

Spokes Summer Competition 2016

Shopping by Bike

First prize – Jeanine Bezuijen

I was born and grew up in the Netherlands where shopping by bike is the rule rather than the exception. In Amsterdam, where I lived for four years, people think nothing of transporting their groceries, musical instruments, children and household furniture by bike. When I first moved to Edinburgh two years ago I felt slightly apprehensive about doing the weekly shop on my bicycle. However, my experience has been overwhelmingly positive and I have continued to do all my shopping by bike.

The main reason I am able to do all my shopping in this way is my bike. My Dutch bicycle has a large basket at the front that easily fits a large shopping bag. I take the shopping bag into the shop, pack all my shopping into it at the till and then lift the shopping bag straight into my bicycle basket when I get outside. At home, I can carry all my groceries into the house in one go. I love my basket and would find it very difficult to do without!

Another thing that helps me to do my shopping by bike is when shops have bike parking space available. Most shops will have some but some are better than others. I like the parking spaces at Lidl on Dalry Road, which are spacious, sheltered and close to the main entry. I have stopped going to shops that do not have adequate cycling facilities.

I think this way of doing shopping by bike is useful for everyone because it is easy and convenient. In the other photo you can see me on my bike. In this photo I am nine months pregnant, which shows that you do not need to be particularly strong or fit to do your shopping this way!

If you can, fitting a big basket on your bike will help you with the shopping and will allow you to transport other things on your bike as well—I often use mine to take cakes to work. Having said that, good panniers can be just as useful and are also frequently used in the Netherlands. With our upcoming family expansion I might have to invest in some since we will probably need more groceries in the future!



Photo 2: Me and my shopping on my bicycle. In this photo I am nine months pregnant, which shows that doing your shopping by bike does not require exceptional fitness or strength.



Photo 1: Bicycle parking space at Lidl, Dalry Road. I prefer to shop at places that provide adequate cycling facilities.

Second prize – Katharine Wake

My ideas (top tips) have been inspired by my experiences of shopping by bike – both the mistakes to avoid and the good experiences to embrace:

Top tips:

1. Keep a foldaway rucksack and/or a couple of bungees in your pannier

Why? Because it is so easy to buy more than you can transport (probably because you are shopping in interesting shops and are tempted by extras)

2. Consider using a flexible bike lock (cable or chain)

Why? Easier to secure your bike to something other than a bike rack.

3. Plan your grocery shopping so you buy the heaviest things (milk, juice etc.) as close as you can to your final destination.

Why? Saves effort – although it could be recommended for those doing serious fitness training

4. Shop local, try the small independent shops

Why? Establish rapport with local shopkeepers (and fellow customers), find local/artisan/interesting produce, engage with the community

Mistakes to avoid:

- Trying to cycle with a baguette tucked under my chin
- The Great Yoghurt Disaster – when the pot fell out of my overloaded pannier and splatted on the ground (and onto everything in the vicinity)
- Wobbly bike rides with shopping bags on the handlebars
- Bike rack full/not there at all, lampposts too wide for D locks, too lazy to go further afield to find better bike parking
- Numerous occasions when I have laboriously transported all shopping up a big hill only to remember too late that there was an alternative place to buy some of it at the top (I'm a slow learner with sturdy thigh muscles!)
- Getting to know (and be known by) a great set of independent traders, supporting their businesses whilst getting access to better variety of products, often locally produced. Getting to know the community, finding out local information, making friends.

My top tips have been tried and tested by me, and give what I have found to be practical solutions to the problems I have encountered when shopping by bike, and my positive experiences of shopping in small, local shops will, I hope, suggest a creative approach to shopping by bike which could enhance the whole experience.

Position	Entries in positions 3-13 [NB - there were prizes only for the top 11]
<p>3 Shane Voss</p>	<p>I recently bought myself a frame fitting lock for my bike to make popping in to shops relaxing, as well as quick and easy.</p> <p>I watched Dutch people turning up at their local shops, flicking down their kickstands and strolling in. For a while I presumed the bikes were simply left unlocked - but no. The locks on their bike only take a second or two to lock or unlock - so fast I wasn't even noticing it happening.</p> <p>Most Dutch bikes have a special bracket for attaching this type of lock. Initial enquiries left me thinking that with a British frame I was out of luck.</p> <p>I now know that isn't so. The lock I've chosen is an AXA Defender (other models are available) which can be obtained for £20-£30. I found the "Type 3" attachment brackets work very well. I have also purchased the optional cable that can plug in to the lock for extra security when leaving the bike for longer.</p> <p>I now find I am much more likely to pop in to local shops on my way home. In the past I tended to cycle home and then walk back. Sometimes I would dash in and grab something while staring anxiously out of the window. Now I can relax while in the shop knowing my bike is not at risk. I also get the additional benefit of carrying my purchases home in my pannier.</p>



Ten tips for shopping by bike

Using a bike for the majority of your shopping is facilitated by the following options:

Buy In Bulk

Order items in bulk if you have space to store larger quantities and if possible use home delivery service. My local greengrocer (Crunchy Carrot, Dunbar) will deliver and I buy 25kg of oats, rice and smaller quantities of other non perishable goods.

Frequent small shops

Stopping to shop with a bike is generally easier than finding somewhere to park a car. Carrying heavy loads is much easier than walking - carrying a heavy rucksack or plastic bags that can be uncomfortable on your hands. You are less likely to waste food shopping more frequently. Maybe surprisingly a 16kg bag of flour will, at a squeeze, fit into a large pannier.

A trailer

A trailer can be very useful for large amounts of shopping. Just make sure your brakes are working well if you are towing heavy loads. The following trailers are two that I have used.

[Carry Freedom](#) Y-frame – my favourite as it folds away flat for easy storage. The new Leaf trailer is specifically designed for the weekly shop. (Designed in Scotland manufactured in Taiwan)

[Bikehod](#) - again well suited to shopping. Ideal for scanning as you can place the shopping directly in the hod. Very easy to attach to the bike and wheel around both the store and once you have returned home.

Additionally a trailer can be used for many other purposes. (Manufactured in UK)

To do larger amounts of shopping, without the option of a trailer, the following are useful:

Invest in a rack

Many bikes don't come with a rack, a worthwhile investment. A [serviceable rack](#), with a max load of 25kg for less than £13. However this limit is conservative, I have transported teenage children on the above rack, n.b. not a shopping trip.

Quality Panniers

[Carradice](#) (UK) or [Ortleib](#). With a heavily loaded pannier it can be one sided, if so, use two panniers to balance the load. A bonus of either of these makes - repairable by the manufacturer. On a budget Aldi and Lidl can be a good option.

A kickstand

Helps support bike when loading panniers. I would recommend either a [rear kickstand](#) or a twin footed [centre stand](#). Pletscher (Swiss company), amongst others, make high quality kickstands.

Examples: some of my shopping exploits

Fruit trees on a bike

One of my most satisfying shopping trips was visiting a fruit tree nursery in Perthshire. I managed to fit 16 bare rooted fruit trees in my panniers and rode over 10 miles to Perth to catch the train. If you decide to follow my example it's easier sticking to apples and pears which are usually shorter or trim the plum trees as its a squeeze getting the pannier onto the train.

Long objects strapped to top tube.

A bike is ideal for transporting long items along the top tube. Some of the items I have carried; bamboo canes, garden tools, brushes, draughtproofing materials.

Frozen/chilled Food

Wrap frozen items in a fleece or a down vest/jacket. Optional – first wrap in a waterproof bag. Also if you have a number of frozen or chilled items keep together in same part of pannier.

Easier downhill

Great if the shop is at top of hill. I bought 100kg of compost from Redhall Walled Garden, using two bike hods, one behind the other. Cycling home was fortunately nearly all downhill/flat.

I made an informal study of the cycle parking offered by local stores/supermarkets within a 1-mile radius of my home. It sets up a rating scale so that stores can be compared.

It outlines the factors that can be taken into consideration when studying cycle parking at shops; first, a priori, ie before the study started; and second, factors which emerged as a result of the study. A rating scale (admittedly not infallible!) is set up, based on these factors. It includes photos of the parking, as visual evidence. It records a set of observations, and reaches a set of conclusions.

I will submit my full report for the Spokes website supermarkets page - this is a 1-page summary.

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:

- what *quality* of cycle parking do they offer? Racks/wheel-benders? Covered/exposed?
- Location of parking for *security*: Under observation, or hidden away?
- Location of parking for *convenience*: Within 20m (15 secs) of the door - or further away?
- *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: Sainsbury's Local (Fountainbridge); Lidl (Dalry Rd); Aldi (Gorgie Rd); Aldi (Chesser); Asda (Chesser Ave); Tesco (Corstorphine).

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. Asda Chesser and Tesco Corstorphine were poor or worse:



Tesco, Corstorphine official cycle park - racks with insufficient support, exposed, secure, remote (60 secs walk) - Rating: 4



Lidl, Dalry Road - racks, under cover, secure, convenient - Rating: 1

Other relevant factors emerged during the course of the study, discussed in my full report. These included cycle parking issues in relation to ..

- *Multi-entrance Stores*: need parking at every entrance
- *Concourses*: At some stores a concourse (pedestrian-only?) had to be crossed to reach the cycle park.
- *Signage*: The location of the cycle park was never signed from the access point(s)
- *Walking Time*: The larger stores are so huge that walking from the bike park becomes significant.

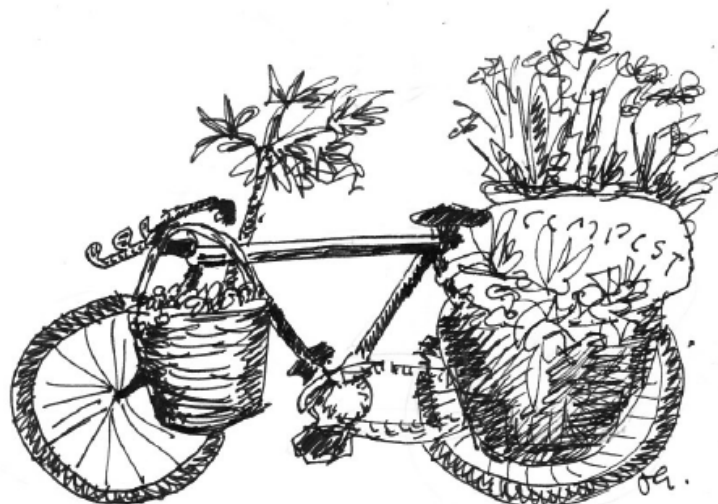
Conclusions

Overall, the smaller stores offered much better cycle parking than the bigger ones. *Lidl Dalry Road* was the best, with a rating of 1. *Tesco Corstorphine* was the worst. All the bikes when I was there (mid-morning) were parked informally against the trolley storage rails, close to the main entrance, not at the official park.

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

6
Jackie
Gulland

I'm a gardener. I mostly grow vegetables, organically and I like to reuse and recycle garden equipment when I can. But sometimes I need to buy something from a garden centre. Most garden centres assume that their customers will come by car. Many don't even have bike racks. They are all on the edge of town and none within easy reach of where I live. So most of my garden shopping happens by bike.



Useful: you can get a lot of garden stuff on a bike, so long as you have a rack and some bungee straps. Panniers help. I've transported compost, garden tools, buckets, pots, a lot of plants, and a small tree this way. If the worst comes to the worst and you overload it, you can always push it home!

7
Jackie
Jack

Having sold my car last year I faced a challenge as to how I would transport my precious cargos, Dexter dog and my granddaughter, Alex.. I purchased a cargo trailer to enable me to take them with me wherever I go by bike. I live within 3 miles of my 2 work locations and commuting in Edinburgh is generally faster depending on the time of day The trailer is double size which allows me to carry a child or dog plus shopping at the same time. I bought it second hand on Gumtree, which I viewed as an investment. I would highly recommend them as versatile ways to carry all your most valuable things!



I would encourage everyone who is able to cycle to work to get rid of their cars. There are way too many benefits to list. Cycling keeps you fit and healthy, costs very little to maintain and keeps people in touch with the weather. I often find I see and feel so much more around the city by bike. Admittedly the hills are a challenge but in a good way. Taking a bike trailer around the city centre is always popular with the tourists. Dexter is often photographed like he, himself is a tourist attraction. which I always find entertaining.

8
Heidi
Wilson

Install an axa frame lock on your bike.

I have lived in the Netherlands until I was 30 and did pretty much everything by bike. I found however that over here - once I had two kids - I reverted to short distance shopping mostly on foot or by car even though I use my bike to commute to work daily. When I considered what was keeping me from taking the bike – I can get both kids on the bike along with bags afterall – it was actually the locking and unlocking of the bike.

Bicycle parking is often close to traffic or parking lots and whilst I bend down to chain up my bike – the kids are unchecked. Also the oily fingers you get from chaining up a bike are annoying anyway – even more so when you transfer the mess all over the kids clothing as you lift them in/out of their seats. I have now installed a Dutch style axa lock on my bike and once again use my bike for the school/nursery run and all those small shopping trips. Both the kids and I love it.

<p>9 Clare Macaulay</p>	<p>Out for a sunny tandem ride along the canal towpath and water of Leith, I reminded my husband of his father's birthday in 10 days time. Did he have a plan for a present? He said he planned to send his dad the painting of a beach, on our living room wall, that his mum had painted and given to us, many years ago. His dad had recently revealed that he had really liked that painting and believed she had promised she'd give it to him when it was done, and he had been unhappy that she'd given it away.</p> <p>Later that day we dropped by Almondvalley Park in West Lothian for refreshment and relief and saw they had a small painting exhibition and they were all for sale. Our favourite was one of a sunset on a beach so we decided that if one painting was leaving, we would have a space on our wall for another. A crude measuring of the frame (picture not bike!), with a specs case, established that it could just get into the pannier.</p> <p>Taking care to get on and off by bringing my leg forward, rather than over the back - trying not to kick my husband in the back either and we got it safely home. Now his father will get the present he always wanted and we have something to cherish that still reminds us of the original.</p> <p><i>Surprise Serendipitous Shopping:</i> Never leave house without a pannier and a spare strap – you never know when you might need them. A pannier can carry many more shapes than you'd think and our waterproofs and snacks fitted neatly down the sides!</p> <div data-bbox="1010 174 1485 723" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1010 734 1485 992" data-label="Image"> </div>
<p>10 Katharine Wake [no prize because also no. 2!]</p>	<p>My Shopping by Bike experiences are illustrated in my 'Bike shopper's rap.' Also covered in the lyrics is my solution to avoid one of the problems (too much shopping, too little space in the pannier) which I used to fall foul of on a regular basis.</p> <p>Bike shopper's rap</p> <p>Get your bike, grab your money, You've just run out of honey – Time to pedal swiftly to your local shop. On the way, I daresay, you may realise That the bakers just beside it sells your favourite pies, And whatever fruit's in season There will always be good reason To pop into the greengrocers Chat, and browse, and try to squeeze in Good fresh produce for your dinner (Lucky cycling makes you thinner!) But beware, do take care - For a pannier stuffed to bursting Can make you rather wobbly Specially if your route is cobbly (Past experience makes me wise, Such a nasty surprise When the yoghurt pot exploded Falling out when overloaded). But I've learnt my lesson now, And it's really quite a breeze - When that extra purchase beckons I can carry on with ease 'cos I've got a brill wee rucksack, Folds up small and very light, It is strong and quite capacious So it's really efficacious. As for parking, it's no bother Find a railing, post or rack, No excuses, please just try it And you won't look back!</p>

<p>11 Tony Walsh</p>	<p>During my time in university I started a 5 month work placement away from home and bought a second hand bike on my employer's internal version of gumtree. This old style commuter bike was a bargain at €30. It even came with a supermarket shopping basket permanently bolted to the carrier (handles had been removed!). This had two functions as far as I was concerned:</p> <p>1 – very handy for going to the shop</p> <p>2 – very ugly and made my bike less attractive to thieves. I actually never locked the bike when in work such was my confidence in the basket's ugliness!</p> <p>Back to the shopping – The nearest big supermarket was 2.5 miles away. With my basket, I could now cycle there, fill up a standard size basket with my groceries in full confidence that I had an identical basket on my bike and therefore everything would fit comfortably. A few bungee cords across the top and I was ready for home. If I needed even more groceries I carried a rucksack on occasion but this was rare because as far as I was concerned I didn't go looking for a bike with a shopping basket but that's what I got and I'm sure going to use it now that I have it!</p> <p>A slight disadvantage was that the basket hit the back of my upper leg when I suddenly stopped but I quickly adapted to this like we all do when adapting to a new bike.</p> <p>When my 5 months were over and it was time to move home again I felt I could probably get more than €30 for the bike but it somehow wouldn't be right so I advertised it on the same intranet site for the same price and had it sold within a day. I hope the next owner enjoyed its shopping usefulness as much as I did!</p>
<p>12 Euan Renton</p>	<p>I find that what can be a boring chore is transformed into something interesting and fun when I can go shopping on my bike.</p> <p>I have a few good paths near my house that offer nice connections to shops I use regularly. As well as being away from motor traffic, they also offer a view on nature in the city.</p> <p>The Water of Leith Path allows a very direct link through to excellent Asian shops plus Aldi and Sainsburys at Gorgie. I can carry a fair load with two full panniers and given the flat terrain it is an easy ride.</p> <p>The riverside sometimes has surprises with the odd heron, a very rare kingfisher and a yet to be spotted otter (they are there though as a neighbour found a young one under her garden shed when the ongoing flood prevention works started - the RSPCA took it away to build up its strength and place it in new territory somewhere else.</p> <p>Quiet Route 8 takes me out to the disheartening but useful Hermiston Gate. Here I find Decathlon and B&Q a regular draw and though the journey is much less interesting, nature still produces some nice surprises with unexpectedly varied flowers particularly in the grass verges north of Sighthill Industrial Estate.</p> <p>I have been surprised more than once by how useful bikes can be at carrying awkward loads. I have found it relatively straightforward to stow a garden spade, and lengths of materials (garden canes, wood, angle iron). I attach these to the frame with bungees, string, masking tape or sellotape. I find two attachments are needed, either at both ends of the crossbar or if not present, on the frame roughly where the crossbar would be.</p> <p>Quiet Route 9 is also handy for getting along to Corstorphine for its varied selection of shops.</p>

13

Rosanna Rabaeijs

I have fitted my bike with my own DIY shopping basket: maybe not for general use, but it suits me!

The 'basket' is a large plastic storage box with holes drilled into it at the bottom, for drainage and to allow it to be tied on to the pannier rack. I tend to use old shoe laces as they thread easily. The cover is waterproof - made from a

large bit of plastic laminated table cloth and the fabric of an umbrella, elasticated around the sides, and with ties with Velcro to fix it around the saddle post. A back light bracket is fixed to the box, and the elastic allows the light to be visible.

I am keen on upcycling and reducing waste, and my other shopping bags here seen hanging on the handle bars, I also made from old umbrellas, which are so often abandoned on the streets. They fold into a little pouches which I keep in my handbag. This basket is the third I have made in the lifetime of this bike (since 1998). I find a large 'bag for life' can easily be transferred from a super market trolley into the box, which I find very versatile for transporting other loads as well, sometimes with the aid of bungee elastics.

My husband thinks I'm crazy but I frequently do two trips to the shop in this way to avoid taking the car, when I buy more than can easily be transported in one trip, egged on by minimum spend incentive vouchers. The customer service desk is quite happy to keep an eye on my shopping trolley with the second bag for life in it ready for collection: I put the perishables in the first load to go home.



RUNNERS UP, MAP WINNERS

[in random order to fit the pages]

I want more promotion of affordable tools to make it more practical to shop by bike than car. E.g. the simple, cheap handlebar hangers. I think Spokes could do an interesting article on this. There's been many a time I've tried to cycle home with carriers on my handlebars for them to slip off and destabilise me.

Also safety is a factor and many shops don't have somewhere safe to park bikes, could we put in more secure parking in Edinburgh. Recently I watched someone spend 20 minutes trying to secure his beloved bike to a post to mitigate someone just lifting the whole thing up and over the post. It was in the newly renovated Quartermile development and I would have imagined somewhere new taking into account cyclists within their plans.



Cyclehoop for Lamp Posts



I think the handlebar hangers are so easy to carry round. So if you end up doing some shopping you have the flexibility to get that shopping home.

In terms of secure parking, I think having more options to secure your bike would again encourage people to cycle to the shops more.



Cyclehoop for Signposts (Heavy Duty)

“Advice” for those who are new to the #bikemessaging experience (like I was 4 months ago) to help them avoid all the “rookie errors” that I made when starting out.

These “top tips” will not enlighten “old hands” who’ve been #bikemessaging for years. These hints and tips are so obvious to “old hands” that they will have forgotten they ever learned them in the first place, and so if they were giving advice to newbies they wouldn’t even think of (some or all of) these tips.

I’ve learned the hard way, so thought would share with other newbies who will hopefully find them useful for those planning to try out the #bikemessaging experience for the first time!

AVOIDING ROOKIE #BIKEMESSAGING ERRORS

As a rookie #bikemessenger I have made all these errors. These tips might all seem rather obvious, but may be useful to for others for whom shopping by bike is a new experience!

Rookie error 1 – purchasing one very large pannier

It seems better value purchase to buy one large pannier because you can fit loads in, and purchasing one giant is probably cheaper than a pair of medium sized panniers, but when

- you fill it right up and start return journey home your trusty steed will be very unbalanced. Not a good idea for new cyclists, or those new to #bikemessaging
- you do a short trip on bike and only need carry a few odds and ends, but you are weighed down by gargantuan pannier with too much capacity and which weighs a ton.

Top tip – buy a pair of medium sized panniers. Take both when planning shopping trip and you will have enough space and beautifully balanced. And when you aren’t needing both you can just take one with necessities, and you have less weight to carry.

Rookie error 2 – buying too much

It’s very easy and tempting to overfill your shopping basket, especially when you spot those BOGOF offers or other bargains.

Top tip – if your wire basket is full to the brim that’s probably way too much as a rookie #bikemessenger. It’s more rewarding to do more regular trips for fewer items. If you see some bargains make a note and come back for them tomorrow. That gives you another excuse to have another fun trip out and getting to know your bike.

Rookie error 3 – you are fatter!

No – I don’t mean you personally! When both your panniers are full up your bike’s backside is significantly fatter on your return journey.

Top tip – remember to even more take care when zigzagging through those awkward gates at entrances and exits to cycle path. You are much much fatter than you think!

Rookie error 4 – the journey home

You’ve cycled many times, but do remember you are not only fatter, but also much heavier on your return journey. If you struggling to go up a particular hill anyway then you will need even more effort on the way home. And what about cobbles?

Top tip – think about hills and cobbles on your journey home. Maybe an alternative route would be better, and more interesting too?!

Rookie error 5 – travel sick cargo

Soft fruits (particularly raspberries) don’t react well to being jiggled about in panniers.

Bananas are surprisingly easy to bruise. Pack eggs carefully to avoid them self scrambling!

Top tip – select and pack soft fruits and eggs carefully. When transporting “poor travellers” then consider avoiding cobbles on journey home.

Happy #bikemessaging

Buying roses by bike - a great day out along the canal to a garden centre in West Lothian

Buying roses by bike

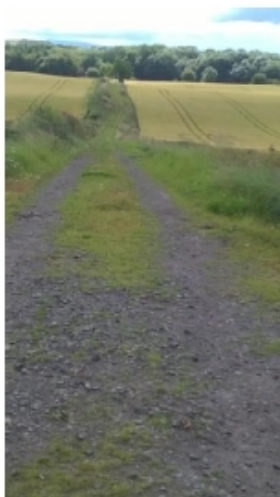
One lovely summer day, I needed to buy roses and my destination was the Hopetoun Garden Centre, near South Queensferry. First I took my bike on the train to Linlithgow, then cycled eastwards along the canal:



passing some inviting tea shops:



I turned off the canal at Auldscathie church, where the Spokes West Lothian Cycle Map showed a path. It went through a field:



But that was fine. Soon I got to the garden centre where I bought my roses. The garden centre had lots of car parking, even a 'dog park' but no cycle parking - but I used a handy sign post:



Back through the field and along the canal, this time giving the train a miss and cycling the whole way back to Edinburgh, passing many dog walkers, canoeists, cyclists, long boats, anglers, a castle and some cows:

A satisfying and productive day's shopping. Apart from a couple of short stretches of busy roads, I hardly saw or heard a car all day.



Keep a couple of bungee cords in your pannier bag, which take up minimal space and can be used to tie down boxes and small packages to pannier racks to increase your load capacity. Great for the trips to the Post Office sorting office to collect a parcel, if you do a fair bit of online shopping.

Useful because it is cheap, simple, portable and has minimal impact.

Interesting or unusual— er, not really! Just makes life on a bike a little more convenient.

1. Shopping by bike

I recommend:

1. **Ortleib Classic panniers.** The pannier has fabric that is stiff enough to maintain its shape when unrolled, considerably extending its capacity.

2. **A lightweight foldable rucksack.** A rucksack of 15-20 litres capacity costs £10 - £20 from outdoor shops. The rucksack can be used for an unplanned shop.

These can be used either separately or together.

Foldable rucksack in its pocket shown with "Bic" pen.



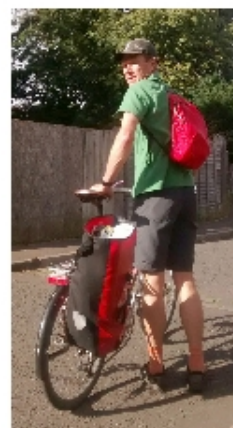
It packs away very small, mine weighs next to nothing (85gms) and can live in the bottom of a handbag or, in my case, a pannier.

As long as light and bulky items are packed at the top of the pannier the bike's handling is unaffected.



If it's raining a plastic bag can be either tucked into the top or if tight fitting, slid over the top of the pannier.

The rucksack is packed with lighter items or things that maybe crushable, eg bananas, crisps, salad etc.



2. Using a bike is a lifestyle choice

I wanted to show what makes shopping easier by bike. The above maybe useful to people new to cycling and who are looking for ways to make the most of their bikes or wanting to reduce their car use.

"READY TO GO"

I keep a high-viz jacket, trouser clips and bike lock actually on the bike when it's in the shed, so that I can be on my way to the shops right away in my "ordinary clothes" when something is needed.

1. The idea is (hopefully) useful in that it makes it more likely I will use the bike rather than the car for a shopping trip. By reducing the time and effort needed to get ready to leave for the shops to a minimum, the perceived advantage in taking the car for short, small load trips is also reduced, and one's "good practice" instinct to cycle kicks in.



I don't run a car since my retirement 6 years ago and so (apart from walking to the corner shop) I do all my shopping by bike.

I prefer to use off-road or quiet streets (despite potholes) and so it's my weekly treat to cycle to the Castle Terrace Farmers' Market. I get there via the canal towpath, a couple of toucan crossings, Festival Square, wheel the bike across Lothian Road, bike across the shared space in front of the Usher Hall. One more road to cross (Castle Terr) then there I am!

Unfortunately the cycle racks are at the far end of the market, so rather than wheeling my bike through shopping crowds I use a convenient railing (see picture), so I need to carry my panniers full of heavy vegetables only a short distance.

I loathe carrying bags. With panniers, the bike takes the weight. That is one of the great advantages of shopping by bike; PROVIDING THERE'S SOMEWHERE CLOSE TO FASTEN YOUR BIKE. If there is no cycle parking adjacent, a cyclist has to use ingenuity to find an alternative.

As long as there's no obstruction, is there any objection to such informal parking? How nice it would be to see a sign on suitably located railings - "Bikes May be Parked Here". What a change that would be from "Bikes Left Here will be Removed" (or similar) for no obvious reason.



I want more promotion of affordable tools to make it more practical to shop by bike than car. E.g. the BTwin add on. I



think Spokes could do an interesting article on this.

I don't think that people are fully aware of all the great options there are. In Copenhagen the Christiana bikes are commonplace and allow

great opportunities to transport children, animals and shopping. You don't see them or the add on trolley in Edinburgh though.



It's hard to impress anyone in Dunbar with cycling related feats as so many people cycle for everyday journeys. However, earlier in the year I managed some notoriety in Dunbar pre-school circles by moving a larger than I expected Ikea unit by bike! It wasn't heavy, but it was impressive!

People assume that you need a cargo bike to move cargo, but I found that with a single child trailer and judicious application of bungee cords you could move furniture and be the talk of the (small) town for a few minutes at least – a useful exercise in talking to people about using bikes.



I'm a keen gardener and really interesting plants are often best sourced from small independent nurseries. There are several such nurseries in the Lothians and a particular favourite of mine is at Boggs Holdings, near Pancaitland.

I've found that it is quite feasible to combine a great day's cycling with some plant buying, as most plants are sufficiently robust to come home by pannier, as my photograph shows. It's quite fun seeing peoples reaction to the foliage wafting in the breeze behind me!

This is really useful as its more fun than mail order/or in a car, interesting as you get personal interaction with the grower (who are understandable "green" minded) and unusual as invariably **everybody else is there by car!**



My experience of *Shopping by Bike* is pretty banal. It usually boils down to strapping purchases that fit (not too big, not too fragile or too squishable) on to the rear luggage rack, using a couple of bungee cords (or is there another name for these?). Of course, after dark, what you can pile on is further limited to what doesn't obscure the rear light...

However, I do have a tip for SOMETHING I WOULD NOT RECOMMEND!

When I was in my twenties, I went over the handlebars. The reason? The fateful shopping bag dangling from the handlebars and getting caught in the front wheel. I was handicapped for 6 miserable weeks with broken ribs and a chipped elbow (all very painful). All my own fault. Worse, I did not learn from my mistake but repeated it 30 years later, this time collecting a gashed chin, bruised sternum, and a knee injury which took 18 months to heal (all very painful).. Now I have learnt my lesson, if I can't fit all my shopping on the rear rack or into a rucksack, and the surplus ends up on the handlebars, I walk, pushing my bike, even if there are a few miles to go.

So, my advice: DON'T TRY IT! It's not worth the (very painful) experience.

On a lighter note, it IS possible to carry a bed on a bicycle! I have seen it done, and have a photo to prove it. The only thing is, my photo won't be allowed in the competition as it wasn't taken in the Lothians... in fact, it took a plucky African in Uganda to attempt such a feat!

Shopping by bike usually means Morningside for me, and deciding whether to take rucsac or panniers. It means deciding which route to take from Colinton Mains: through the Braidburn Valley; or the former City Hospital, converted, like the old Infirmary in the city centre, into flats. It doesn't really matter: both are lovely, and traffic-free, and both then involve negotiating bad parking and buses and gradient and whatever else is on Morningside Road.

It means hoping there will be cycle parking spaces free outside Waitrose, and putting rucsac / panniers, helmet and water bottle into a trolley for convenience, which can mean the minor inconvenience of not using the basket-only checkouts - even though I try only to buy what would fit into a basket: the drag up towards the Braid Hills and Pentlands can drag more if I have a heavier load. It means getting to sit with my free beverage and paper in sight of my bike and feeling glad to live in south Edinburgh; bumping into friends rushing to get their messages before picking up the kids; remembering I didn't buy those nice lavender and lime infusion tea bags . . . going back and then also buying milk and beer.

It means deciding whether to wheel the bike down to the library in the hope of getting a cycle parking space there, or just walking over. It means going into just one artisan shop for a treat. It means realising you don't have time to do the charity shops today, and vowing to make a special trip over for them soon. It means passing Home Hardware on the way back and remembering you need varnish, and the times you ill-advisedly cycled with things like small items of flat-pack bungee-strapped to the rack, or plants poking out of the panniers. It means cycling back, being overtaken by people much older than you with small items of flat-pack, or plants, fixed to their racks. It means not having to call at Tesco on the way home, and knowing you've burned off just about enough calories to justify buying the artisan cake.

This is an account of an individual's experience, highlighting the mostly unconscious choices we make when shopping by bicycle; and how the ordinary can, when brought to such conscious attention, be extraordinary (and interesting and useful). It's not unusual in that it's the sort of thing many do on a daily basis, but it is novel for me as a fairly recent returner to cycling. I find the different experience of everyday terrain and activity when cycling, as opposed to walking, to be fascinating.

OTHER ENTRIES

[in random order to fit the pages]

Belhaven fruit farm near Dunbar! It proved a great day out for my 7 year old daughter. We cycled from Musselburgh town centre to the railway station, putting our bikes on the train to Dunbar. 20 minutes later we were in Dunbar and from the station there is a good off-road route following paths, tracks and minor roads past the primary school, through Lochend Woods, past Belhaven hospital and towards West Barns, from where the old Stenton Road (now blocked off to traffic) provided a peaceful and scenic ride up to the fruit farm itself. I'd say the journey took us about 45 minutes. We picked strawberries, had a spot of lunch and played in the farm's playpark. We followed a similar route back to Dunbar station.

So many day trip opportunities for families assume people have cars, so it's always great to discover those that can be easily and safely accessed on foot or by bike.



On the last Saturday before Christmas 2015 the weather was cold but dry so I joined some friends on a cycle to Musselburgh from the Meadows. It was a lovely cycle and the exercise and fresh sea breeze cleared my mind of work. On the return leg to the City I remembered (with horror) that I had few opportunities left to buy my sister and brother-in-law their gifts. A moment later, with relief, I recalled that a nearby outdoor sportswear retailer offered a discount to members of Cycling UK so I departed from my friends near Leith and went into the shop. It was easy to find a couple of tops that would be suitable presents. Then I decided to try on some hillwalking boots and soon found a comfortable pair.

At that point I remembered that I hadn't brought my bike panniers and, as the sales assistant bagged up my purchases, I realised that getting my haul of bargains home was going to prove difficult. In the end I found that balancing the bags on the bike and in my small rucksack was too precarious even for the Water of Leith Path so walked the 6 miles home.

My experience was a useful reminder to: go prepared with panniers when buying items; split the weight of purchases evenly between both panniers; the Water of Leith path is a nice way to shop in Leith without being exposed to car traffic and shopping by bike can save you money because your purchases are limited by the size of your panniers and rucksack!

Shopping by bike entails filling both panniers and a box on top with fresh fruit from the local market.

This is a useful task because riding a bike requires lots of bananas. Bit of a chicken and egg scenario really!



Shopping by bike you never have the infinite faff of trying to park a car.

No parking spaces that are impossible to fit into and--amongst other things--parking restrictions don't keep you from shopping at small non-chain supermarkets. I live off Gorgie Road and am blessed with a selection of supermarkets as well as Chinese, Polish, African, Halaal, Indian and Sri-Lankan food shops. All of these are equally accessible by bike, and the smaller shops tend to be cheaper than the supermarkets and have smaller queues.

I often avoid taking the car, simply because I find parking to be pointlessly difficult. I also enjoy not doing a big shop because I am limited by the size of my pannier and whatever else is inside it.

From where I live to the local Aldi there is a foot path/cycle path of about half a mile. It is the quickest and easiest way to walk or ride to the shops! Many new super markets are being build/refurbished in Edinburgh. Let encourage them to make off street lanes (old rail lines) for old people to get exercise and shopping. Few supermarkets provide reasonable bike racks either. We are still in the age of car shopping. We can move forward if we try!

Good exercise & quick shopping, especially for older/retired people of which there will rapidly be more.

CHECK OUT BIKE ROUTES TO YOUR SHOPS

More and more communities are connected every year to traffic-free or cycle lane-marked cycle routes which take you to supermarkets and other retail outlets. In the Eskbank/Bonnyrigg area alone, two supermarkets and Dalkeith and Bonnyrigg town centres are accessible from hundreds of homes via links to National Cycle Routes 1 and 196 which will be virtually traffic-free later this year, while the retail park at Dobbies can be reached using cycle lanes and shared-use pavements. All of these have bike parking. Look around your usual shops to see where there are cycle routes, buy a Spokes cycling map for your area, or call your local council's Cycling Officer and ask. Then tell your neighbours!

It will help to remove the perceived barrier that "cycling on the road is too dangerous" while introducing people to cycle routes they didn't know they had.

Never, ever carry your shopping in a bag slung over the handlebars.

Having ruined a load of fruit that got caught in the spokes of the front wheel, I can attest that the bag over the handlebars is not a good way to carry your shopping. I should have known: my dad had a scar on his chin from the time as a teenager when he went head over heels when the load slung over the handlebars got caught in the spokes. You might feel you can cycle safely with a bag hanging from the front, but it just doesn't work!

After shopping for a French loaf, thought it was easily carried strapped across the back rack but then sustained the unusual injury of grazing my inside thigh on the surprisingly rough crust of a rustic baguette while swing my leg over-- no end of mockery for ages after.

Strapping a rustic baguette across your back rack can be dangerous -- Mount with care when carrying an extra wide load!

A friend of mine who lives around the corner in Marchmont saw a tandem for sale in Broxburn. He wanted to go to look at it, and get it home if he liked it enough to buy it.

I already have a tandem, so we cycled out together on it (mostly on the canal towpath). He did decide to buy the tandem, so we then each rode home on the front of our respective tandems. We stopped for a celebratory beverage at the Bridge Inn in Ratho on the way back.