

# Lake District Meet – Langdale, May 2013

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Two men and a dog attended this one - me, Austin and Trudy.



As it was in the Wayfarers Club hut, a palace, in the most popular valley in the Lakes, with climbing on the doorstep, this was a bit puzzling, until we realised everybody else had seen the weather forecast. Lightweights. When I was your age I thought nothing of tramping the fells in all weathers - still don't think much of it, as a matter of fact.

So the good news is that Friday evening was beautiful after a day of rain, and I had a lively potter up Lingmoor Fell in the late sunshine. The not so good news is that it was a Folk weekend in Langdale, and the Old DG was rammed - not just full, you could barely open the door.

“Well, you're a folkie”, you exclaim. “Get in and give it some welly”. Sorry, but my idea of folk music doesn't involve listening to three blokes with guitars and amplifiers, God help us, in a room the size of the Old DG bar. If you haven't got a voice that will fill a room that size you're better leaning on the bar with a pint and joining in the chorus with plebs like me. Not that kids with guitars ever know the good chorus songs anyway, they're too busy tuning their bloody.....

Sorry - carried away there for a minute. Anyway, I refuse to use the New DG because I once went in and it had Space Invaders, so I went back to the hut to do my Grumpy Old Man stuff - and we had an excellent evening with some of the Wayfarers lads round a roaring fire. One of them had just returned from a motor-cycle race across Siberia, using bikes that are the Russian equivalent of the Trabant car, produced in a State factory in the middle of Siberia, with the workforce all shipped out there and housed in a State village. And then the factory shut down. He said the people were

fantastic, the vodka consumption had to be seen to be believed, and the whole place was a disaster. But some joker still organises this race, which lasts a couple of weeks, covers an enormous distance, and gets temperatures sometimes of 40 below. Bit nippy on a motor bike; I think two finished out of about 40 starters.

So what with this, and other stories, and a bottle of wine which mysteriously emptied we passed on into the early hours; which didn't matter 'cos it was peeing it down by Saturday morning, though I got up by mistake about 9 o'clock. And it kept on raining 'til 3o'clock, when it eased and I thought I'd take a stroll round the Pikes in the evening sun. Ha! Freezing gale on top, and the rain came back at 6 o'clock, when I was still up there, obviously, so I trudged down in a thoroughly foul evening of thick cloud and heavy rain. The dog seemed to quite enjoy it, mind, stupid bitch.

Raining harder than ever Sunday morning, so Austin re-lit the fire to boost morale, and we wondered about a lunch-time pint on the Old DG. But about 10o'clock three old guys - well, about my age actually - from Nottingham Climbers Club arrived, so we settled round the fire and discussed how much better things were in Langdale in the sixties, and everywhere else for that matter. Those conversations can last for days, but about 2o'clock we thought we'd better make a move, and as it was still lashing down it was homewards.

Funny thing is, I've rarely enjoyed a weekend so much, so yah-boo to those who missed it. The dog had the time of her life, standing at the hut gate in the pouring rain for hours on end and menacing the sheep that passed - cars actually, but when you're a collie, what's the difference? She doesn't get many cars passing up Church Street: she though the busy road up Langdale was heaven. And the moral? Don't take any notice of weather forecasts - its people who make a good meet, not the weather.

Mick Biggin