

Spokes Summer Competition 2022

Shopping by Bike

results & prizewinners

Competition description: www.spokes.org.uk/2022/08/spokescomp-shopping-by-bike

We asked: “Whether you’ve a great idea that would help other people, a challenge you’ve overcome, an experience you’d rather forget, or something you’d *not* recommend – if it’s about *Shopping by Bike*, we want to hear from you!! It needn’t be about equipment, though it could be. It might be an amusing incident, or how shopping by bike changed your life, or just a handy hint.”

Judging: This was done anonymously as far as possible, with only one of the five judges knowing the names or any details of the entrants. Judging was by four members of Spokes Resources Group and an external judge, Charlotte Otter, former Sustrans staffer and now government media officer. Judges independently scored each entry, and then discussed the scoring to determine a final agreed outcome.

Emerging themes from the entries

- Shopping by bike with kids
- Shopping by bike with a cargobike or trailer
- Shopping by bike without a cargobike or trailer is perfectly possible
- Handy hints for everyday shopping by bike
- Shopping for big or heavy items

First prize, Eve Boyle – Shopping by cargobike in Midlothian

Twenty months now without a car,
abandoned mid-pandemic
as cycling is rediscovered
then sold to upgrade the bike.

Now fitter
faster
but, curiously,
no lighter.
Or maybe not so curious, as
carbs
fats
sugars
are crunched through
(biscuit-shaped combos, chocolate-dipped, have
the best crunch)
to feed the furnace
that powers the legs
that turn the pedals
down to the supermarket
and back up to the larder.

Always back UP,
always INTO the south-west wind.
So the larder is quickly emptied.

But some things
(some bike parts too,
overpackaged in gloss-finished
cardboard)
are too big for panniers.
An Urban Arrow is the answer.
Elegant as a 50s Bugatti,
its silent motor powers up the hill
and out,
beyond the boundary.
Room and time for the garden
centre,
to fill up with plants and compost.

The staff admire,
question,
check for dog room,
take photos.

Then on to home.

Too long to zigzag through slalom gates on the
cyclepath,
So it must be the road.
No wider than other bikes
yet cars are wary and give up more of their sacred
space.
(This is a bonus).

And so on and up through the centre of town,
turning heads,
raising smiles,
a thing,
a novelty,
an elegant novelty!

Just a few years back,
such a bike was
a cranky curiosity in Edinburgh,
as it is still deep in Midlothian.
But change is upon us
and this is how shopping will soon be for many.

But it will always be back UP,
INTO the wind.



(With thanks to cargo Bike Movement for the loan)

Second prize, Sam Taylor (age 9) – Fruit picking at Craigie’s Farm

Usually we just walk to the shops but last year we went fruit picking in our cargo bike. It was lots of fun.



We started off getting in the cargo bike then we cycled up the road on the cycle lane very fast.

After 45 minutes of cycling we were there!



We spent a bit of time collecting the fruit

We spent even more time deciding how to arrange the boxes so that that didn't fall out. And then we started cycling back.

On the way home we had to hold on to the boxes and the fruit to stop them falling out and we had to try and not eat all of them!

And we made LOTS of jam... like LOTS!! And we're still eating the jam 1 YEAR later!!!



But we've eaten most of it by now

Now the only bad thing about it was how you get there... there were loads of cars and not that many cycle lanes.

So I think WE NEED MORE CYCLE LANES AND LESS CARS!



Third prize, Robyn Campbell – Shopping with kids by bike trailer

Although my husband and I have always been keen cyclists since we were students in Edinburgh, and now cycling commuters by necessity, we didn't know what that part of life would look like when kids arrived.

Now with two kids in tow (literally), I spent my most recent maternity leave doing the usual baby classes, park trips, shopping by bike. The shopping trips were made infinitely easier with our bike and trailer set up. Cycle to the shops with the kids; unhook the trailer, push it round the shops in its pram mode, loading the shopping as we go, amuse the cashiers as we balance eggs and yoghurt and bacon amongst the babies, and reattach to the bike again to cycle home.

The trailer-bike combo has seen shopping trips without the kids too, when maximum grocery space is needed, for example absolutely loaded up with snacks for our local toddler group, Wee Leithers!



Fourth prize, Kirsty Lewin – Getting food for cat Betty

1. I don't have a car. But I do have Betty. Betty, a small tabby cat, chooses to live inside and watch the starlings swing by from our top flat window. Betty is a cat with a conscience. Betty demands eco-friendly cat litter that mustn't be delivered in a truck. Betty knows that trucks are dangerous in narrow residential streets and that fossil fuels are destroying the climate. Betty also knows her preferred cat litter is not sold in our local high street. It is, however, regularly available in the Range on the National Cycle Network, or, failing that, a bit further on in the pet shop at Fort Kinnaird on the wrong side of a large busy roundabout.

2. Brunstane Road is currently closed to through traffic but open to bikes. The cycle up to the Range is thus pleasant, easy, and quick. Once there, I often wheel the bike into the shop, load the cat litter on, tie it down with bungee cords, wheel back to the check-out, pay up and cycle off. If they are out of stock, I sigh, grit my teeth, and head for Fort Kinnaird. This trip is more complicated, mainly because I have yet to find a safe route to avoid the heavy traffic. However, what Betty needs, Betty gets, and cycling safely through Fort Kinnaird always feels like a victory.

3. Cycling home with a 25 kilo bag of cat litter on board requires steady hands and reliable brakes, especially back down Brunstane Road. It's always wonderfully exhilarating, and the unusual cargo draws plenty of smiles from the crowds on the Prom.

I do most of my shopping locally on foot. But shopping by bike for the big stuff makes perfect sense. It's fast, it's convenient, it's invigorating and it's the right thing to do. Just ask Betty.



Fifth prize, Elaine Appleby – Tips for the weekly grocery shopping trip

1. Assemble shopping lists (mine and mum's) and both bank cards (in cycling jacket handy zip pocket).
2. Gather cotton shopping bags, bungees and rucksack.
3. Don't forget bike keys and £1 for the trolley (they don't let you push the bike round and put the shopping directly into the panniers...yet.)
4. Cycle the short back-street route then through the park and past the allotments (what's in bloom this week?)
5. Post plastic bread bags into recycling bin at the shop door.
6. Gather groceries (an easy task because mum always writes her list in the order the items are encountered as each aisle is traversed).
7. Have a chat with familiar shop staff about their gammy leg / their grandchildren / their day off yesterday.
8. Pay and load the panniers - this is the delicate part of the operation. Don't put all your plant milk and porridge oats in the same pannier. Carry the squishable items (strawberries don't like being shoogled) in the rucksack.
9. Use the bungee to attach toilet rolls or bags of pasta and rice (tied up in a cotton bag) on the top of the pannier rack.
10. Pedal home carefully and unpack. Discover the grooves in the cucumber where it was in contact with the can of tomatoes - still edible though.

Job done till next week.



Position

Entries in positions 6-15 [prizewinners]

**6
Rupert
Nash**

Going to supermarket with two kids can be a challenge, however you travel.

But in spring 2020 when baby was big enough, we got a bike trailer. This was a game changer: loads of space for shopping in the boot of the trailer and panniers if needed. The kids also enjoy being in the trailer - whatever the weather as it has a cover, unlike me!

One real advantage of going by bike, especially with the kids is the ability to stop on way. Parking the car adds too much bother and walking home with heavy bags you don't want to go out of your way, so we basically never did the incidental stops. But with the trailer we have freedom to stop wherever or take the long way.

Popular options for us now are the playground, by the Esk, and the cafe (especially if this means we can get pastries). Our eldest is now getting a bit big for the trailer but he's good enough on the bike to ride to the closest supermarket - freeing up more space for the days when you need to stock up!



Shopping by bike doesn't have to be dramatic or heroic...

**7
Jenny
Purcell**



...sometimes it's the easiest option!

Detailed hints for shopping by bike

For many people the thought of shopping by bike is dismissed because they “need” to do a big weekly shop. However if you can adjust your routine it is quite possible to do all shopping by bike, the occasional home delivery or using a bike trailer. I use a carry freedom Y large trailer but I will focus on a regular bike and panniers. If you can make time to shop more often you can make shopping by bike a feasible option.

Good quality pannier rack. Many racks have 25kg capacity, enough for a lot of shopping. Some will carry with 40kgs. Check the fittings are tight if you carry heavy loads regularly as losing a bolt or two is inconvenient and unsafe. I have carried a bulk bag of flour -16kg in one 20 litre pannier.

Large panniers. Good for bulky items e.g. 16 rolls of toilet paper or many loaves (see image below). Leaving the top open increases capacity even further. You can always use extra straps to hold the contents in place. Additionally the shoulder strap can be threaded through the top of the rack minimising swaying.



My pair are [Ortleib's - Back Roller plus](#) and have a capacity of 70 litres. That's huge. They can be reduced in size with side straps, so they don't flap about or catch the wind. They're expensive but a worthwhile investment especially if you can purchase through a bike to work scheme.

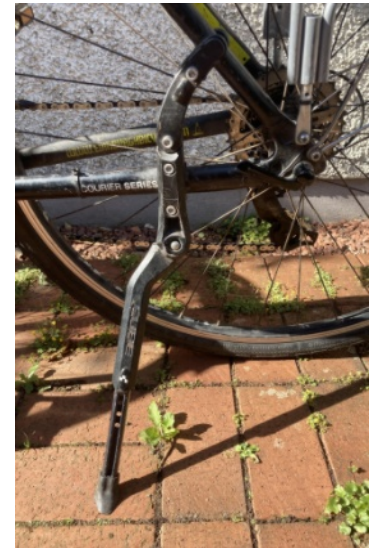
I often just use one pannier and find the handling is fine unless you have a really heavy load. Best to have two panniers if you have a lot of shopping.

Make sure you pack your shopping carefully. It is even more important on a bike because of vibrations from the road. Put your bananas on top and try to cinch the straps loosely enough to avoid bruising the fruit.

Attach a **Kickstand** to allow loading and unloading easily. Either chainstay mounted or two legged behind the bottom bracket. I used the [Cube Universal](#) that will fit most (24"-29" wheel) bikes.

Attach long items along the top tube strapped using toe straps. For example I have carried three scythes handles along the top tube with the blades safely in a pannier. Bamboo canes can also be successfully transported, up to 2.4m or 8ft.

Use a **foldable rucksack**. I use an Exped summit lite 25 litre that can carry 5kg. The rucksack can be popped inside your panniers. Often shopping is short distance, so for carrying light bulky items it's a good option. A rucksack can also be used for items that are vulnerable to road vibrations. I carried delicate soft fruit, mulberries, whereas in a pannier they can end up a mushy mess. There are other yet smaller options that can fit in a jersey pocket, but it's often wise to take bags larger than you think you need.



8
Mark
Jaekel

I love shopping by bike because:

- I find always a parking place;
- limited space in pannier bags prevents me from shopping unnecessary things;
- keeps me fit and good for the environment
- saves fuel for the car

My tips:

- belt bag for purse, phone, keys, so that you have those always at hand
- waterproof panniers for transporting shopping
- tea towels to wrap glass containers
- add insulating bag into a pannier bag to keep fridge items cool



9
Nora
Jaekel

What I do in the e-cargo bike is not quite shopping, but it proves an e-cargo bike is a fair match for a car boot and can get the biggest of shops home easily – astonishingly easily.

Since Feb 2022 I've been part of **Portobello Community Fridge**. It's a group of volunteers who organise to collect close to out-of-date food from various supermarkets in the local area on Fridays/ Saturday mornings to give it away at the 'Community Fridge' on Saturday between 10.30am to 11.30am.

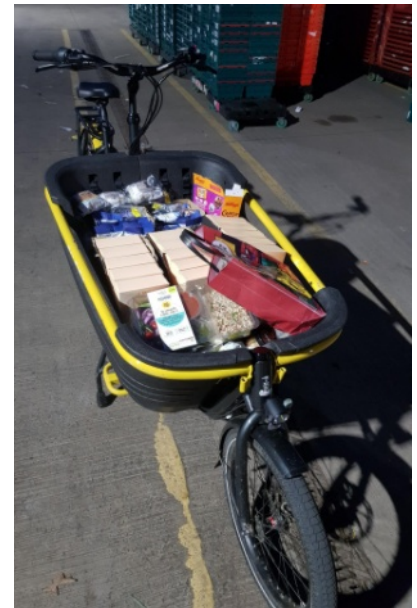
Every week it happens. Most weeks I volunteer. At first, I was all set to offer my car for collections and in deep dark winter it seemed unthinkable that I'd cycle to a big supermarket and cycle my collection ('my shopping') home. The car collection was politely accepted but it was quietly said that the team were 'trying to keep that route for bikes'.

'Oh!', I thought. Interesting.

I already commute fairly regularly by bike and use my bike to get most local places but I didn't do my food shopping that way. I either walked to local shops or took the car to slightly further away ones. But on those Friday night fridge collections there were other volunteers on these slightly odd-looking bikes. They called them e-cargo bikes. Soon enough I was joining them on my push bike, rather than the car, using a rucksack and later panniers to collect goods.

Then in May 2022, Porty Community Bike Library opened. They had a Raleigh e-cargo bike stored in a container in Tumbles car park that anyone could hire for free. It was booked each week for the Friday night Community Fridge collections. It was quite a beast and took a bit of getting used to – a bit like cycling a barge - but wow, when it got going it was a thing of beauty and power. I became a regular Friday night e-cargo bike collector, doing the Fort Kinnaird pick up.

Gliding down Brunstane Road North, with a wee gang of conspirator cyclists was joyful and that ride back to the fridge drop of point at the Baptist church hall, looking over the Forth as the sun set became a highlight in my week.



Later a different e-cargo bike became the library bike. This one was a trike – three wheels – called the XYZ. It was much easier to just get on and ride, it was practical – utility bike – I think is the term and such fun but much bumpier than the Raleigh.

Both bikes carried what would have been a car boot of food with ease as can be seen in the photos. The fact that these bikes could be hired for free was game-changing.

Portobello Community Energy have created a wonderful thing with this bike hire project <https://portycommunitybike.myturn.com> which has been so instrumental in the success of that other wonderful Portobello project, the community fridge. The fridge averages about 250kg of food collected and diverted from landfill each week. In four months, there have been over 340 'bums on seats' as part of the bike project.

Being part of both projects, I learned how easy it is to go 'shopping by bike'

**11
Wheeldon
family**

Here we are on the way home from the supermarket with half a week's worth of food shopping. John (3) is on the front seat and Esther (1) is on the back. We struggled carrying anything with this set up until recently as the rear child seat makes carrying panniers or a rucksack tricky, but we picked up the front pannier rack second hand from The Bike Station which means we can carry a good amount along with the kids now!

We used a trailer for some time while Esther was very young, but living in a flat with limited storage we found this setup more convenient.

We recently borrowed an e-cargo bike from Laid-Back Bikes which is a game changer, but this shows you don't need a lot or to spend much to do a family shop by bike!



**12
Yoav
Tzabar**

My entry is a photo of my bike - originally built for me in 1997 as a road bike with drop bars. However, over the years, it has done service as my touring bike and my winter training bike. However, a couple of years ago, I sold my car and needed a bike for every day use about town. Off came the drop bars to be replaced by straight bars and, as you can see, front and rear racks added with a box on the front rack. With the box and panniers on the back, I can now do the week's shopping with ease. It just goes to show that you don't need a purpose built cargo bike and that most bikes can be modified at low cost to one's needs.



**13
James
Lewis**

Picking up some timber for a cat ladder
I used my trailer and borrowed another
Easy peasy!



SW20 cargobike

I thought Spokes might like to hear about my recent experience using the Urban Arrow cargo bike that has been made available to my local community by SW20 and the Cargo Bike Movement and how that has made me change my mind about my next bike purchase.

I'm an older cyclist in my early 60s and I have a standard hybrid commuting bike that I used to use for travelling to work during the summer months, before I retired. I've been thinking about buying an ebike to ease me into my later years and hopefully allow me to cycle more often.

Borrowing the Urban Arrow has made me reconsider what I need rather than want as I get ready to fully commit to a different bike.

As most folk will know, Urban Arrow is one of the top names in domestic cargo bikes and basically consists of an ebike with a hyper extended frame on which sits a bathtub shaped cargo area that can accommodate a load, and/or two small children on a bench seat. I used the bike to take a load of garden waste to the Sighthill recycling centre, and then to pick up some tools at my son's flat in Newington.

On my way back along the Grange/Blackford quiet route, I stopped in Morningside to do some shopping. I was lucky enough to get a space on Morningside Road in one of the "loading only" bays and walk directly into the shops that I was visiting. It was brilliant.

The carrying capacity of the cargo bike is what made me start thinking a little harder about what I need going forward, because it easily swallowed up four bottles of wine and ten bottles of beer for a house party, without flinching. Nor did I flinch riding back to Craiglockhart with about 20kg of load on the bike, due to the assistance of the motor.

My normal bike shopping experience is restricted to stuffing a couple of items in the rucksack that I use to carry my bits and bobs, and I had plans to upgrade to panniers on my soon-to-be-bought ebike, but I've now changed my mind. Instead of a bike with some space for a few purchases, I'm now committed to one of those "Swiss Army Knife" type ebikes that will allow me to both pootle around town on various jaunts, and also carry a fair load of shopping, including more wine and beer, but perhaps even house-plants and a bag of compost, or a small piece of self assembly furniture. I'm already making plans for it, and imagining how easy it will be to park in town...



I've attached a photo of the haul from the wine shop, with my cycling rucksack for scale:)

**15
Pete
Roche**

Leisurely shopping trips

Until a year before the pandemic, I did my weekly shop at the Longstone supermarket either on foot or by bus. On receiving a pair of wonderfully enormous panniers as a birthday gift, I decided it would be easier to do the shop by bike.

Instead of putting up with heavy traffic on Murrayburn and Longstone Road, initially I took a more circuitous route through Hailes Quarry, the canal towpath and then across Redhall Park. This route offered a few moments of peace and quiet in a hectic weekend schedule. But when Covid arrived the canal became busier with pedestrians, runners and cyclists, taking their daily exercise. And anyway, no-one was terribly sure how dangerous proximity to an infected individual was. I don't have a spleen so I was being extra careful.

I tried cycling along Longstone Road a few times, but even with less traffic the parked cars made it a bit of a safety lottery. Even after the Spaces for People cycle lanes were installed it was still less than ideal because none of the lanes are continuous along the full length of the road. And anyway, I would miss those few moments of peace I now welcomed on my weekend shopping trips.

Thankfully by consulting my trusty Spokes Cycle Map I was able to work out a new safe route that avoided both busy roads and the crowded canal towpath. Firstly, I head up Dumbryden Drive, and into Hailes Quarry Park as I would have done to get onto the towpath. But, instead of turning right and cycling past the new Herb Garden installed by the local Friends of Hailes Quarry Park Group, I turn left and head across the park and up to the Longstone Street exit.

During the first winter of the lockdown parts of this path to Longstone Street became flooded and blanketed in a sheet of ice, which caused myself and several other cyclists to suffer painful accidents. But we have since persuaded the Council to raise the level of the path, so hopefully this problem will be avoided in future freezing weather.

After Longstone Street I wind my way through the back streets of Redhall, past Longstone Primary School, to a path with the intriguing name of Hawmuirside, named after the field where the school was built. This path leads down into Redhall Park. The area must have originally been a moor with Hawthorne scrub, but the path is now flanked with a patchwork of colourful flowers thanks to the local community. I exit the park via another beautifully named path – Kilncroftside - named after fields which stretched from Inglis Green to the south end of Redhall Park. Then, at the traffic lights at the end of Redhall Drive, the supermarket is in front of me.

The journey by road may only be ten minutes, but what I lose in terms of time is more than made up for on the more leisurely route by adding to my sense of well-being and equilibrium. How many other people can say they get to spend time in two of Edinburgh's wonderful parks on the way to the shops, arriving home refreshed and all set to take on the rest of the rest of the weekend's tasks? Both Parks have active 'Friends Groups' who build herb gardens, collect litter, plant trees and flowers, thus enhancing the enjoyment of all users, including cyclists on their ways to the shops.

RUNNERS UP, MAP WINNERS

[in random order]

Rosanna Rabaeijs

Here is an 'aerial' picture of my current day-to-day bike, which I use for shopping: I have always done my shopping by bike, so happy to share some of my own personal, possibly idiosyncratic, tips.

The box on the back is fixed to the pannier rack as I find this the easiest – I pack my shopping into a 'bag-for-life', which has a strong cardboard box, chosen to fit with the lid cut off, already in it to stop things getting squashed and bruised: it can be replaced easily if it gets battered or dirty. I have used many crates over the years and I find an old 'Safeway' box is one of the best, as it is sturdy and has ready-made holes in, ideal for letting water drain through and for tying it on. But of course it's plastic so not ideal, although this one I saw abandoned as rubbish on a kerb, recognised it, thought 'that's not rubbish!' and took it for re-use. I used to tie my crates on with old shoelaces, and will again in future, but currently it's with plastic cable ties (again sorry, planet).



The next crate I use, when this one's plastic gives out will probably be a wire basket, as they work well too. I have an elasticated cover over the crate: the current one is a rain-cover for a rucksack: it's the perfect size, and a good visible yellow, and is tied on so it doesn't get lost or forgotten.

On the handlebars I also have a front basket, and it is also tied down: I find the ones that can be removed tend to bounce about, especially on the setts, potholes and hills of Edinburgh. Attached on to the rim are many other useful things, such as extra shopping bags, extra lights, extra ties, an Allen key, an R and a carabiner clip for holding a supply of hair elastics, which I find can be very useful for improvised ties.

Laura Moss

I first started cycling when I lived in Japan - the university issued international students with a bike on arrival!

15 years later I still use my bike to go and buy all of the ingredients for sushi!



Top photo: Me in 2007 at Kyoto Seika University

Lower photo: Me and my partner in 2021 stopping for lunch after cycling to Musselburgh



David Wilson

Shopping for a family of four is a breeze, this bike swallows any load, and the trip is a ton of fun too!



Mark James

Not strictly shopping but I thought you'd be impressed that I drive/cycle a 7 seater!!



Yes, a trailer with 6 supermarket crates of seaweed at East Beach Dunbar.

Pippa stylishly dressed and an interesting choice of shopping container on the rear of her regular bike.

Katharine Wake

The positives and pitfalls of shopping by bike – summed up in three limericks:

On the plus side...

I do all my shopping by bike
And have found nice wee shops that I like
It's convenient and quick
Eco-friendly and slick
And proof against fuel costs spike.

And some more benefits ...

To bike to the shops is a pleasure,
I discover new gems every day.
It's quick and it's green,
Stop for cake in between!
It combines fitness, business and leisure

And lastly, a cautionary tale...

When shopping by bike, young and green
I bought more than I had foreseen,
With pannier well stuffed
I bounced over a tuft
And the yoghurt fell out – what a scene!

Tracy Griffen

I bought a non-powered cargo bike second-hand earlier this year, and love it!

Fellow Spokes member Kirsty Lewin reposted the Gumtree advert and I couldn't resist the bright red Bakfiets bike. However impractical a non-powered cargo bike is in a hilly city. Weirdly I knew the person selling it, and was very happy to adopt their pre-loved family bike (that he'd had specially imported from the Netherlands).

I have discovered not only can I take my fitness studio assistant (Coco the fitness pug) out in it, but we can go plant shopping as well! As a non-car driver, I've never had an easy way to buy plants, but now I do. And by growing more plants, it's helpful to the environment. I have also discovered the leg strength benefits of having no e-assist, and recommend it to anyone who wants to strengthen their knees whilst transporting valuables.

I've been a Spokes member for around 20 years, and love cycling round Edinburgh. I was the first Personal Trainer in Edinburgh to build a business cycling to clients (since 2005) and do much of my shopping by bike. Coco has travelled on my bike in a basket (as a puppy), graduating to a bike trailer ages 2 to 8 years (that she hated), and now to Cocomobile #3, the Bakfiets cargo. We were even in Leith Festival pageant this year!

I've attached a photo of Cocomobile #3 (Bakfiets cargo) and one of puppy Coco ready for Pedal on Parliament.

A huge thanks to Spokes, who campaign for better cycling conditions for Edinburgh - living and working in the middle of the ongoing tramworks, I'd be scuppered without my bike



Hazel Darwin-Clements

Cycling to Morrisons

I just need to pop to the shops
But I don't have a metal box
To shield me from the sights and sounds
I breathe quick, legs go round and round

Glass shards catch the late daylight
Wee critters scuffle out my sight
A man with headphones and a can
A broken mamma wheels a pram

The brambles lit in orange glow
The sky tonight a colour show
The smell of someone else's tea
There's Hazel nuts all o'er that tree

Remember to buy cooking oil
Wheels on tarmac, roots and soil
Stop. Look at that! A brazen fox
You don't get that in a steel box.



Daniel James-Watling

This photo makes our heart sing

Our 3 year old has been learning to ride her bike. She now loves to whizz her way to the shops and nursery

As a special treat she chose her absolute favourite, Cuckoo's Bakery on Dundas Street. She even shared a bit of her cupcake!



Nigel Mead

Ideas for shopping by bike

1) to minimise car journeys to the recycling banks, offer a weekly/monthly pickup of small items from households to be taken by cargo bike to the recycling centre

- collection from households on particular day in month
- for a small fee
- I would anticipate more small items (light bulbs, toaster etc.) recycled rather than go to black bin /landfill.
- Allow more people to see the usefulness of cargo bikes
- Reduce pollution and co2 emissions.
- Generate income for future cargo bikes etc.

2) similar to collecting food from supermarkets and delivered by cargo bike to food banks. Extend scheme to recycle old school uniform from collection point to be delivered to appropriate charities.

I hope that these ideas are useful.

Sanne Dijkstra-Downie

I remember clearly that this photo was taken the very first time I took both my kids (then 4 and 7) to the 'big supermarket' on their bikes.

It was taken in September 2019, after a difficult year during which my eldest couldn't ride a bike for medical reasons, so to me this photo is special because it's about a little bit of normality returning to our family.

True to type, it also shows my youngest speedily stealing snacks while I was unlocking the bikes :-)



Mike Armstrong

I'm attaching a couple of pictures of my partner Fiona's Mango town bike which I borrowed (seat raised by several centimetres) to collect a vacuum cleaner I bought from Screwfix at Murrayfield.

Strapping it to the rear rack was straightforward and avoided the use of our car for delivering a heavy and bulky item home to Blackhall.

I might just have to add a similar bike to my own fleet.

Bikes rule, cars are not as necessary as so many people claim!



John Robson

It is quite simple really but the most radical investment I've made to help me shop by bike was a kick stand and frame lock.

After seeing the cycle culture in the Netherlands first hand I realised struggling to find suitable street furniture to balance and secure a cycle to wasn't the way to make daily shopping easier.

Instead a quick shopping stop can be eased by using the kick stand and frame lock. Parking can also be closer to the store door and paranoia about theft is yet to be warranted (touch wood).

These are ubiquitous elements of any Dutch cycle and it makes sense if we want to be more Dutch, we should start to use them more here.



Leigh Chorlton

On Saturday mornings my partner and I would meet at the Edinburgh Farmers Market to get food for the week, though for the last 6 months I've been getting the shopping for us both. Kat hasn't been well, and with coursework to on top of feeling ill, they just couldn't get there.

Using my bike with panniers has been the best way of getting across the city. It makes going to the market a pleasure. I love the freedom, letting the bike carry the weight which I would struggle to carry otherwise. For me cycling is the best stress-free way of getting around.

I put my shopping in one pannier and Kat's in the other, and drop Kat's food off at theirs on my way home.

Alistair Armitage

Winter in Edinburgh, and it gets dark early. I worry about the batteries in my bike lights. When did I last put a new set in? Off to the Gyle, but will the lights last for the journey back?

I start to muse and arrive at my competition entry (with apologies to Dylan Thomas):

Do not go shopping into that good night,
bike lights should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their LEDs had forked no lightning they
Do not go shopping into that good night.

Good men, their panniers full, crying how bright
Their reflectors might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Cyclists who toured with the the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go shopping into that good night.

Men, at the checkout, who see with blinding sight
Front lights could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, the batteries in my rear light,
Bless me by lasting until I am home, I pray.
Do not go shopping into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Martha Koerner

I love my bike to go shopping and I particularly love its handy basket, in which I've transported all kinds of purchases.



Gareth Morgan

Lots of people in Dunbar use bikes, but relatively few seem to use them for their main weekly shop.

However, I live about 1 mile from Asda so it's a bit of a pain to walk (especially if buying more than a few bits) but also wasteful to use a car.

So most weekends I hook up my "Mule" trailer to a very basic touring bike, head to Asda and then back with a good load. Not just light things like loo rolls or boxes of cereal - I find it's OK if I have 6-8 bottles of wine and some large 2litre bottles of soft drinks. (Officially the Mule has a 25kg limit, but I don't carry scales to check!)

The neighbours seem impressed when they see me! But why is shopping like this seen as unusual. Even if it's raining a bit, the Mule has a cover.

However, it is frustrating that Asda installed a nice new covered bike area less than 2 years ago but the spaces are not long enough for bikes with trailers. So I have to leave the trailer sticking out.

Sarah Leslie

My top tip for cycling by bike is to maximise the bungee cord capabilities paired with a pannier rack and use lights well.

This helped me to transport a handmade stool from Portobello's tool workshop to my flat in Tollcross!

