

Cycle Ayrshire had two home rides and one away last week. The first, last Wednesday, had a weather report for heavy rain from 1.00 pm onwards but it arrived well ahead of the forecast which meant it had already been raining for some time before the 11.00am start for a Twenty's Plenty ride from Kirkmichael.

To the ride leader's surprise he was not the only cyclist out in such conditions. Several others were there, eager to go out despite the weather and the leaders continuous asking if they were sure! Only one decided it was too wet and headed back home. So it was a magnificent seven who set out for a 20 mile cycle, turning into a soggy seven as the rain fell for most of the 2 hour ride.

Heading north towards Maybole, the group soon turned left to start swinging back towards Crosshill. A right before Crosshill to follow the NCN7 route joined them up with the Dailly Road, following it along the north side of the Water of Girvan all the way to Dailly itself. At Dailly, the group headed back towards Kirkmichael, this time along the B741 on the south side of the Water of Girvan. A few miles before Crosshill, the leader was turning right to climb up towards Straiton when two of the group decided they were wet enough for one day and would take the most direct route back to Kirkmichael. The remaining five headed up the B741 towards Straiton, eventually turning left into a service road just before the Blairquhan Estate. Normally bumpy and with many potholes, the road had been resurfaced and provided a nice smooth, and traffic free, ride back to the outskirts of Kirkmichael. The rain ceased just a couple of miles from the end so at least the riders were not dripping on the floor of the community café as they headed for well earned tea, soup and scones.

[View the Kirkmichael route here.](#)

Saturday was a day for the ladies with another of their longer rides. Starting from Kilwinning Station, fourteen set off for a 24 mile ride in mixed weather which saw them sheltering under roadside trees dodging the heaviest showers. The destination was the Dunlop Dairy which was reached by the closed road past High Moncur, then via Fergushill Hall and Loanhead to pass uphill with wind assist through Dunlop and on to lunch.

Another heavy shower extended the lunch stop during which time the cheeses were tried and purchases made. Retracing and taking the first left on the return introduced them to a head wind which almost brought them to a standstill several times. They were grateful that the route to Torranyard and Benslie was mostly downhill. A rethink of the way through Kilwinning showed the benefit of pooled knowledge and avoided busier roads, rounding off a more taxing ride than the usual monthly fifteen miler.

Sunday was an 'away' special ride starting at Aberfoyle, with the aim of doing the Loch Katrine circuit. A commendable eleven riders assembled in the central car park. The leader had decided to do it clockwise avoiding the immediate steep climb via the Duke's Pass. The first stop was 11 miles out at Stronachlacar where the cafe provided an early lunch which took into account the travelling time to the start. Having arrived at the lochside the group took in the views as they ate, witnessed the arrival of the Sir Walter Scott and the disembarking of cyclists who were set to pedal back to Trossachs Pier. It was agreed that Cycle Ayrshire's group would cycle at their own individual speeds and regroup 12 miles later at the east-end pier. They overtook and passed cyclists of all descriptions and ages most of whom gave a friendly wave or greeting.

A leisurely pause at the bustling commercial centre of the Trossachs allowed everyone to catch up and eventually decide it was time to face the hardest work of the day. Once again it was everyone for themselves as the climb over the Duke's Pass would bring out individual approaches to climbing. The 500' ascent started as the road headed south away from Loch Achray. Two miles later the top was reached and hand positions changed to prepare for the 700' descent into Aberfoyle. The regrouping in the car park was earlier than anticipated and everyone was pleased with their time for this testing and iconic ride.

[View the Loch Katrine route here.](#)



Waterfall along the North shore of Lake Katrine



Trossachs Pier Visitor Centre