

Don't it just drive you *mad...*

I would like to give Dave Wooster from Marlow the final word concerning the debate over the smoking ban.

We have the choice to walk or fly.

We have the choice to cycle or drive.

We have the choice to guzzle gas or go electric.

We have the choice to smoke or not.

We have the choice to drink alcohol or not.'

This covers a lot of the issues at the forefront of public debate currently, concerning our carbon footprints and the choices we all make. David believes that as with all the other issues we should make that personal choice, 'why didn't the government give the pub industry the choice to have some pubs that allow smoking and some pubs that do not allow smoking.' David believes that it 'would give everyone the choice to go to a smoking pub or a non smoking pub and we would soon see pubs solvent again instead of the many publicans going bankrupt and our social life being eroded away by the closure of our traditional meeting places.' I have to whole heartily agree, the choice to go to a smoking pub or a non-smoking would have been a good idea and it did work for some pubs that I know of, before the total ban was introduced.

Moving onto a fresh subject, the state of the roads is something that has and does drive me mad. We are all used to the roads being dug up every forty minutes (well it seems that way) and the road works that go along with that. However what really makes me mad, with good reason, are the small pot-holes along the road, it would seem that many have grown

to the size of craters. They are designed to propel you violently from a bicycle or destroy half of your car and I speak from experience. One afternoon my car jolted severely, jumping out and peering cautiously (I knew it wouldn't be good) at the passenger side, I saw a huge pot-hole/crater, a flat tyre and a mangled alloy wheel, which I was told later, is no mean feat. With steam coming out of my ears I finally got home and phoned the Council and was told it would be filled within twenty-four hours. I may as well have phoned the tooth fairy to fix it; it would have been quicker, it took over a month before the hole was finally filled in and I am sure others became its victim in between. Refusing to be left with the costs to repair the car, I filled in the relevant claim forms and sent them to the council. I was initially turned down with some very flimsy excuses, not one to be easily dissuaded I began a three month battle filled with strongly worded letters, photos of the pot whole, the car damage and a mechanics report. The council finally capitulated three months later and sent me a cheque. It is outrageous that you can't drive down the road safely; already we have to be vigilant for pedestrians, wildlife appearing in the middle of the road, your random lunatic driver and now the tarmac is lethal. I am sure many of you agree that the amount we pay in council tax and road tax should ensure that the roads are safe and useable. Anyone in a similar situation should take photos of the damage and the address to claim is Financial Services, PO Box 12, County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1TH.

I would love to hear what drives you mad or any experiences you have had on the roads. victoria@stables5.wanadoo.co.uk.
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