

SO IT GOES

BY JASON LOVE



On weekends when normal people are playing football or mowing the lawn, I'm at The Shoe Outlet going nuts. "Oh, these are comfy. Give me two pairs in case one breaks down."

Ten years ago - I remember clearly - I stood outside the fitting room at Debenhams wearing a new bomber jacket. I turned to get an opinion on the matter and found a witch. I know she was witch because her words haunt me to this day:

"Forget the jacket; you should worry about your shoes."

I didn't listen to her because, well, I don't listen to anyone, but her words must have stuck: I have been on a shoe-buying binge ever since. Black shoes, brown shoes, blue shoes, white. Oxford, brogues, trainers, hiking boots.

At last count, I owned 62 pairs of shoes and continue to march on Imelda's record. I only have two feet, right? Seven days in a week. 62 pairs ought to cut it.

No way.

Every shoe has its own personality - nuances in colour, temper, feng shui. If I'm feeling auburn sassy, I can't wear shoes that say chestnut bold. I express myself accurately, artistically, and above all, shoeefully.



And the shoes pile ever-higher. It would be okay if I could part with some, but I cannot. My hands won't do it. There were those Chelsea boots that went into, came out of, and returned to style in the time I've owned them. I held them by the fray over the recycling but couldn't let go. What if someone has a retro party?

My footwear fills the wardrobe floor, five shelves, and two Amazing Shoe Organisers. In fact, I recently reached a dilemma: either I purge the shoes that I haven't worn for three government terms or I start removing clothes...

I started with my shirts since I only need a few. If I want a shirt to say something novel, I'll just change my shoes. Voila. Five cubic feet of free wardrobe space.

I moved on to the trousers and found that one pair of jeans suffices for a simple, low-maintenance man like myself. I cut two pairs into shorts and sold a third on E-bay to some poor chap who fell for that "like new" thing.

Because I am down to my last few outfits, I no longer wear clothes at home. I can't risk dirtying them. I'm naked even as I write this. Well, except for my slippers.

The question is, "How many shoes is enough?" Will I need to build a shoe wing onto my home? Perhaps a shrink can help me detach from the shoes I don't wear anymore. Or the ones I bought but never wore in the first place. I know what will happen: I'll start having those barefoot nightmares again.

It is particularly embarrassing because men aren't supposed to have a shoe thing. At least they don't know about my panty problem. Sorry, was that out loud?

As it stands, I am going to keep all my shoes because, you know, they're paid for and they already fit and everything. Maybe I'll always be one pair of shoes away from happiness. I guess it could be worse: I could have a wardrobe full of bomber jackets.