

# GROUPTEST

CTC CYCLING DEVPT. OFFICER **GAVIN WOOD** REVIEWS

## Cargo trailers

A trailer is the most economical option for carrying bigger loads by bike. CTC Cycling Development Officer **Gavin Wood** tried four

**WHILE 1-IN-5** journeys in the UK are household shopping trips, less than 1-in-100 of these journeys is made by bike. Partly that's a reflection of cycling levels in the UK; partly it's a bike's lower carrying capacity – even with panniers.

A cargo trailer is an inexpensive way to carry larger loads and bigger individual items by bike. With payload capacities ranging from a modest 25kg through to almost 100kg, most will carry a trolley

full of groceries – or a family-sized camping load.

A trailer can be attached to almost any bike. You don't need a sturdy tourer equipped with luggage racks and an extra-strong rear wheel. But you'll still need low gears to haul the load, which should be evenly distributed for stability, as well as strong brakes to stop it. And unless the trailer has its own brakes, it's unwise to tow more than 60kg – reduced to 30kg if the weight is below the hitch.

### 1 One wheel or two?

Most trailers attach on or near the rear axle. One-wheel trailers usually fix on both sides and pivot about the axle, with a steering pivot behind the bike's rear wheel. Two-wheel trailers usually fix only on the left, with ball or other three-way joint and an offset drawbar. Trailers that attach to the seatpost or rear carrier can double as a handcart, but beware that a heavy load, lower than the hitch, will under-run and tip up the bike when you brake

### 2 Hitch

Trailers attach at the rear axle, or via a clamp on either the chainstay or seatpost. Single-wheeled trailers usually fix to both sides of the rear axle and only pivot vertically. Two-wheeled versions that fix to the lefthand chainstay or axle require some flexibility in the attachment to allow the bike to corner and the trailer to track. Some trailers have a safety strap to prevent the trailer detaching by accident.

### 3 Towing bike

If you live in a hilly area or plan to pull big loads, you'll want good brakes and low gears on the towing bike. Full-length mudguards will prevent your trailer and its cargo getting dirtier and wetter than it needs to. If your bike has an unusual setup, such as drum brakes or hub gears, it is worth checking with the manufacturer that the trailer's coupling mechanism is compatible. I used a light touring bike with a compact road groupset and had no problems with loads of up to 30kg.

### 4 Visibility

Like bicycles, trailers are subject to lighting regulations. Any trailer you are towing must be lit between the hours of sunset and sunrise. Trailers require a red rear lamp and a rear reflector. Some manufacturers also supply a safety flag, which helps to provide a little extra visibility for you and your trailer in daylight.



CYCLE  
LOGISTICS

CTC has a particular interest in trailers and freight cycling due to its involvement in the EU-funded Cycle Logistics project. This project aims to get more goods and services delivered by bicycle, both on a commercial level, increasing business-to-customer deliveries, and by individuals. A small percentage shift from car to bike for some of these journeys would have a large impact on busy urban roads. If you have found this group the most useful, or even bought a trailer as a result, please email [gavin.wood@ctc.org.uk](mailto:gavin.wood@ctc.org.uk)

**BURLEY TRAVOY £299.99**

Despite weighing a shade under 4.5kg, the Burley Travoy is still capable of carrying up to 25kg. The Travoy is easy to assemble: twist the two handles and the trailer snaps into shape, then you click the two 12-inch push-fit wheels into place. It comes with a robust, waterproof bag that clips to the frame and is capable of carrying a full load of shopping; the handle is perfect for pulling the trailer around off the bike. There is also an upper bag available (£80) that is tailor-made to carry your laptop and other office essentials. The trailer fixes to your bike via a seatpost mounted hitch and locks into place once seated correctly. It's suitable for seatposts up to 31.6mm and you can buy spare hitches for your other bikes. When loaded, the trailer tracks the bike nicely, and its relatively narrow profile of 51cm makes it suitable for a range of duties. [extrauk.co.uk](http://extrauk.co.uk)

*A lighter-duty trailer clearly designed for commuters and shoppers*

**CARRY FREEDOM Y-FRAME LARGE £240**

This 7kg trailer can carry a staggering 90kg. (But without that weight holding down its back wheel, can your bike stop it?) The weight is spread over a wide, solid plywood flatbed that is covered with a non-slip surface. This sits on top of the well-built steel Y-frame that gives the trailer its name. At its widest point the trailer is 72cm. The Carry Freedom is easily assembled and the 20-inch wheels are push-fit. The flatbed has four holes, through which you can thread the two supplied Velcro straps for securing loads of various shapes and sizes, useful for awkwardly shaped objects. The hitch arm can be mounted on either side of the trailer and couples using your rear wheel's quick release or bolt. A flexible nylon insert lets the trailer track your bike without feeling like it is bumping it. Carry Freedom also supply a variety of boxes for the flatbed. [carryfreedom.com](http://carryfreedom.com)

*Simple and sturdy, the Y-frame is a supremely versatile trailer*

**CROOZER CARGO £150**

The 16-inch wheeled Croozer Cargo is the heaviest trailer here, weighing 11.4kg and offering a maximum payload of 30kg. Overall width is 52cm. Assembly of the trailer is tool free and you can quickly disassemble it for storage. The steel frame feels solid, the plastic flatbed storage area slightly delicate. Fabric sides and a detachable weatherproof cover keep the load dry and secure. It couples via a bracket that fits to the rear axle, with a safety strap. The coupling feels very secure. The hitch arm itself is angled and spring loaded. The trailer tracks nicely and doesn't noticeably jolt or jerk around; even fully loaded the handling isn't adversely affected. The hitch arm can be moved to convert the trailer into a hand cart.

[amba-marketing.com](http://amba-marketing.com)

*Heavy for its payload, but ideal for use as a shopping trailer*

**MADISON ADVENTURE CT1 £249.99**

The Madison Adventure weighs 8kg and has a maximum payload of 35kg. The BOB Yak style single wheel design gives the trailer a slim width of 42cm. The main frame is constructed from steel and seems robust, and the waterproof bag feels of good quality and is large enough to accommodate the dismantled trailer. The trailer hitches to the special quick release skewer supplied. The two coupling arms have dropouts that hook over the skewer and these are locked into place with a satisfyingly audible (and reassuring) click. There is also a safety flag. The trailer tracks the bike nicely, feels stable when cornering, and there is no shifting of the load to disturb the balance of the bike. [madison.co.uk](http://madison.co.uk)

*Suitable for shopping and a great touring trailer as well*