

Taking care of your bike can save you cash

Out driving in the Lothians today, in town and country, and one could not miss lots of cyclists, young and old, encouraged by the sight of the watery, winter sun. Yes, it was cold, air 7C but with a wind chill factor, but it was manageable.

However, the roads are salty and the recent rain as covered verges, particularly in the country, with debris. Off-road cycle paths are also muddy and your bike, whether bought during the Festive period or at another time, takes a battering.

So, what do you do to protect your investment? Jonny McBain, a former mountain bike champion, and an experienced retailer, with 40 years of experience, provides some hints and tips about what to do and what not to do in part one of a mini series.

Jonny owns Pedal Power, a busy shop in West Calder, and he stressed that what you should not do when you come back from a cycle ride is put the bike away and leave it with salt and mud deposits on the bike.

He said: "If you want your bike to last a little longer then there are various things you can do. I always recommend taking the worst of the mud and the salty water off with a hose, sponge and warm water, but that can be time consuming.

“Taking the worst of the mud off first would be your bare minimum. If you don’t do it when you come back then mud and stuff will dry on the bike and makes it harder to remove.

“Remember, with a simple hose you can take around 90 per cent of that mud off.”

There are hundreds of bike cleaning products on the market and that can be confusing for a novice cyclist and Jonny said: “There are general bike cleaners, and there are many available, and it is normally a simple task to put them on and they agitate the mud, making it easier to remove.

“Going down the lines of oil and degreasers can be a bit trickier. If you put too much degreaser on then that can do more damage than good. These products do work, but your local bike shop should always be there to advise.”

When out, it is important, he added, to always carry a spare tube if your bike tyre uses an inner tube. Jonny said: “Punctures can happen at the furthest point away from your home and when it is raining and cold.

“A pump, a tube, a puncture repair kit and a multi tool should be with you in a saddle bag. That is the norm. Keep the saddle bag attached to your bike so you never leave it at home.”

PICTURE: Jonny McBain in his busy shop in West Calder. Picture by ***Nigel Duncan***