

Ask Which?

Each month this year, we will feature one of our original members on this page as part of celebrations of our 50th anniversary



John Hull with the Sinclair Zeta 2 motor

As a boy, John Hull built a crystal radio set and read about scientists splitting the atom. It was the beginning of a lifelong passion for new inventions.

John grew up to become a chartered electrical engineer, experimenting on a heavy-water nuclear reactor while working at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment. The director there at the time was Sir John Cockcroft – one of the two atom-splitting scientists.

Given John's love of new inventions, it's hardly surprising he became a member of Which? at the start, in 1957, and he has used the magazine to buy dishwashers, Teasmades and digital radios.

He passed on his love of new inventions to his sons by buying them the Sinclair ZX80, ZX81 and Spectrum.

The Sinclair ZX81 was one of the first computers tested by Which?, in July 1981. It had 1KB of Ram memory which could be expanded to 17KB – although that extra memory pack tended to fall off the back.

He also bought a less-remembered Sinclair product nine years ago, the Sinclair Zeta 2 battery-driven electric motor, to power his pedal cycle. It drove one of the wheels of the bike while a Zeta 1 drove the other.

John said 'It was rather noisy but it provided half the energy required to get up the two short, steep hills between our house and Wantage town centre.'

Now aged 89, John is looking forward to our next report on digital radios to find a portable model for the family's shower room.

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■ April 2007 Best Buy competition

The following won a digital camera: Mr W F E Mann, Worcester; Mr J Panting, Cyprus; Mr D J Prince, Loughborough; Mr D J Witchell, Sevenoaks and Mr C R Wood, Sheffield.

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