

It was a warm but dull and overcast morning, as I headed down to the Swing-bridge, (albeit at a very slow pace) for the early morning Father's Day ride. A couple of people had already been in touch to say they wouldn't be coming, I myself was feeling slightly worse for wear, the after effect of late night footy and amount of alcohol consumed. No chance of leaving myself behind to day I thought! On reaching Plank Lane and whilst making good use of the bench to rest my weary body, I was almost glad there was no-one else there. Excellent I thought, a nice steady pace back home and some much needed breakfast. Alas that was not to be!

Sitting there for some 10 minutes or so, I became inspired by the appearance on the faces of some 30 to 40 cyclists that passed by whilst taking part in a road race, they were being cheered on and encouraged by marshals at the swing-bridge. So with renewed enthusiasm and top gear engaged I set off for a quick lap of Pennington Flash. That's when the transformation occurred, with the warm morning air rushing past my face, legs pumping, lungs and heart now firing on all cylinders it was back over the bridge to the old Plank Lane pit site for the start of an unplanned very enjoyable 2 hour non-stop 100% off-road ride. The route covered the rough up and down terrain across to Bickershaw, along the stony overgrown disused railway line to the woodlands and lakeside paths around Hindley. From there it was back along the very muddy and overgrown railway line to Howe Bridge, (not for the faint hearted I might add) eventually heading back to firmer ground at Plank Lane, emerging as if by magic near the Nevison Inn. Sadly though too early for a hair of the Dog, if only I'd peddled a bit slower!

Another mission completed and "yes" its possible to lose yourself out on the open trail, after all if our ancestors had been happy with just a steady pace, bikes may never have had pedals, let alone gears fitted and we could have been spending Sundays in the park astride plastic horses heads on sticks.

See you next week?