



05 Rolled away: Caroline Pearce's Vauxhall



17 Uni hopefuls: Mark Cooper's daughters



76 Nearly up: Martin Woodall's car warranty

News & regulars

04 Consumer news

- The Vauxhall cars that roll away
- Harry Potter mania cuts book prices
- The future for home information packs

09 Saving you money

A full page of practical tips

10 Product news

First looks at new TVs and mobiles – and the latest air conditioners to hit the market

23 Money makeover

We help cut a family's insurance bill

26 Money monitor

Best Buy Isas and children's accounts, plus home-based chip and Pin machines

34 Food and health focus

We save money on medicines and look at the ingredients of natural toiletries

Features

12 Which? Awards

Find out which companies provide you with the best products and services

17 Paying for university

Helping your kids keep the debt down

20 Online money

Is online banking for you? We investigate

24 House insurance

Best Buys, plus cover for downloads

28 Product reliability

The audiovisual brands you can really trust

36 Barbecue food

How healthy are your bangers and burgers?

38 Drug companies

We investigate the influence that the pharmaceutical industry has on GPs and patient charities

Help & advice

76 Ask the experts

Includes fire extinguisher labelling, selling a car, fast drying speeds, plus sunglasses

78 Your letters

Keeping rodents out, praise for cheques, train points, and a stand against 'chair'

79 Campaigns

How our campaigns team has been making its voice heard

80 Brief cases

Damaged roof felt and a faulty kitchen refit: our lawyers advise

82 The way we were

From Butlins to Benidorm, plus tell us your memories of holidays in times past

84 Question time

Pensions Minister and Consumer Champion James Purnell on the new personal accounts

Our promise

Expert advice when you need it

Which? aims to help you choose the best goods and services – and avoid the worst. We're entirely independent – we take no ads, no freebies and everything we test is paid for at full price. Since

1957 we've informed, influenced and campaigned on behalf of all consumers in the UK.



Best Buys

These are products that achieve high total test scores.

Don't Buys

These are products that have performed extremely poorly in at least one of our key tests or that have achieved very low total test scores.



Exceptional Value



Our coveted award is given on those rare occasions to products that are both of superb quality and outstandingly priced.

MEMBERS' HELPLINE Call 01992 822 800/0845 307 4000 **EMAIL** which@which.co.uk

Printing your photos on a small photo printer is child's play and you don't need a computer. We show you how **PAGE 54**



50 Scuff marks: we test how well blank DVDs play after they've been scratched

On test

IN-DEPTH TESTS

44 Home cinema

You can get cinema-style surround sound in your home for just over £100

50 Blank DVDs

Which discs are the best for you

54 Small photo printers

These easy-to-use devices let you print your own photos without using a PC

58 Irons

Best Buy steam irons and steam generators plus our ironing tips

62 Nappies

We find out how Pampers and Huggies perform against supermarket brands

66 Oven cleaners

We find the best grease busters

68 Secateurs

The Best Buy cutters for your garden

70 Freezers

Best Buy worktop-height, tall, built-in and chest freezers for everyone



Comment

A new market force

There's no doubt that the cost of higher education is rapidly evolving into the second highest financial outlay of many people's lives, after buying a house. And it affects not just individual students, but their parents, too. As the number of universities has grown, so has the government's need to ask students to help pay the cost. Anyone planning to go to university is recommended to do some careful financial planning.

When Which? started life back in the 1950s, savings were focused on a deposit for a house and trying to find a building society to offer you a mortgage. Now many parents will be going through a similar process of saving for university fees, with the aim of minimising the level of debt their children will be left with: our survey on p17 shows that 75 per cent of parents will help fund their children at college.

The increased accessibility of degrees has had two major outcomes. First, more and more people see university education as a consumer service – hence students suing institutions that they feel haven't provided them with the right quality of product. And second, there's a ripple effect on other areas of consumer spending. Some 20 per cent of parents in our survey would consider buying a second property for their children to live in at university – a significant factor in the housing market.

Thus the effect of higher education now extends far beyond what classes of degrees students attain. People are assessing it seriously in a much wider consumer context. So those involved in all aspects of university education should beware – the consumer has a lot of clout these days.

Why the awards will help all of us

Some Which? members may feel we are selling the family silver by launching awards after 50 years of dignified silence. But we are not. We've long campaigned for excellence in consumer goods and services and it is only right that we recognise the best of the best to the outside world. And these awards will encourage businesses to develop even better products. That can only be good for Which? members – and all other consumers, too.

© Which? Ltd 2007

Material published in Which? may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the prior permission of Neil Fowler, Editor. Which? may not be used for advertising, sales promotion or publicity. Which? may grant permission to use its WHICH? BEST BUY logo in certain circumstances. For further details please email: CR@which.co.uk.

UK ISSN 0043-4841; Printing Charterhouse Print Management

THIS ISSUE IN NUMBERS

4,310

The number of premiums we gathered from 92 policies provided by 46 house insurance companies. You can find the Best Buys on p24 – but don't quote us on that.

2,580

The number of continuous hours we spent running our 15 generator and steam irons for our lime build-up scale tests. For results, full steam ahead to p58.

440

The number of cuts we made in our lab tests besides an extensive user trial of 22 secateurs. Our Best Buys will help you keep you in trim, so turn to p68...