

RidewithGPS Signing up to RwGPS

Go to the RidewithGPS website on your computer. Note that Apple users should choose Chrome, not Safari

Sign Up. The name you choose will be your user name, and appear on all your routes – you can't change it later.

The starter version, which is free, is adequate for most, and will sync wirelessly with a Garmin. You can transfer to BikeGPX if using a phone.

The Basic version costs \$60 per year, and has some significant advantages:

- It works with phones, giving map and directions on screen or through the speaker. You can also use the app to plot or alter a route on a phone or tablet
- Points of information (e.g. Lunch stop). Not shown on Garmins, so use Custom Cues
- Heat maps – I use the global heat map to see if others use a path.

The Premium version is not worthwhile for most people

Now find the Settings section (click the logo next to the bell on the top right.)

Most of this can be left as set.

- Under Location, set your home address. This will come up if you put Home in the location search box and the Route planner will centre on this.
- I choose not to share any information under Privacy. Scroll down and set a privacy zone (i.e. hide where you live from strangers)
- Under Preferences, select or deselect metric units, hide contact support button. Default home - Dashboard.
- Nothing else needs attention.

Below the settings section is a help section. This is very good and will help for anything to do with RwGPS, for dedicated GPS devices and for using a mobile as a GPS device

If you are considering a Garmin or similar, I would strongly recommend the Edge Explore 2. This doesn't have some of the advanced training metrics, but is a very good navigation device. Just make sure its the updated version 2.

RidewithGPS Downloading a route

RidewithGPS refers to routes and rides. Broadly, a ride is a recording of a route that has been ridden, a route is a potential ride. We are creating routes, either from scratch or from rides.

To download a route from the CLCTC website (or elsewhere), first go to your original route. Download your route as a single track to your desktop (or somewhere else you can find it) Open RidewithGPS. In the left hand column, click on upload – browse files Select the .gpx you just downloaded - save as route. Click done Refresh your RidewithGPS. You will see the file as 'the route' Hover over this, and you will see a pen, tagged as 'edit'. Click on this. Now click on Save. Give the ride a useful name, and the click save.

If there is already a RwGPS route on the website which you want to follow, you can 'pin' it. A pinned route will change if the leader changes it. From the CLCTC map, choose 'this route on RidewithGPS' In the top left, click on 'pin' The route will now be on your dashboard under Pinned

Once you have the route in RwGPS, you may wish to edit it. Note that a pinned ride or route can't be edited, first you must go to 'More' – Copy to My Routes – choose Privacy / Rename as wished – Copy Likewise a Ride (which may for example be the route-check done in advance and saved) should be copied as above.

To save the ride from RwGPS as a gpx for your phone (e.g. if using BikeGPX), Under 'More', top left, select Export as a file, and choose GPX Track

For ride co-ordinators:

Firstly, put all the other details of the ride on the database. Update

Once you have a ride on RwGPS, make sure it is saved with the visibility set to Public.

Click on Share – copy link.

Log in to the Central London database and go to the details of the ride.

Under additional details, click on 'important ride here'

Paste the link from RwGPS, removing the initial 'e'. Click Import

Copy the resultant map number into the Map ID box on the database entry, update.

After the map has been uploaded to the CLCTC database, any subsequent changes to RwGPS will not be transferred unless the route is re-loaded.

RidewithGPS Editing & Planning – The Screen

The same screen is used for both editing an existing route and planning a new route.

To edit a route, either:

- open that route, then select Edit – Edit in Planner
- or from the Dashboard, hover over the route and click on the pen icon (the bin icon is to delete the route).

If the panels on left & right are not visible, use the < & > icons to show them

On the left hand side you will see the stats (distance, climb) & surfaces for the route, plus a cue sheet if that has been recorded.

On the right hand side, there are the operator keys:

- Undo / Redo / Clear Map are as stated
- ‘Enter location’ searches and highlights that place. Then there is a choice to start from or route to that location. Sometimes, it is easier to find a generalized location, then drag the icon to a specific point.
- Add to route extends the route to where the point is added.
- Control Point adds a fixed point along the route.
- If you save or reload your route or change routing type, the option will revert to Add, even if you were on Control Point.
- Routing changes between cycling, driving and walking. Some plot as Driving in order to stay on roads, but this misses the cycleways of Cycling. Walking is used when that will be the best option.
- Draw lines – for when all else fails, but it’s definitely possible (e.g. pedestrian crossings).
- The coloured box selects the highlight colour of the route.
- Reverse route – As stated. So long as you save it as a new route, the old one will be kept.
- Point of Information (Basic & above) is used to mark stops. Not shown on Garmins
- Custom Cue (Basic & above) – adds a cue line to appear on a Garmin or similar
- Other keys aren’t relevant, but see RwGPS Help for detail.

At the bottom of the screen is the Route Profile information and graphic. Click on Gradient to see % climb (it helps to click off elevation for this). Surfaces is just a general guide - a broken line can mean anything between paved cycleway and muddy or rutted bridleways. To look at a sector in detail, on the graphic click and drag from start of the area in question to the end of it. That portion will then be enlarged to see detail. Choose Deselect to return to full view.

The Map screen itself has various icons and sub-menus

- A full screen option. Not relevant
- Heatmaps (Basic only): Global heatmaps can be used to see where other people go. Or if no-on seems to go there.
- Settings. All on except cue icons off, imperial / metric as preferred
- Map Type – use OSM Cycle or Google Map for plotting, Google Hybrid for an aerial view (though often obscured). More on this below.
- The + & - Zoom keys (or use mouse scroll)
- The Google Pegman: Google Streetview, works best when Google Maps are selected, allows sight of road features, junctions and surfaces. Enlarge the map to make sure the icon is dragged to the right place. Can be hard to see which way the Pegman is pointing. Scroll in & out. Click on > to follow road. To revert to the map, click on the arrow within the location detail box.

RidewithGPS Google Maps and Open Cycle Map

When working with RwGPS, there's a choice between Google Maps and Open Cycle Map.

Google Maps are a version of that which is familiar to most. The screen is fairly clean and clear. When you zoom in, drinking & eating places are shown – clicking on them will bring up the location on full Google Maps. Stations likewise. But Google Maps tend to route along main roads with a narrow painted cycle lane, and conversely have an attraction to shared paths (e.g. canal paths) which can get very busy with pedestrians, and so unsuitable for group cycling. Google Maps are better on road than on bridleways.

Open Cycle Maps are a free project reliant on user input. The map is more cluttered as it includes very useful cycle route designation (see <https://www.opencyclemap.org/docs/> for a key). There are also contour lines to indicate inclines. Not all refreshment places are marked (and there are no links), but stations are marked, as are toilets and bike shops. Open Cycle Maps tend to route off of the main road whenever possible, even if only to rejoin shortly. Open Cycle Map is much better than Google on bridleways and cycle-paths.

So it's often best to do outline planning in Google, then adjust and correct with Open Cycle Map. Everyone has their own likes and dislikes such as main road or bridleway, and no routing software can outdo direct knowledge.

Sometimes, it's useful to check if a marked route is bridleway or a footpath. This is best done with a detailed Ordnance Survey Map, available free at <https://www.streetmap.co.uk/> For France, IGN Mapping is available at <https://maps.walkingclub.org.uk/topographic/ign-france.shtml> Other European mapping is also available from that site.

RidewithGPS Editing a Route

Once a route appears on your Dashboard, you may wish to edit it

- Older CLCTC routes (those which haven't previously been through RwGPS) use a relatively small number of Control Points, so the route doesn't follow the road, which can cause uncertainty at junctions, and Garmin users will get Off Route warnings. Further, the climbing / distance figures may be wrong, and there won't be any cues displayed.
- If you are editing a Ride which has subsequently been saved as a Route, you may wish to adjust mistakes and missed turns
- Or you might just be taking an old route and re-editing it to make a different version.

In order to make a route follow the road:

- Open the route in Edit mode. In a second tab, open the route in plain view mode. This makes it easier to check that the new version hasn't gone astray from the original.
- Using Control Points on the edit screen, first click all the way round the route at each turn on the existing line.
- Now nudge each of those points onto the road (or onto another path you wish to follow). It is important to make sure RwGPS has not taken a different direction between points, so go slowly, from start to finish. Sometimes, only Google Maps will work, sometimes only Open Cycle Map will work. Sometimes Walk or Draw Lines is the only answer. Just keep checking the original.
- It is especially tricky when lines overlap, as the route goes out and back on the same road. When a Control Point is being adjusted, the route either side will go black, so it is possible to see if it is correct.

In order to edit an existing route:

- Again, use Control Points in Edit mode
- Click to add a control point either side of where you wish to edit. Add a third point between these, drag it to the correct place. Nudging the point along the path between the others should sort any minor deviations.
- Click on an errant Control Point to remove it
- It's also possible to adjust a point at a refreshment stop, or to start and finish at the correct side of the station.

Once the editing is complete, check thoroughly that all Control Points are actually on the path - otherwise there may be an incorrect turn marked in the cues.

Now Save. Make sure the Privacy is as preferred. Save As New (and rename if the original is still wanted).

There is also now in Beta the option to change start location.

- Open the route from the Dashboard, select Edit - Change start location
- Click on map to select new start.
- Now edit as above to remove the old start and adjust route accordingly
- Save as above

RidewithGPS Plotting a new route

There are many different ways to plot a route from scratch, with pros & cons for each. With experience, so comes the ability to try different styles. Bear in mind that the route will go in the direction plotted, so start at the station and Add to Route from there. It's best to plot in Cycling mode.

- First think of your area – The Chilterns have short, sharp ramps, The Downs have long climbs. Herts and Beds are not long or steep, just relentless up & down. East & West are relatively flat (except for the hills).
- Rivers and canals are flat, but there banks can be steep. Trains don't do hills, but they have tunnels. 'A' roads are the flattest, followed by 'B' roads. Lanes can be perpendicular. But it's safer to walk up a lane than along an 'A' road.
- Now decide where you want to go as the halfway stop, or from which station you want to start. For now, just click on that point, then on the other until the two are sorted. Google Maps and Open Cycle Map will probably take different routes, but this is just a start. Either will give a fairly straight route which should be roughly two thirds of the desired distance.
- Clear the map, start again with a point at the station. Trains travel on the left, so that will indicate which side you'll emerge. But details can be sorted later
- Then, with Add to Route, click on the halfway stop.
- Now with a Control Point added midway, drag this, taking the line, to the right until the overall distance is about correct for half the day
- Next, back to Add to Route, Click back at the station, or wherever you wish to finish.
- Another Control point on the return line, drag to left so that the overall distance is about right for the day.
- If an afternoon stop is wanted, add this in with another Control Point.
- This has produced a route running anti-clockwise (mainly left turns). Save it for now, then return to editing for more refinement.
- Check thoroughly along the route that the suggested course is suitable. By using Control Points edit to remove unsuitable roads or dubious off-road. Use Google Streetview to check surfaces, carriageway widths and junctions.
- Now look at the gradients. Is there anything unsuitable? Once again, use Control Points to edit and work around unnecessary ramps, be they up or down, especially off road.
- Now save again. Once saved, the standard reload key ⌘ can be used to go back to this point.
- Look at the overall route, checking for total distance, elevation and location of stops. Refine until content, save again.
- There is a Reverse Route option if wanted. Sometimes a clockwise route is preferred to change a long uphill to a long downhill. First save the route, then choose Reverse Route. Save the result as a new route with a new name so that the original is retained

The RidewithGPS Help pages will answer most further questions.

You may of course choose to plot your ride in Komoot, Ordnance Survey Online Maps or one of the many others. Regardless, any proposal sent to the Ride Co-Ordinator should be as a RidewithGPS route or as a .gpx file.

RidewithGPS
BikeGPX (with thanks to Marcella for the guide below)

For those who don't have a paid-for RwGPS plan or a Garmin, the easy option is to use the free app <https://bikegpx.com/> . This works on both Android & Apple phones.

For navigating, BikeGPX is a breeze. Super basic - clear and simple. Nice red line to follow en route. Free.

I have the premium version, which includes the height profile, km done/left and some other stuff (it's a one-off ~£5) but the free one also does the trick.

Once you've downloaded the app on your smartphone, it's good to check your preferred settings first.

Settings > Display Settings

>>Navigation style: 2D auto-rotate is best

>>Disable Screen Lock

I don't think you have 'Show Elevation Graph' in the free version.

Not sure the free one has Dashboard Gauges either. These show your speed etc.

But you can use the free app to also:

1) Record your ride

Go to Settings > Track log recording > Tick Record While Navigating

Remember to go back to the main screen and tap 'Start Riding'

Once you've ended your ride, navigate to the Track log screen > View Track >

Finish

How to upload gpx routes to BikeGPX

There are different ways but my preferred one is as follows.

Download the .gpx file to your desktop

Open the website <https://bikegpx.com/>

Go to Upload a file

It always loads as 'the route' - rename it as you wish.

Click on Save route

It loads on a map.

Notice a QR code at the right bottom corner?

Open the app on your phone >> Select Route >> Add Route + >> Scan a bikegpx.com route barcode

Point the scanner at the barcode on your laptop and voilà, there's your route.

The day you intend to ride it, to avoid using mobile data, open the route on the app and scroll through the red line to fully load the map (street names etc).

Note that the app stays open in the background. To close it for good you need to

Force Stop it via your Apps list

If you have a smartphone you no longer use, that would be ideal for BikeGPX

I don't and sometimes if you start taking pics, or use whatsapp, the red line might stop displaying. In such case, quickly Force Stop the app and reload the route. Small price to pay for a nifty cheap as chips app.