

Prestwick Railway Station was the gathering point last Wednesday for fifteen Cycle Ayrshire riders. The route was by Monkton, Tarbolton to Mauchline leaving by Barskimming. This brought them to Stair for a light lunch and drinks. The return passed through Springs, Oswald's Bridge and St Quivox before crossing St Cuthberts Golf course on foot to find less busy roads back to Prestwick Station. The ride was in actual summer conditions at a gentle pace covering about 30 miles.

Sunday was the annual 3-ferries ride and eleven adults and one young girl, acting as stoker on a family tandem, gathered at Wemyss Bay Railway Station. A seven mile jaunt took them up to the Western Ferries pier at McInroy's Point, Gourock for the first sail of the day in calm and partly sunny conditions, excellent for both cycling and ferry rides. The run north from Hunters Quay along Holy Loch was briefly interrupted at Sandbank to buy sufficient food and liquid to reach Bute. At the head of the Holy Loch they turned left on to the single track B836 up Glen Lean to Loch Tarsan reservoir with the head of Loch Striven the next port of call. This fairly gentle rise to around 400 feet, with occasional halts at passing places, followed by a shorter return to sea level did little to prepare them for the 20% gradient as they turned west from Loch Striven. This near 500 foot climb had some walking included.

Those ready for a rest halted at the top for their food, drinks and recovery time while others continued, fancying the downhill and shelter from a cool breeze as well as the likelihood of being lunch for the local midges. The midges were elsewhere. The route to Colintrave by way of the A886 and the quieter, less taxing, B866 by the shore of Loch Riddon brought the group to the ferry for Bute. Rather than going direct to Rothesay, all bar one opted to go over to Ettrick Bay for ice cream in sunshine. The path south eastwards away from the café at Ettrick Bay appeared less used than on previous years, nearly disappearing in places. Ten bikes and a tandem may have made it more obvious. Continuing by roads A844 then B878, the group reached Rothesay for the Wemyss Bay ferry having seen this part of Scotland at its best.



Colintraive Ferry crossing

