



GRAVEL ESCAPE

RIDER INSTRUCTIONS

Saturday 13th June, 7am



WELCOME

Thank you so much for being the first group of riders to take part in **Gravel Escape**. Whatever the weather, you are in for some great riding as you take on a lap of Sussex.

Gravel Escape started out as a training ride last summer between three friends looking to have a long day in the saddle. After a few post-ride beers the question was raised, “would that make a good route for an event...?” The very quick answer was “definitely”. We hope you agree!

Please read these instructions carefully, as they will help you be as prepared as you can be for June 13th.

**GRAVEL
ESCAPE**



WELCOME



Initially, three text messages were sent to people with a link to the **Gravel Escape** website, and the jungle drums did the rest. Within 48hrs almost 100 people had signed up. A few personal invites were made and now we have 150 people on the start list!

What this means, is that you are all closely connected with each other, and not just because you ride gravel bikes. Remember this when you are riding, as it is very likely that the stranger riding next to you knows someone that you do.

We have planned a Diet Coke version of a future full-fat Coke event in 2027. We want to test all aspects of the event on experienced riders. Since the event is free to enter there are aspects we will develop when we can charge for entry, but all the important ingredients should have been included.

PLEASE NOTE

Gravel Escape is not a competitive event - there is no timing; you make your way along the route as best you can. Getting to the finish would be a challenge for *any* standard of rider, so we want you to enjoy being able to do something that 99.9999% of the world's population cannot.

Gravel Escape is inspired by **Strade Bianche** where the white roads that are raced on are connected by country lanes and roads. Sussex has a vast network of bridle paths, bridleways, disused railway lines, cycle networks and of course the South Downs. **We have tried to stitch together the best sections of gravel / off-road riding we can find with some of the nicest roads to ride on in Sussex.**

TEST EVENT



We are looking for your feedback on all aspects of the event, while taking into consideration that it is a test event with a skeleton crew who are working on it for the first time.

Designing a 200km route off-road has been a lot of fun with a lot of riding, but it would be a massive lie to say we have exhausted every single possible path we could take you on. As you ride around you may know of alternative routes / paths we could take in the future that we haven't been able to find yet - we'd like all your suggestions.

We'd also like your feedback on whether the routes are hard enough - we can make them harder! Or whether there needs to be a flatter / shorter option available.

We'd like to know if the mix of road versus off-road works; we have purposely added in sections of road to break-up the off-roading and give you a chance to eat, stretch, or ease off to let other riders catch-up and re-form the group you were in. We don't want this to be a war of attrition or the hardest day of your life. There are other events that can cater for that.

There will also be the usual operational questions: Were there enough aid stations? Was there enough food and variety? Did the GPX transfer accurately to your computer? Did you feel sufficiently prepared for the big day? Would you recommend Gravel Escape to a friend? Etc. We will send out a post-ride survey to capture all this information.

Now to the important bits...

ARRIVAL & PARKING

BY TRAIN

There are excellent train connections to Lewes early on event morning. There are a large number of you coming from Brighton & Hove, who will likely be aiming for the same trains, so please come early.

CAR PARKING

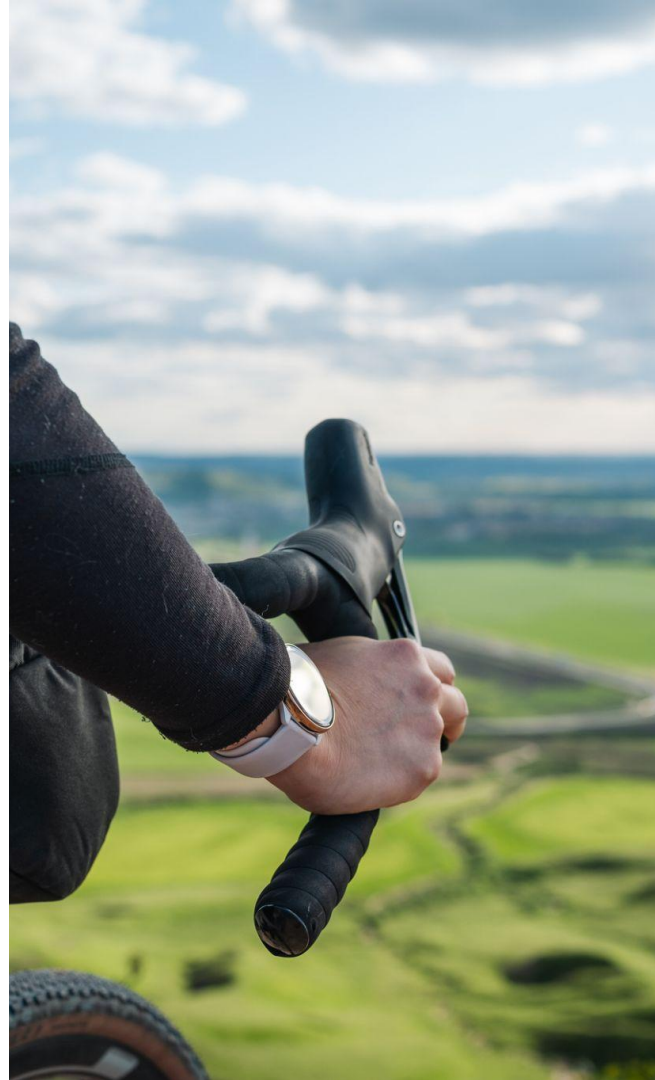
There is no parking at Pharmacie or the Cliffe Industrial Estate. If you are coming from out of town the best option for parking early in the day is [Lewes Train Station car park](#) - it is £8.30 for a full day and very quick access to the start / from the finish (5-8 mins pedalling).

BEING DROPPED OFF

If you are being dropped off you can do so at the Cliffe Industrial Estate - however we recommend turning right (and not left to Pharmacie) when you enter the estate and finding a quiet car park to unload bikes. There are loads of places to drop-off but you cannot park there all day without the chance of a fine / being clamped.

Pharmacie:

11 Cliffe Industrial Est, Lewes BN8 6JL
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/RsBGsvMeHPqgHBw97>



REGISTRATION

Registration at Pharmacie will be open from 6am until 7.30am.

You will need to collect your rider bib number with our emergency contact details, and tell us which distance you are planning on riding. You must tell us which route you plan to take.

Riding will start from 7.15am, with rider briefing starting at 7am. We will let you start when you are ready and create small wave starts to ensure no early congestion on the route.

If you are late you can still start the event, but from 7.30am the start area will be closed down ready for the public opening of Pharmacie. If you are really late please contact us on 07303 120741 and we will instruct you on what to do next.



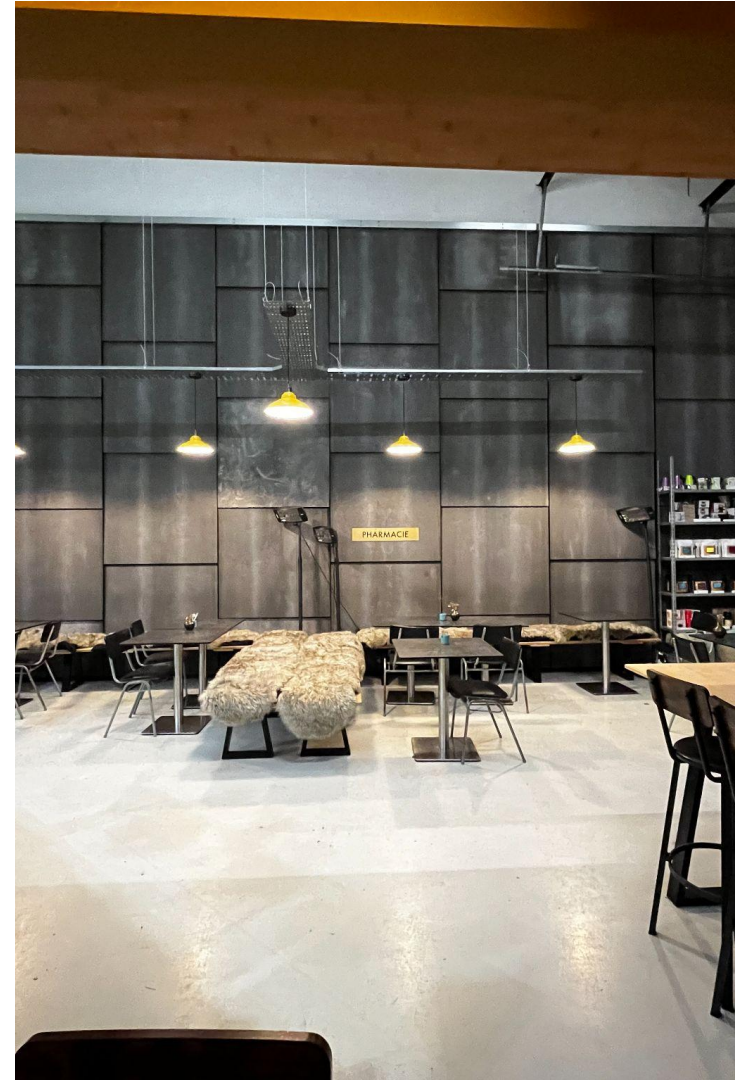
CATERING AT THE START

There will be free filter coffee available from Pharmacie and discounts on barista made drinks and snacks.

There may be a lot of you arriving at the same time so please appreciate there might be a queue to get a pre-ride flat white and danish.

You can always delay your start time to get your caffeine hit once we've given the briefing.

There will be a baggage drop at Pharmacie where you can leave spare / warm clothes for the journey home. Please ride with any valuables, just in case you go directly home.



COMPULSORY KIT

All three routes go onto the South Downs Way, which is pretty exposed to the elements, so you need to be prepared for strong wind and rain.

1. Fully charged mobile phone
2. Please carry a wind/waterproof jacket in your jersey even if the weather is splendid. We got caught out horribly on the last test ride...
3. Rear light with flashing mode - you are on the roads
4. Ability to carry 1.5L of water
5. Spare tubes even if running tubeless
6. At least 40mm tyres with decent grip - this is not really a ride for semi-slick 35mm gravel tyres pumped up at 80 psi...
7. Tools, pump, tyre levers, chain splitter & split link.

We will have a jet wash and lube at Aid Station 2 & 3 in case you need to clean your chain and brake pads.



COURSE SUMMARY



The 100km has 1,000m climbing and is 48% dirt and 52% road (mainly old country lanes)

The 150km has 1,800m climbing and is 55% dirt and 45% road (majority old country lanes)

The 200km has 2,700m climbing and is 65% dirt and 35% road (majority old country lanes)

Riders should ride to their ability and to the trail conditions. You will encounter all types of off-road riding from champagne gravel, to cut up brick lanes, single track and chalky / flinty paths.

In sections, the route can get slippery in the rain. However, we recce'd the routes in February and March and everything should be rideable. There should be no hike-a-bike at Gravel Escape. **Take it very easy if the chalky paths are wet** as they are more treacherous than a frozen road.

You are riding along narrow country lanes, through some villages, towns and residential areas. **Gravel Escape is not a race** so please ride with your own safety in mind, and with consideration to local drivers, horse riders and other users of the road.

There will be no marshals on the course; you must have all routes loaded to your bike computer. We'd love to be able to sign-post the route but with three loops and over 300km of paths through residential areas, it would take an army of people with signs to be able set-out the route and make sure no cheeky residents remove them...

GPX FILES

GPX files are available on our website - these are still drafts until the event week when final drafts will be submitted.

Files downloaded to platforms may be adjusted by the mapping software - please check this against the original route.

Most importantly - all three routes follow large sections of the same route, however they do diverge at random points.

If you are riding with others that you do not know, do not assume you are all doing the same distance. E.g. Don't get caught on the 150 / 200 route on Old Coach Road after Bo Peep Lane if you are doing the 100...

Have a look through the routes so you are aware of the rough differences.



THE START

First riders will be able to leave after the briefing at 7.15am. We will not have a formal start process as we want to allow you to start the ride when you are ready and with the people you ride with.

A rider briefing will start at 7am, or when we have processed enough people through check-in. Please arrive in plenty of time to ensure we can keep to our timings.

We will ask all riders riding solo, in pairs or 3's to start first, and larger groups to hold back a little to allow for gaps to form between groups.

The 100 and 150 will head towards Glynde on Ranscombe Lane, the 200km will head into Lewes and Egrets Way.

It is obviously important to not just follow another rider out of the Cliffe Industrial Estate and end up starting on the wrong route.



CUT OFFS

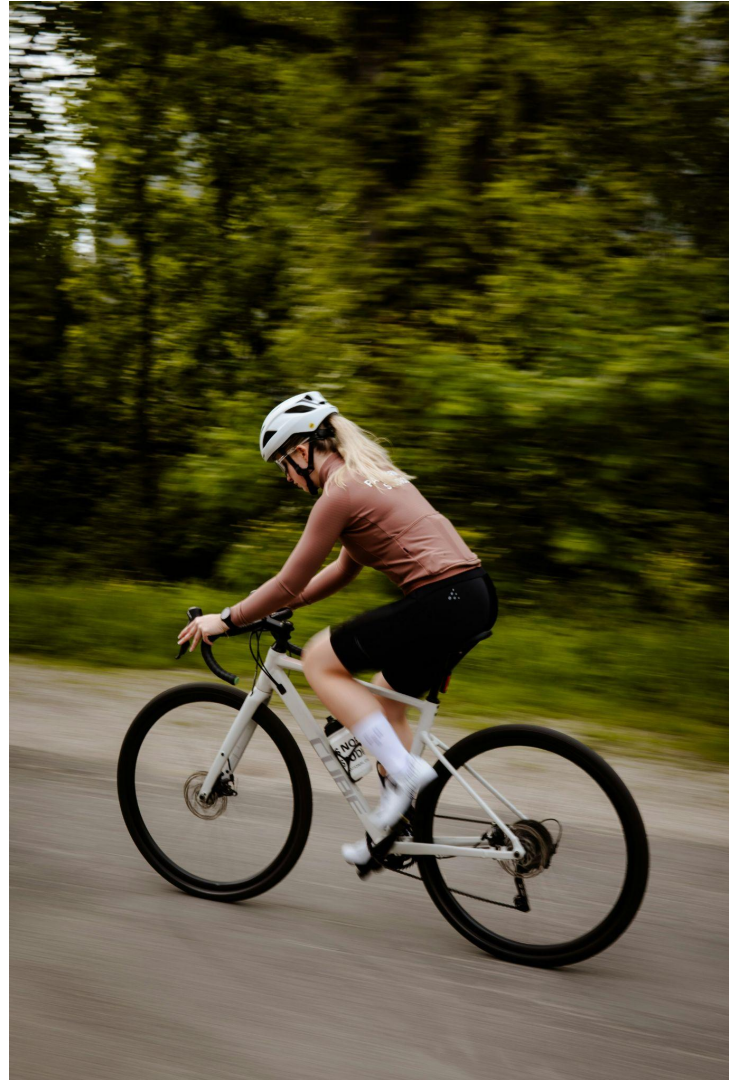
We need to ensure all riders have finished by 8pm.

Aid Station 3 (Partridge Green) is the key location for cut-offs. If you arrive through AS3 after 5pm we will ask you to complete the 100/150 route. This is approximately 27km from the finish, which will remove 23km from the 200km route.

If you arrive through AS3 after 6.30pm we will arrange a van to collect you and your bike and either drive you to the finish, or drop you further down the route.

If you have entered the 200 and are worried about meeting the cut-off, you could start the 150. If you are within the cut-off window at AS3 you could finish on the 200km route - getting you to about 178km.

Times will be strictly adhered to. Please be respectful of this as we want to ensure rider safety.



AID STATIONS

CHECK IN

You must stop and check-in at each aid station so we know where you are on the route.

ON THE 100 ROUTE

There are two aid stations - the first is at Barcombe Recreation Sports Pavilion in Barcombe, where snacks, drinks and (questionable) coffee will be available.

The main aid station is at Cadence Partridge Green at 72km, which has superb coffee and we will have a supply of sandwiches, snacks and drinks.

ON THE 150 AND 200 ROUTE

There are aid stations at Cadence at Horam (approximately 32km and 55km); on Worth Way just past East Grinstead Train Station (approx 75km and 102km) and Cadence at Partridge Green (approx 122km and 151km).

At East Grinstead and Partridge Green aid stations we will have a jet wash - in case your chain / brakes are full of mud, and some spare parts - inner tubes, brake pads, chains just in case.

AT EACH AID STATION:

- Vegan / Vegetarian sandwiches
- Meat & Vegan sausage rolls
- Pork Pies (for Tim Jones)
- Flapjacks
- **Cold** cans of coke
- Water
- Energy Drinks
- Electrolyte tabs and Haribo

At both Cadence aid stations, coffee, snacks and toasties can be purchased.

Toilets are available throughout the route and at both Cadence cafes.

THE FINISH

All rides finish at Pharmacie. For those finishing before 3pm the cafe will be open for another coffee or a final snack.

All riders will be provided with a complimentary refreshing drink from Beak Brewery, and cold food will be on offer for free. Hot food can be purchased from a nearby pub, [The Snowdrop](#).

If you need to stop and head home under your own steam please let us know on 07303 120741 (text message is fine).

If you want to stop and be collected from the route please call us on 07303 120741 and we will collect you from the nearest location we can get to.



CREDITS



Thank you to Pharmacie and Cadence cafes for being so accommodating and letting us hang out at your venues supplying our own food and drinks. Please all Gravel Escapers show your appreciation when you pass through each of these excellent locations.

Quite a lot of work has taken place to get to a pilot event... and you might want someone to blame for getting you to sign up for a lap of a county...

Thank you to Dan Fisher and Greg Coley for riding the unofficial **Gravel Escape** last year - your encouragement to make this an event was the catalyst.

To Andy Bone, Dermot Cameron, Matt Greenall, Matt Smith and Steve Winslade for testing the route and giving their seal of approval.

To Jamie Larkin, thank you for the many hours of test rides you've come out on in Feb, March, April and May, for finding Robin Post Lane and showing me around Friston Forest. I hope all the time sitting waiting for me at the top of climbs hasn't been too much of a chore.

To everyone that completed the survey we sent, allowing us to make some important decisions, thank you.

And lastly to everyone who saw the event and shared it with their community. The gravel bike community is growing really quickly but is still relatively tiny. We know we are right and it's our job to convince everyone else to join us.

Thanks
Team at Gravel Escape



GRAVEL ESCAPE

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