

we own and all their details like make, model, size, cost and all that. Even that can be a bit of a problem – for Naresh that is – he’s the one who has to enter all the details about the bikes that the boss buys in and that can be really tedious.

SD: Well, I’m sure we can improve on that. So tell me, if a customer hires more than one bike, how do you record that?

Annie: Well, you can see this card only has details for this particular bike, so if a customer is hiring three bikes I have to put the details on three separate cards, including writing out their name and address three times. We have to do it like that because sometimes people hire more than one bike, but for different times. For example, we get families on holiday who hire bikes for the children for the whole week, but maybe just a couple of days for the parents. When people do want a number of bikes it’s a bit of a pain looking out all the cards and filling in the same customer details on each one, not to mention working out what it all costs. We once had a customer who hired 20 bikes for his daughter’s birthday party, which took me ages. That was a bit of a one-off though; we do get requests for parties and events, but it’s generally the special stuff that they want.

SD: Special stuff?

Annie: Sorry, I should have told you about that. We have some novelty items that Mike (he’s the boss) has picked up at auctions, like a couple of genuine working penny farthing cycles. Those are very popular for period style photos and charity events. People tend to notice them, so they’re a really good advertisement for us as well. Last year we had a local couple who hired one of our old tandems for their wedding and we got loads of publicity from that.

SD: Presumably hiring those out is rather more complicated.

Annie: Oh yes, we have to write on the card extra details about our special bikes, such as their age, value and restrictions on what they can be hired for.

SD: OK, so just to get back to the actual hire procedures. You fill in the details on the card, the customer pays and you give them a receipt.