

## Re: UK-biased question about GPS

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I assume that if I buy the bottom level GPS I have to "manually" enter a set of waypoints

Not necessarily. Even bottom end GPS units normally have a port where you can connect your PC to upload waypoints and routes (a route is just an ordered set of waypoints).

which I derive in some manner from my OS map, and it just watches satellites, and points me towards the next waypoint?

I only have direct experience of the Garmin eTrex series. They will do things like display an arrow pointing in the direction of your next waypoint, tell you how far it is etc. Older eTrex are silent and everything is done on screen (eg. displaying message "approaching turn"). I think the "C" variants, and certainly some other units, can issue audible warnings if you are approaching a turn or going off route.

Obviously the best thing in the world would be a colour GPS, compass, etc which had a walkers map of the Cotswolds in it.

Not necessarily. The problem is that the GPS screen has to be small otherwise it wouldn't be truly portable. You can zoom in for detail of your immediate surroundings or zoom out to see the overview but lose detail. They've not yet invented the GPS that you can unfold over your groundsheet during the picnic stop

I assume that if I buy a £350 Garmin, and the Fugawi OS maps CD, I can pretty much achieve that?  
That's a bit outside my budget, but maybe I don't have to pay full retail.....

Check that the maps you want to buy are compatible with the unit. There is no industry standard and every GPS manufacturer has their own private format and interface for uploading maps. Maps intended for one brand cannot be used on another. On the bright side, though, the Garmin interface although supposedly "secret" has been known to the unofficial software writing

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community for some time and there are many products out there, some of them free, which allow you to create your own maps. Indeed, I actually wrote one myself which you can download and try out free of charge from <http://homepages.tesco.net/~Keith.Sheppard/MapMan.htm>. Be warned that DIY map making is very time consuming but can be entertaining and rewarding in its own right.

Why can't you just buy a GPS ready-to-go with UK OS and road maps loaded  
– they seem to ask a lot of an average punter.

Cynical answer, because the manufacturer hopes to make more money out of selling you maps than they did from selling you the hardware. Practical answer, because the amount of memory required to hold detailed maps of everywhere the owner might want to visit would greatly increase the cost, and perhaps even the size/weight of the unit. Remember that Garmin don't do a UK variant as such. They do a European variant so it's not just UK OS maps to consider. Indeed, even you might wish to use your GPS in continental Europe or elsewhere.

Should I write a book of country walks with the downloadable waypoints available?

I doubt there's anyone here who hasn't considered that, it just needs someone with enough get up and go to actually do it.

I already own an XDA-IIs/PDA2K PocketPC, with a much nicer screen than I'm likely to get on a GPS... I suppose I could justify buying one of those battery-powered bluetooth-link GPS bricks. How easy is it to get the OS maps onto my PDA, and get the PDA to take fixes from the GPS lump?

Not a hardware combination I'd like to carry around on Cat Bells on a rainy day.

thoughts? recommendations?

If you want to know what particular GPS units can do, check out the Garmin web site. Skip all the marketing stuff and go straight to the user manuals for the products you are interested in. Garmin publish all their manuals on the site and I knew exactly how to use my eTrex Legend, and what it could do, long before I actually bought one.

Keith

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