

The first Saturday in February saw Cycle Ayrshire's ladies out on their first fifteen-miler of the year. Nine riders met at Newton on Ayr on a surprisingly sunny Saturday morning. Bearing in mind the snow and ice recently affecting inland areas, the leader had devised a route along the coast and around the town of Ayr.

They headed off in a northerly direction and then doubled back along the Newton Shore and continued past the big hole where the gasometer used to be. They followed the back roads around Newton Green to North Harbour Street, dismounting to walk across the new bridge to South Harbour. They continued to follow the cycle route along the seafront and over the millennium bridge to climb up to Greenan Castle, then crossed Dunure Road to join the cycle path to Alloway and the lunch stop at the Burns Birthplace Museum where a tenth lady joined the chit chat.

After lunch they rejoined the cycle path to Maybole Road.

With two members of the group having headed for home, the remaining eight turned right into Burnbank Road then took a series of turns through the side-streets of Belmont and Forehill to eventually cross Holmston Road and join the riverside path to cross the pedestrian bridge over the River Ayr.

Turning west past Ayrshire College another rider left the group.

Finding the path closed at the railway bridge, the seven dismounted to cross the river by pavement to Mill Street and cross the river for the final time via Turners Brig.

The group continued on to North Harbour Street once again and made their way back along the Newton Shore returning to the start point just as the rain clouds were gathering.

The following day there was an invitation to meet at Kilmarnock's Dean Castle Park.

It was another in the do-it-yourself category which left it up to riders to decide how far they would cycle for a lunch in the refurbished Castle Kitchen.

Twenty four met but nine with longer memories agreed to meet in advance and honour the twenty mile ride that had been cancelled earlier due to snow.

They were probably the earliest starters and well on their way round a circuit that took them north and back for just under twenty miles non-stop. Starting from the Park,

they headed up the Glasgow Road towards Fenwick to join the cycle path on the old A77. Four miles later they headed past the Whitelees Windfarm to take a left on a newly resurfaced minor road back to the A77 cycle path and back into Fenwick.

Turning left down Waterslap they headed for Grassyards Road and back to the start via New Farm Loch.

The leader describes it as a 'great wee ride with a perfect elevation profile – uphill to the turn and downhill back'.