

Last weekend was put to good use by Cycle Ayrshire, with members out on Saturday and Sunday. Both were bright days and less affected by the 'mini-beast from the east' than was suggested. The strong wind and flurries of snow was a constant reminder of what might have been round the corner.

Saturday's outing was for ladies only and featured one of their longer rides. Four riders assembled and set-off from the Mauchline start on a route the leader described as 'a little hilly'. As it turned out, the opening miles were to the west with a tail wind so Stair, where a late starter caught them, was reached quickly. Soon they were through Springs and crossing the B742 at Broadwood to face a testing uphill before dropping to the A70 cycle path. The stretch along the ridge between the Water of Coyle and the River Ayr produced the views of the day with a fine vista of Ayr Bay and snow-capped Arran.

A brief detour of less than a mile through Sundrum Estate saw them on the minor road north of Coyllon, again crossing the B742 bound for the B730 Stair-Drongan road, where a right and a left led them to Gemmell's for lunch where their number was increased by one. Finishing the food, the shortest route back to Mauchline via the Barskimming Bridge was accomplished into a biting headwind which had encouraged the decision to shorten the last stretch to a twenty-mile total.

Cycle Ayrshire's Sunday gathering was at Eglinton Park and, considering the 'heat', 0° to 2°C, and a very fresh easterly breeze with the occasional snow flurry, it still attracted eleven enthusiasts to participate in a 20 mile uninterrupted ride to the north of the park. The group headed out, topped and tailed by electrically assisted bikes, to join the B785 south east of Benslie and go north west to cross Lugton Water near Burrowland in a dip calculated to remind cyclists about using gears. A turn to the north by Lylestone farm brought a mile and a half of open, unsheltered, headwind with a little relief gained by turning along the B707 towards Highfield near Dalry, followed by a southerly stint on the No. 7 cycle route, with some clues to be seen about the new Dalry by-pass.

A branch westwards passed Dalgarnen Mill, a few hundred yards (quite enough) on the A737 and some west with wind assistance had the group joining an extended part of the

Meadow Park Road at the top of Kilwinning. Whitehirst Park and a bit of Pennyburn Road was enough of the built-up area so, ducking under Pennyburn Road, they used various paths to reach the cycleway No. 73 to get back to Eglinton Park for much needed food and hot drinks at the Tournament Café, where they were joined by three other members, two of whom had cycled over from Kilmarnock.



Lunch at Gemmels for the hardy Ladies Longer participants