

Pre Christmas load carrying. Can't fit it in the car? Then take the bike!

It's been a crazy few days before Christmas – lots of things needed shifting in a short space of time. It all started with a friend of mine, who I'm going to holiday with in Otago later in the year. He got a great bargain on trade me – two double glazed windows perfect for doing up his older house to survive the Otago winter. They windows were, however, located in the northern suburbs of Christchurch, measured 1.3x1.5 m, and weighed in at over 40kg each. Could I do him a favour and pick them up??? I couldn't fit them in the back of my people mover car, so the obvious solution was to take my bike instead. Early Sunday morning when the traffic was quiet, I hooked up my home made three wheel trailer, fitted an old weatherboard or two for supports, chopped up some old foam for padding, and rode the 7km from my place in central city to Burwood.

It's always entertaining watching people's faces when you say you're going to carry some awkward load on your bike, and this certainly got a good reaction. The journey back with windows strapped onto the trailer was enjoyable, even if it was not the fastest journey I've ever made, and I avoided the quiet back roads with traffic calming judder bars. The few cars I saw, gave me an impressive amount of room when overtaking , and I even got a friendly wave from a waiting car at the two lane QEII roundabout. It all went smoothly and I arrived safely back home with the double glazing well intact. I have, however, declined the opportunity to cycle them from Christchurch to Otago.



Steven picking up the 2 double glazed windows



Windows safely back home

Later that day I needed to pick up some Oamaru stone to be used in a camping activity between Christmas and New Year. It was from an artist with some spare blocks of stone who lived about 6km away in the south of Christchurch, and this time the perfect vehicle for the job was the home made 'Tadpole' – a three wheeler with a big bin on the front. I had to decline the generous offer from the artists husband to take the stone for me in his car, and we loaded 120kg of stone into the bin. I got the impression they were expecting to see the wheels explode with each block we placed in, but it handled the weight very well and I plodded all the way back to my place quite happily.



120kg of Oamaru stone loaded in the Tadpole.

I made a second trip the next day for the remaining 140kg of stone, then I needed to stock up on some more aluminium for a bike trailer workshop I had planned with DOC in Arthurs Pass. I usually get the 5m lengths cut into appropriate sized pieces which makes it easier to carry on one of my standard bike trailers, however cutting charges have been going up, so I decided to take the full 5m lengths on my new design of kayak trailer instead. The trailer is strapped onto the lengths of aluminium towards the rear, and the front end strapped to the pannier rack of the bike. The straps provide enough flex for all turning manoeuvres. In hindsight it would have been better to have fitted a piece of wood to the pannier rack that extends behind the rack. The tube can then be suspended underneath the wood and still clear the back wheel. The aluminium weighed 33.11 kg and I needed to pick up a 25 kg 4yr old on the way home so she got to sit on the home made front seat, which is a bike seat hose clamped to the top bar with footrest on the bottom bar. I was a little nervous about passing lots of stagnant cars while I was cruising down the cycle lanes on the busy Armagh Street, just in case one didn't notice my extended load and pulled over into it, but fortunately there were no incidents and again arrived happily back home.



Child and 5m lengths of aluminium for more bike trailers.

Then to round off the three days of odd-load carrying exercises I picked up a set of skis (no major drama) and loaded the Tadpole up with the last 6 months of accumulated scrap metal that had been causing some marital tension for a while. There was some roofing off-cuts from the latest bike shed, a few old bits of furniture and many dead bikes left over from the free bike maintenance workshops we run in Linwood. The useful parts have been removed and will be used for fixing up other bikes at the next workshop on February 13th. The weight of scrap metal was only 30kg but rather awkwardly shaped.

The total weight of awkward loads over the three days was well over 400 kg. If you're in Christchurch feel free to borrow a vehicle for your own load carrying needs, or get in touch to discuss how to build your own. Email steve@cycletrailers.co.nz 021 0619296



Scrap metal off to be recycled