

“Shopping by Bike” - Survey of Local supermarkets Peter Hawkins, August 2016

Shopping by Bike - what efforts do the shops themselves make to encourage cyclists to come and shop there?

I looked at my own local shops - the supermarkets within a mile of where I live. Some of them I visit regularly, others occasionally.

I asked:

1 what *quality* of cycle parking do they offer? Racks or wheel-benders? Under cover or exposed?

2 Location of parking for *security*: Under observation, or hidden away?

3 Location of parking for *convenience*: Within 20m (15 secs) of the door - or further away?

4 *Choice* of parking location: Formal, or informal? Where the intended parking (ie *formal*) is poorly located, is there some *informal* parking (barriers, railings etc) available in a more secure or convenient location?

Informal parking was determined by where cycles were actually parked (from observation), or from my own knowledge of where cycles *can* be parked (if no bikes were present).

Taking all factors into consideration, I then rated the stores on a 5-point scale:

1 Racks, under cover, secure, convenient

2 Racks, exposed, secure, convenient

3 Racks, exposed, inconvenient/insecure

4 Wheel-benders

5 informal parking only; no formal provision

The following stores were examined:

A Sainsbury's Local, Fountainbridge/Gibson Terrace

B Lidl, Dalry Rd

C Aldi, Gorgie Rd

D Aldi, Chesser

E Asda, Chesser Ave.

F Tesco, Corstorphine

G Sainsbury's Murrayfield was included (for sake of completeness) but not fully studied (no photos)

The photos on the following pages take each store in turn, describe the basic features, and offer a rating based on these. Some stores had more than one cycle parking 'facility', usually a 'formal' one plus one or more informal places:



A) Sainsburys Local: racks, exposed, secure, convenient: Rating: 2



B) Lidl, Dalry Rd.: racks, under cover, secure, convenient: Rating: 1



C) Aldi, Gorgie Rd, rear door:(bike is behind pillar): informal, under cover, secure, convenient: Rating: 3



Aldi, Gorgie Rd, front door: racks, exposed, secure, convenient: Rating: 2



D) Aldi, Chesser: racks, exposed, secure, convenient: Rating: 2



E) Asda, Chesser, rear (E) door: informal, exposed, secure, convenient: Rating: 3



Asda, Chesser, west (main) door: wheel-twisters, under cover, secure, convenient:
Rating: 4



Asda, Chesser, SE corner: racks, exposed, insecure, inconvenient (45 secs walk):
Rating: 4



F) Tesco, Corstorphine 1: near main door; informal, under cover, secure, convenient.
Rating: 3



Tesco C'phine 2: same location as 1; Note: bikes wedged behind trolleys and pillar: Rating: 4



Tesco, C'phine 3: same location as 1. Informal, under cover, secure, convenient.
Rating: 3



Tesco, C'phine 4: the official cycle park: racks (but with insufficient support), exposed, secure, remote (60 secs walk).

Rating: 4



Tesco, C'phine, 5: wheel-twisters, exposed, secure, convenient.

Rating: 4

G Sainsbury's Murrayfield:

South side (Gorgie): Racks, exposed, secure, inconvenient (25 secs to threshold, but a further corridor added another 40 secs to reach stacks). Rating: 3

North side (Murrayfield): Racks, exposed, secure, convenient. Rating: 2

Observations:

Other relevant factors emerged during the course of the study:

1 *Multi-entrance Stores*: Larger stores with more than one main entrance should have formal cycle parking for each entrance. This condition was satisfied by Sainsbury's Murrayfield and Aldi Gorgie, but not by Asda Chesser.

2 *Concourses*: For some stores, the cycle parking was adjacent the street or the car park, but for others a concourse of some size had to be crossed to reach the cycle park. Whether cycling is allowed here, or whether it's part of the pavement, isn't clear. Strictly-law-abiding cyclists might feel the need to dismount, thus adding to the access times and possibly turning a 'convenient' park into a 'remote' one. This is the case at Asda Chesser and at Sainsbury's Murrayfield, south side.

3 *Signage*: The location of the cycle park could be signed from the access point(s), but it never was, in any of these cases. However, Lidl's cycle park had an attractive cycle logo in coloured brick on the paving.

4 *Walking Time*: The larger stores are so huge that walking becomes a significant part of the shopping experience.

Thus, Asda Chesser takes (at gentle walking pace of 5 kmh, ie 83 metres per minute) 45 secs for the north-south traverse, and fully 90 secs for the east-west;

Tesco Corstorphine takes 60 secs for the south side, and 60 secs for the east;

Sainsbury's Murrayfield takes 105 secs from south to north - you start in Gorgie, and finish in Murrayfield!

Conclusions:

Overall, the smaller stores offered much better cycle parking than the bigger ones. Lidl Dalry Rd was the best, with a rating of 1.

Sainsbury's Local, Aldi Gorgie, and Aldi Chesser were adequate, with at least one rating of 2.

Of the bigger stores, Sainsbury's Murrayfield was 'adequate', with at least one rating of 2.

Asda Chesser and Tesco Corstorphine were 'poor' or worse:

Asda had wheel-twisters by its west entrance, while the east entrance, which is more accessible for cyclists coming from the road network, ie Chesser Ave or Slateford Rd, has only informal parking; and the formal parking is 'remote' at the SE corner, requiring a walk of 45 secs to the main entrance.

Tesco Corstorphine was worse. All the bikes when I was there (mid-morning) were parked informally against the trolley storage rails, close to the main entrance. The formal parking, down the south side, consisted of two sets of inadequate racks (quasi wheel-twisters), and the larger set was 'remote' (60 secs walk). The smaller set was nearer the main entrance, but had one rack quite badly bent, and a bike in it that looked abandoned (see photos).

These findings, though on a small scale, confirm a national trend away from large supermarkets in favour of smaller, 'Local/Metro/Express'-type stores. It's not just the cycle parking, but also the walking times involved.

In Schumacher's immortal words, "small is beautiful".

Note: I am aware that a study of parking at stores has already been carried out under Spokes' auspices, but it has not been published, and I haven't seen it.