

Putting a skiff on the single skiff road trailer

The boat on her trolley can be slid with a bit of encouragement on to the road trailer from behind:

Lift the front of the trolley up on to the rear crossmember of the trailer and roll the trolley forward till the stern of the boat grounds. At this stage the trailer winch can be used. Unwind the strap and take a turn around the upright of the trolley before hooking in to the U bolt on the stem. You can now wind the trolley forward; its wheels come off the ground because the stern has grounded.

As the trolley comes on to the trailer it needs to be kept central or it will slide off to one side. At the end of the process be careful to keep the trolley axles from attacking the trailer mudguards. The trolley docks against two studs welded to the trailer axle, and two stops at the front which bear against plastic strips on the side of the trolley. When the trolley is all the way forward, unhook the winch strap and take it round the stem head and back to the crossbar on the winch, then tighten it a little.

Take the boat's bow rope and use it to go under the trailer and back up to the stem head several wraps and then lash it tight. Take the ratchet strap right around the boat and trailer just forward of the mudguards. The hooks on the ends hook together just inside the gunwale and then the ratchet mechanism and the hooks are safely not chafing the hull, but suspended between the gunwales. Make it tight but not bar tight.

The oars need to be securely tied to the seats so they do not rattle about and chafe. Slide the cushions across so the oars rest on them. The rudder needs lashing down or taking in the towing vehicle. The spare tyre is in the club container, and the number lock has the same combination as the key safe on the trolley, ask someone for the number.

The lighting board is attached to the rudder fittings with the boat's own pintle. From bitter experience I can tell you the pin can jump out on a bumpy road and the trailer board is not improved by dragging along the road for a few miles. So tie the pin down with its lanyard.

The cable is led forward inside the boat under the seats and comes out of the bow to be secured to some part of the trailer before being connected to the tow vehicle. The ridge pole for the cover is stood on the floor just forward of seat 3 and the ridge poles slotted in. Then the cover is spread over it with the F going forward. For short trips within the Highlands I tend not to use the cover, but for long trips down the A9 it keeps road dirt out.

The cover straps go only around the boat, not the trolley or trailer. Make sure the security chain is hooked over the towball or fastened through a strong point. The tow hitch and jockey wheel are standard but if they get in the way they can be removed altogether. The boat tows well, being long and light, and the trailer has good ground clearance.

When getting the boat and trolley off the trailer make sure the boat painter is secured to the trolley as the trolley tends to stick on the trailer and the boat slides off it. If this does happen it's easy to take the boat right off, take off the trolley, and then reunite them. If you want to portage the boat past locks i.e. on the Caledonian Canal it would help a lot to get someone to deliver the trolley to you. It fits on a roof rack or you can tow it on the trailer.