

The £100 car that clocked 480 mph

Nov 1 2003 Duncan Higgitt, The Western Mail

CAREFUL driver Joanna James was clocked speeding in her ageing Austin Maestro - at an amazing 480 miles an hour.

Joanna, 28, was stunned to be hit with the supersonic speeding ticket in her 14-year-old runaround car bought for just £100.

The 480mph speed in the G-reg Maestro was faster than supercars such as Ferraris and Lamborghinis - and twice the take-off speed of a Boeing 737 jet.

Mother-of-three Joanna said, "I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the ticket said I was doing 480mph.

"I can barely reach 48 miles an hour in my old car never mind that sort of speed.

"The ticket even said they had photographic evidence of me on a speed camera - but I would have been just a blur like a bullet flying past."

Joanna bought the run-around silver Maestro with 70,000 miles on the clock for just £100 four months ago.

She was clocked on speed camera on a 30mph road in Bridgend, South Wales.

Joanna, of Sandfields, Port Talbot, said, "It's ridiculous. My battered old car starts to shake and shudder if I even try to put my foot down.

"When my husband Ken opened the notice he was furious. Then when he read I'd been doing 480mph he nearly lost it completely. It took us a couple of minutes to realise it was impossible.

"A lot of our friends think it is funny - but I have got no points on my licence and I want to keep it that way.

"I always drive carefully. I have my three-year-old Chloe with me most of the time when I am in the car."

Husband Ken, 34, said, "I was really surprised when she had the speeding ticket because she's a very safe driver.

"But it is ridiculous to think she could have been doing that sort of speed - it makes you wonder how many other mistakes they make."

The South Wales Safety Camera Partnership - run by three police forces in Wales - blamed the ticket on a clerical error.

A spokeswoman said, "We apologise for any inconvenience this has caused.

"We will be sending her an amended ticket for 48mph."

But Joanna plans to appeal against the ticket with its £60 fine and three penalty points.

She said, "I was doing 32 to 35mph because I was concentrating on the signs to find my way home.

"And if they think they're going to send me a ticket for 48mph, they can think again. If they can get it wrong once they can get it wrong again. I have no faith in speed cameras at all."