



THE BP GARAGE ON THE A4 EASTBOUND NEAR HAMMERSMITH

Who do they think they're fuelling?

Two BP garages facing each other on same road charge different prices for petrol



CHEAPER: THE GARAGE ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE ROAD



THEY stand on opposite sides of one of the busiest roads into London. But in price they are poles apart.

Motorists stopping at the BP garage on the way into the capital are being charged £1.50 more to fill up than those heading out and dropping into the BP garage on the other side of the road.

The BP garage on the A4 eastbound – just before the Hammersmith Flyover – charges 131.9p per litre for unleaded. The one on the westbound side charges 128.9p. That's a £1.50 difference on a 50-litre tank in a typical family car.

Despite this both forecourts were charging the same for diesel – 134.9p per litre. It

By **James Salmon** and **Harry Howard**

is one of the more glaring examples of the apparently arbitrary way fuel is priced at forecourts that baffles motorists.

In the worst cases petrol stations can charge several pounds more to fill up than another one owned by the same company a few miles down the road. In this case, despite both being branded BP, only one of them – the cheaper one – is operated by the oil giant itself. The other is owned by the Motor Fuel Group. It is the second largest independent forecourt operator in the UK operating under the BP, Shell, Esso, Texaco, JET and Murco brands. The firm refused to give an explanation of why it

charges 3p more a litre than its neighbour. But customers were not impressed when the difference was pointed out to them. Jay Purohit, 36, said: 'That's really mad. People are doing this, and they're getting away with it.'

Pensioner Valerie Miller said: 'That's pretty naughty. If it wasn't rush hour I would go round the roundabout and go across the road.'

Examples of petrol stations charging significantly more for fuel than neighbouring forecourts are littered across Britain. One Sainsbury forecourt in Liphook in Hampshire on the A3 is charging 131.9p per litre for unleaded.

Just 20 miles down the road in Water-

looville, a Sainsbury's forecourt charges just 10p less per litre, at 121.9p.

This equates to £5 for a tank.

Luke Bosdet, from the AA, said: 'Pump-price watching is second only to the weather as a UK obsession. And so, when one forecourt of the same brand charges significantly more for the same fuel and drivers can see it, the retailers shouldn't be surprised when drivers lash out.'

Fuel retailers are facing accusations of failing to pass on a recent fall in the wholesale cost of fuel. Prices hit the highest level since September 2014 last month. Petrol now costs an average of 128.2p per litre, with diesel at 132.2p per litre.

Motor Fuel Group declined to comment.

... but once you've filled up, don't think you're going anywhere fast

By **Isabella Fish**

IF you wonder why you seem to be stuck in a never-ending traffic jam these days, there was an answer last night.

The number of vehicles on our roads has leapt by an astonishing two and a half million in the last five years.

With the UK population hitting 66million last year and as more of us turn to online shopping, a surge in the number of delivery vans has been blamed for increased gridlock in many town centres.

Last year there were 2,460,900 more vehicles on England's road when compared with five years ago in 2013 – an increase of 7.7 per cent. Over the same period, road space increased by just 0.6 per cent, according to the latest figures by the Local Government Association.

This means there are significantly more vehicles per mile of road leading to increased conges-

Number of vehicles on roads up 2.5m in 5 years

tion, air pollution and more wear and tear on our roads.

Chancellor Philip Hammond has identified traffic as one of the factors holding back productivity, with people spending too much time travelling and not enough time working.

A report in February found a surge in delivery vans taking goods to homes and offices had fuelled a rise in congestion.

Last year drivers wasted an average of 31 hours stuck in rush-hour traffic at a cost of £1,168 each, according to research by traffic

analytics company INRIX. This includes wasted fuel and time, as well as indirect costs such as higher prices for household goods as firms pass on their rising freight bills to customers.

The LGA, which represents 370 councils in England and Wales, is warning that congestion is having a significant impact on our towns, cities and communities, and is acting as a drag on local growth.

It is calling on the Government to use two pence per litre of existing fuel duty to tackle roads maintenance and help deal with a

£9.3billion backlog of repairs. Martin Tett, LGA transport spokesman, said: 'England's roads are currently gripped by a growing congestion crisis. Very few journeys begin and end on a motorway or trunk road yet Government funding on the strategic road network is 52 times higher than for local roads.'

'Spending more on improving our national roads will only serve to speed vehicles up between increased delays and congestion on local roads.'

'It would already take more

than £9billion and over 14 years for councils to clear the current local road repairs backlog. Reinvesting two pence per litre of existing fuel duty into local road maintenance would generate £1billion a year for councils to start tackling the backlog and improve our local roads.'

RAC spokesman Rod Dennis said: 'A new funding formula is desperately needed to give councils the funds they need to get on top of maintenance and bring these roads up to a standard that is fit for the 21st century.'