

Interview

SD: ...so could you tell me what happens typically when someone wants to hire a bike? Just talk me through it bit by bit.

Annie: OK, well say someone comes in and says they want to hire a bike for that afternoon, so I ask them if they know what sort they want – it's always easier in that case. Then, when I've got an idea of what they're looking for, I get Naresh or one of the other mechanics to come and suggest a couple of bikes that might suit.

SD: And is the customer always happy with that?

Annie: Yes, usually they go with whatever Naresh says. He's the head mechanic and he's pretty clued up about bikes. We hardly ever get any of them coming back and complaining after the ride.

SD: So what's next?

Annie: I get the bike's number – that's stencilled onto the bike – and then I use that to look up the bike card. There's a card for each bike and we keep them under the counter in this box.

SD: Ok, and what order do you keep them in?

Annie: We keep them in the order of the bike numbers – it's the only way really – though it does cause problems with queries. For example, the other day I had a man on the phone wanting to know if we had two bikes, a Raleigh Pioneer for him and a Dawes Galaxy for his partner, and how much it would cost for three day's hire. First of all I had to look on the shop floor to see if we'd got the right bikes, then I had to search through all the cards and then I had to work out how much it was going to cost him. He was very patient, but that sort of thing takes ages. Anyway, I'll show you one of the cards.¹

SD: Thanks. Can you tell me – are the hire charge and the deposit the same for all the bikes?

1. The bike card is shown in (see also Figure A.2 on Page 296) (see also Figure 2.2 on Page 25) Example bike card from the current Wheels system.