

[Set Sunday free](#) [1]

Written by [Dr Eamonn Butler](#) [2] | Saturday 30 March 2013

Easter in Britain is one of the busiest shopping days of the year, with garden centres and DIY stores in particular full of people stimulated by the spring weather ? well, when we are not having an Arctic spell ? to bring a bit of a new look into their homes and gardens.

But larger stores, like those same garden centres and DIY stores, will be able to open only six hours on Easter Sunday ? like every Sunday. Convenience stores can stay open longer, but retail premises larger than 280 square metres are allowed only six hours.

That alone should make us question the Sunday trading hours. It is a completely arbitrary number: why not 250 or 300 or 350 square metres? Laws should apply to everyone, or to nobody.

Since limited Sunday trading was introduced, Sunday has become an important shopping day. It gives families in particular a little more time at the weekend for those large purchases that they want to make together. It used to be hard to do that and get in the weekend food shopping at the same time. It has actually made things more relaxed.

Remember too that other important shopping days often fall on a Sunday ? Christmas Eve and Boxing Day, for example. Retailers right now could really use the boost of a proper day's trading at these times, especially those who are losing trade to online alternatives.

The Sunday trading laws were relaxed for the Olympics and the world did not come to an end. Subject to reasonable planning restrictions to prevent local nuisance, we should relax them entirely. Why should the government decide whether people can and cannot shop, or can and cannot open for business?

The law states that employees can refuse to work on a Sunday without fear of retribution. That should really apply to other days too ? not everyone has Sunday as their religious day of rest. And of course, nobody has to shop, or open their shop, on Sunday if they do not want to. Why should those who do not want to be able to force the rest of us to comply with their choices?

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