

Car boot sales

Car Boot Sales exert a powerful attraction - with the promise of bargains for the buyer and easy money for the seller. However there are many pitfalls. By bearing in mind the following points you should be able to avoid most of them.

ARE YOU DEALING WITH A TRADER OR A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL?

Your rights as a buyer are much stronger when dealing with a trader BUT often those who are traders go out of their way to appear like private individuals.

OBTAINING COMEBACK FOR FAULTY GOODS MAY BE DIFFICULT

There is no guarantee that the seller will be back at the same car boot sale. SO EXAMINE GOODS CAREFULLY

SAFETY OF GOODS

1. Electrical goods

Be very careful with these. Check the mains lead has the standard blue/brown/green-yellow colour coded conductors. Avoid single insulated leads. Avoid damaged or worn leads. Ensure the plug is approved by ASTA/BSI/BEAB, has insulated pins and is correctly wired. Ensure the all guards and safety devices are fitted and working (such as on fires). Finally avoid old, worn, damaged or broken electrical goods totally.

2. Toys

Make sure that eyes and other small parts cannot be removed and cause a choking hazard for young children. Also check for sharp points and edges. Avoid worn or damaged toys which could have a safety hazard not present when the toy was new. Check for the presence of a CE mark and observe any age restrictions.

COUNTERFEITS

Clothing, watches, cassettes, videos and car parts are often copied and counterfeited. The car boot sale, due to its nature, is a common outlet for these goods.

COUNTERFEITS ARE NOT GOOD VALUE

They are often of very poor quality, such as shoddy clothing, poor quality audio tapes, where the background is louder than the music. Indeed recently a video of a new film was a copy of a recording shot with a camcorder in a cinema including the voice of the usherette saying "Don't use your camcorder in here"!

OTHER GOODS

As well as those items mentioned above, there are other things sold at car boot sales which you should take care with. Amongst these are : upholstered furniture (only buy fire resistant items identifiable by a permanent label);

- Gas appliances - be very wary of these and remember that only a CORGI registered company or British Gas can install mains gas items;

- Clothing - such as children's nightwear should be fire resistant, hood cords are only allowed in larger adult sizes of clothing;
- Protective equipment - such as cycle helmets, do they meet relevant standards?; are they damaged?
- Cycles - are they in good order, do the brakes work, are they the right size for the rider? - very important with children.

Car boot sales are fun, everybody likes the thought of finding a bargain. However, there are those who unscrupulously attempt to take advantage of this. So enjoy yourself BUT be aware of the dangers.