

Here's some of her haul...



INGRID has been sent lots of freebies, including:

£21.72 refund to cover cost of faulty Just Sheepskin booties and postage.

£30 in Virgin Trains vouchers and signed paperback copy of Sir Richard Branson's autobiography.

A3 Jiffy bag full of various Pilot pens – ballpens, fine-liners, fluorescent markers, silver decorative pens.

Postal order to cover cost of Aquafresh dental tape.

One free night's stay in one of the Corus Hotel's executive rooms with breakfast.

£50 in John Lewis gift vouchers.

£100 to spend on clothes at Debenhams.

Free Bikram yoga session.

£300 of Selfridges vouchers.

£0.20 token to spend against any purchase of Mars confectionary.

£25 credit on her mother's BT account.

One pack of Cobra Beer 5 per cent premium lager.

Six return British Airways Club Europe tickets.

A cheque for £350 to cover cost of Sony repair bill.

Free Apple MacBook repair.

Case of 6 x 125g Food Thoughts cocoa.

£11 refund for Clinique superfine liner.

£50 Gap gift certificate.

Replacement Culinaire Magi-Can tin opener.

Replacement runners for IKEA chest of drawers.

Six boxes Dorset Cereals Simply Delicious Muesli.

Four £1 Weetabix vouchers.

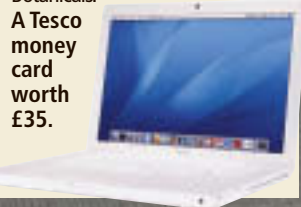
STV fly papers and a packet of window fly traps.

£5 voucher for Alldays, Always and Tampax

Replacement Le Creuset butter dish.

Two candles from Archipelago Botanicals.

A Tesco money card worth £35.



Pictures: PHIL COBURN

THE MOAN RANGER!

Mum pulls in freebies worth £2K writing complaint letters

by **Nick Dorman** and **Emily Hall**

MEET Britain's biggest moaner – a mum who rakes in £2,000 of goodies a year by bombarding big firms with complaints about poor products and services.

Ingrid Stone, 40, has doggedly written more than 1,000 letters to the chief executives of businesses including British Airways, Tesco, BT, easyJet, Sainsbury's and John Lewis.

She said: "My husband hates me making a fuss but I just can't stand bad service."

"Complaining is not thought of as being very British, but I started writing letters when I thought something wasn't up to scratch."

"More people should do it. It's our right as consumers. I'm not just doing it to help myself, I will be helping everyone if companies then pull their fingers out and improve things."

Ingrid got the complaining bug when she was only eight years old, firing off a furious note to the boss of a funfair after she won a doll that was dirty.

Since then she has received a mountain of replies, including one from Virgin boss Richard Branson – who cheekily sent her a signed copy of his autobiography after she complained about a late train.

She said proudly: "I'd like to think I was the most successful complainer in Britain. It's not just in my interest to make a big deal out of poor service. It helps the companies improve, too."

Makeover

But Ingrid insists she only ever grumbles when services or goods fall short of her high standards.

A mother to three-year-old Ruby, Ingrid perfected her letter writing while working as a PA in her 20s and now churns out half a dozen a week.

She even complained about goods at her wedding – and was given a makeover and £100 from Debenhams. Top store Selfridges sent her £300 in vouchers after gifts turned up late.

When a trip to Cannes turned into a shambles, with the pilot getting lost, British Airways' then chief executive Willie Walsh sent her six business class flights to Prague worth £5,000 as compo.

And a similarly stern letter about a nightmare hotel experience led to a luxury stay at the Corus flagship Hyde Park venue in London.

Her most extreme cases include whinges about a pair of Topshop leggings with a baggy crotch, the lack of dates in Dorset cereals and fly paper that wasn't sticky enough.

Ingrid added: "If I buy something and I don't like it, I complain, which leads to me receiving a lot of vouchers. Tesco recently gave me one for £35, which went a long way towards paying for our weekly shop."

"There is so much poor service and so many poor products out there, I wouldn't be at all surprised if people did."

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■ **INGRID is author of Letters of a Dissatisfied Woman – due out later this year**

■ **Voice of the Sunday People: Page 14**

HER FIRST LETTER (AGED 8)



CUTE CUSTOMER:
Note about dolly

WRITE ON

Ingrid with some of the replies to her angry letters

Ingrid's top 5 tips

- 1. ALWAYS** contact the managing director or chief executive of the company. Complaints sent to customer services departments often go astray.
- 2. ALWAYS** write, never email. A letter is more formal and emails can easily be missed or even accidentally deleted.

- 3. BE** polite. You won't get anywhere by being rude in your letter.
- 4. EXPLAIN** clearly why you are unsatisfied using bullet points. Send pictures if necessary.
- 5. BE** prepared to have a little joke about your experience. Even managing directors like to see the funny side.