

The day's weather forecast was spot on, beautiful sunny morning with a hint of cloud cover, almost perfect cycling conditions. This week unlike last I was on top of my game, full of enthusiasm and for the first time on one of these rides, a clear plan of where to go. You know what they say though about best laid plans!

Didn't take too long to go awry, got on the bike only to find it had a puncture, swapped bikes but that had a soft tyre as well, luckily enough it was just short of air. Tyre fully inflated and running a bit behind schedule the Lane was well and truly beckoning as I set off.

Got to the bridge some 5 minutes late (or on time for me depending on your point of view) three other cyclists already there and raring to go. My plan had been to go to Parbold along the canal, two of the party had already rode that way from Wigan though, said they didn't mind back tracking but I came up with an alternative route. Plan well and truly out the window. Used a bit of the knowledge learned last week and set off across the bridge in the direction of Bickershaw via the rough terrain of Plank Lane Ruck's before crossing Bickershaw Lane and heading towards Hindley. It was going to be a day of changed plans, we turned back on ourselves this time towards Hindley Green and across to Howe Bridge, through Colliers Wood picking up Marsland Green Lane and the East Lancs Cycle Path at Astley Low Green. Yet another change of plan took us to Cross Hillock and across the fields to Mosley Common then Ellenbrook. That was the end of the plan changes; from Ellenbrook we made our way towards Walkden picking up route 55 heading towards Worsley and the Old Station Platform (may have been here once or twice previously) Time for coffee anyway.

Coffee consumed it was next stop Monton followed by Worsley Village as we picked up the canal towpath for our return journey. The towpath was going to take us past the Boat House (been in here once or twice also) could we be strong willed and ride past? Not a cat in hell's chance, Boat House it was for some much needed food and liquid refreshment, just a happy coincidence that the liquid refreshment happened to be of the beer variety, simply replacing lost fluid and nutrients that's all.

Bodies refuelled it was along the towpath once again for our final leg (finals a touchy subject at the moment, as far as England's concerned anyway) Next stop Butts Bridge and my time to depart, couldn't bear to ride past my back door. Pleasantries exchanged Caroline, Andy plus our guest Jim (no not that one) headed back to Plank Lane and their respective journeys home.

Great ride (eventually) great company as always and superb weather, pity more of you couldn't make it.

Maybe next week, last chance to get some mileage in before heading off to France!

Till then.