

Bacon rolls and pots of strong tea were the reward for ten Cycle Ayrshire members who rode from Maybole to lunch in the beautiful village of Barr last Wednesday. A headwind on the outbound leg forced the group to pedal downhill sections that usually promise a free-wheel. Wet conditions helped to inflict more punctures than usual for a 30-mile jaunt. But there were compensations with wonderful views from The Screws (the kindlier hill road between Old Dailly and Barr and less savage than the name suggests), and the warm hospitality at Barr Community Café is guaranteed to lift the spirits of the most drookit of cyclists.

Sunday's foul weather seemed to have swayed the minds of the many and it was only four to the fore at the meet point- a rather exposed Saltcoats Harbour Car Park, for the annual main ride up and over to Millport. A 'suck it and see' approach prevailed with one eye clearly on the weather to see what could be salvaged out of the ride. Smart use of back streets through Saltcoats and Ardrossan kept the quartet sheltered from the side-wind that was blasting straight in off the sea. Once out on to the North shore it was fully utilised- now being on their backs and gratefully accepted to zing them along route 753, through West Kilbride, Hunterston Estate, Fairlie and up the coast to Largs Pier.

One in the party opted to for a return back down the coast with the assistance of Scotrail. The others, boosted by the enthusiasm and desire of one of the riders to visit the Island for the first time, boarded the ferry, the odyssey continuing. An anti-clockwise circumnavigation of the Island was chosen to showcase Cumbrae and "tick" the landmark boxes; Lion Rock, Crocodile Rock, Indian Rock, The Ritz Café. Wind friend turned to wind foe as the trio headed down the east coast and the lunch stop at the Garrison Café was gratefully received for rest and re-fuelling. The stop also coincided with the heaviest downpour of the day. While the cyclists stayed dry inside, the 200 competitors for the Cumbrae Road Race (running) were assembling for their start!

Runners and riders headed off in opposite directions to be re-united at White Bay, on the north tip of the island some 20 minutes later. The riders enjoyed the wind assistance down the back of the island and a breaking sky. They also returned their number to four with the arrival of late-comer who caught them up under his own steam. Though the runners also

benefited from a tail wind up the east coast, it was decided that they needed some moral support in dragging their “soaking simmits” to the finish line, so riders parked up to cheer them on. A quick spin to the top of the Island was rewarded with clearing clouds and a brief appearance from the sun, the fantastic views sullied by the nuclear submarine heading down The Clyde. Spying the ferry mid-channel, it was decided to head back down and catch it at the slip.

“Quit while you’re ahead” was the conclusion of the discussion on the ferry ride.

So, on returning to the main-land, it was decided to “let the train take the strain” for the remainder of the trip.

On such a foul looking day at the start, the step by step (or pedal by pedal ) approach was greatly rewarded, giving credence to the adage for activities in Scotland “Weather Good or Bad, Get Out There”.



Stopped to cheer on the 20km run participants



Definetely not lunching outside !