



Photos by Patrick Field

● 8FREIGHT

BIKE TEST

CARGO BIKES

For shorter journeys, they're a practical alternative to a car for kids or cargo. Cycle trainer *Patrick Field* tests an 8Freight and a Bullitt

BICYCLES ARE ideal for personal transport but have limited carrying capacity. If you need to move bulky household supplies, building materials, or gardening tools, or want to transport children, there's a point at which a bicycle becomes impractical. Adding a trailer works and is relatively cheap. But for regular load-carrying, you can't beat a cargo cycle.

These two cargo bikes are light and nimble enough to provide enjoyable, local transport, with the option of spontaneously transporting heavy, awkward loads. Drop off the kids on your way to work, pick-up a weekly shop on the way home, and still enjoy your commute. Both bikes have aluminium frames whose carrying capacity isn't bolted on; it's part of their structures. They're not retro but modern: urban utility bikes, if you like, or 'sports cargo' bikes.

LOADING

The first choice to make with a freight bike, and the most obvious difference between the 8Freight and the Bullitt, is the location of the load. The 8Freight, designed by Mike

Burrows, has been around for ten years, manufactured initially in small batches by the man himself. The current version, assessed here, is basically the same machine but mass-produced in Taiwan.

Mike has lots of experience of long drivechains from building recumbents. He opts for a standard handlebar-and-fork steering arrangement, puts the load behind the rider, and solves the problem of transmitting power to back wheel with a nylon pulley. This diverts the triple-length chain's pulling run down under the load tray and stops the returning run from flapping.

The Bullitt, also manufactured in Taiwan, for Copenhagen-based Larry vs Harry, dates from 2008. It follows a classic 'Long John' pattern: the cargo deck sits ahead of the rider and a rod beneath links a steerer-tube turned by the handlebar to the fork.

The rider of an 8Freight has a conventional view forwards over the handlebar, which is directly connected by a steep head-tube to a BMX-size front wheel. It's deftly manoeuvrable. The handlebar is the widest point, which helps when judging



● (Above) The 8Freight's hubs are supported on one side only. Puncture repairs are easy, upgrades less so
(Below) The rear rack makes it easier to secure oversize loads that overhang the main luggage platform

