

# New Year Meet – Low Sterne, North Yorkshire

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*January 2014*

It's not every hut where you can sit in the lounge and look out through the patio doors across miles of open country. You can do just that at Low Sterne, but the downside is that you're facing South West, so if there are some deep depressions about you can see every downpour racing in and you get full value as it sluices down the double glazing.

"It's like being in a goldfish bowl," said Geoff, as we sat by the fire on the Monday morning and watched the tidal waves run down the glass. We chucked another log on, but about lunchtime it eased off to merely wet, so we ventured out to the Marton Arms, a sort of half-way house between staying in the hut and being happy or going for a walk and being miserable. We emerged to a gentle drizzle, so Heather gave up and went back to Newcastle where they celebrate without getting externally wet, and the remaining four discovered it was £6 to do the Waterfalls Walk from Ingleton, so drove up Kingsdale and snuck in the back way - down to the kiosk, turn round, and back up to Kingsdale again. Very nice and sheltered, and the waterfalls were impressive.

Back at the hut the others arrived, so we built up the fire and had a sociable quiz, in which Robin amazed and saddened everyone with his knowledge of pop music, and Tigger knew Capt. James T. Kirk's middle name<sup>1</sup>. The result was an amazing tie, after three hours of extreme mental anguish.

New Year's Eve morning we were back in the goldfish bowl, but it eased off about mid-day and the sun surprised everybody by appearing for a couple of hours. But by then the main party had been long gone on a walk from Horton so they got wet - I shan't draw the obvious conclusion from this sorry saga. I set out when the rain stopped and had a glorious afternoon of winter sunshine ascending Gragareth from Kingsdale - nuff said.

A splendid meal followed everybody's return, the wine flowing a bit too freely, and to everybody's amazement, but especially mine, I gave them The Lambton Worm', after which we retreated to the lounge and reminisced, sang, recited and generally behaved as drunks do, until midnight, when we sang Auld Lang Syne, proper words for once, and staggered off to bed, probably.



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<sup>1</sup> Tiberius, apparently. Tigger is what is technically known as a Trekkie'. Takes all sorts.

It wasn't raining in the morning, but through the patio doors I could see what was coming. The others hadn't, so mounted their bikes and Tigger and I watched them disappear into the gathering gloom with something of the feeling that peasants must have had as they watched the aristocrats going to the Paris guillotine. Sure enough, the next apocalyptic downpour rolled in, and they all came back some hours later like drowned rats, but smiling, so that was nice. Pete and Jude went walking but with much the same result. So, cups of tea all round and we settled down by the fire and had another quiz which was won handsomely by one side, but we aren't sure which. And so to bed.



So yet another Meet featuring absolutely vile weather. Still, we expect nothing better at that time of year, and the main event, the social bit, was brilliant. Much as I love Cwm Dyli and its dodgy light fittings, Low Sterne ticks all the boxes for a sociable gathering with lots of eating and drinking. Except for mountains, of course, nearly forgot about them. The mind boggles at what it must have been like further west, though, so we'll settle for uphill walks and peering into water-filled caves. But one of these years