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Tim Saunders and family

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## CYCLING IN HAMPSHIRE

I've always loved cycling but since my university days have found the roads have got busier and driving standards have declined. Because we don't want to ride on the roads it means we have to drive the bikes to the start of the route. I wasn't even sure whether my ageing Ford Fiesta would be able to transport five bikes. But it can. So, on my trusty roof rack I have bike bars that allow me to carry two full size adult bikes on the roof. I then have a carrier that I fit on the boot that will carry up to three full size adult bikes.

We venture to Wickham, Hampshire where there is a popular car park but we find a space and unload. I fit my Akaso Brave 7 LE waterproof camera to my bike's handlebars, which act as a steady tripod for me to take photo and video by pressing the photo or video buttons on the remote wrist strap. Here Hampshire County Council has a cycle and walking trail, which goes through the Forest of Bere and into the South Downs. Very picturesque but little Henry (4) is always worrying about going along this route after his last encounter with a large dog that jumped up at him when we were walking. Despite my shouting at the dog and the owners, they couldn't care less and continued on their way, the dog off its lead. We noticed that a lot of dog walkers do this along the way, which is off putting for young families. I put this to Hampshire County Council and am told: "In areas we have marked as safe to let dogs off the lead, such as the Meon Valley Trail through Wickham, dog-owners are still responsible for ensuring their dog does not intimidate other path users. We also hope that the respect and care shown by most dog-walkers will be reciprocated with tolerance and understanding from other path users." Not good enough when a little boy has been scared out of his wits. On other occasions my wife has suffered a large dog jumping up at her along this same route. So we go along it with a little trepidation but soon realise that dog

owners and their dogs have a respect for bicycles that they do not seem to display for those of us on two feet. Interesting sociological exercise. Henry is still timid and veers into a hedge when he sees the first dog off its lead but soon grows in confidence as most dog owners wait for us to pass and we all have a thoroughly enjoyable bike ride.

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