions](#) · [disclaimer](#) · [site designed by Maxey Web Services](#)

© 1998 - 2005 maxey.co.uk · all rights reserved