

New Years Eve Continued

We retraced our steps back towards Otterburn for a quick stop at the site of the Battle of Otterburn, where there was a picnic area and info board, along with a large stone from the battle.



Battle of Otterburn site

The wind was absolutely savage so we did-

n't stop for too long! We made our way back down the A68 and then made our way towards Kielder, a beautiful journey despite not being via the private forest drive (toll) as that is closed for winter. Our destination was Brit Stop number , a village pub right in the heart of Kielder Forest and Water park. We were intending on eating at the pub but with it being New Years Eve food service wasn't offered all day, the menu looked good though! We opted for several drinks instead whilst getting to know the friendly barman (see below!) and then a cosy night in the van accompanied by a fillet steak and bottle of Pape! Yum.



Friendly barman, Charlie ☐



Last supper of 2016 in our home on wheels

Sunday, New Year's Day

New Years Day dawned bright yet chilly. A perfect day for a bike ride, so we dismantled the wheels and set off for a few miles on the Lakeside Way path, a wide, hard surface track that is 27 miles long around the circuit of the reservoir. We didn't realise that Kielder Water is in fact the largest reservoir in Western Europe! We didn't fancy over-exerting ourselves, we'd had a lazy morning already, so just went on a short circular which

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took us under the impressive Kielder Viaduct, then over it, and alongside the lake for a little way before turning round and returning via Kielder Castle. In actual fact it was only about 4 miles!



Kielder Viaduct



The cycle path over the Viaduct



An old railway line over the Viaduct has been transformed into a decent cycle path which goes right around the water.

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I had a good play with my drone camera around the viaduct taking some amazing shots, and we also did some Geocaching too.



Kielder Viaduct from the sky- taken on my Parrott Bebop
Drone with full HD camera

It was a lovely day and the light was simply breathtaking, until the heavens opened as the sun set for the first time in 2017. Being New Years Day, food service in our Brit Stop was again disrupted, but they were happy for us to stay put for the evening and we returned the favour by enjoying a few pints of the local ale, which was very nice!



Who says camping and caravann-
ing means Beans on toast and Frey
Bento pies..!

We had a New Year's feast of Moules Mari-
nade followed by chicken casserole for dinn-
er in the van, and just as we finished eating
we noticed a break in the pitter patter on our
roof; the rain/sleet had stopped and a quick
check through the sky light and bingo, the
stars were out. Our main reason for visiting
this area was the draw of the night time
skies. Northumbria is a Dark Skies area, and
Kielder actually has an observatory with teles-
cope. Sadly the events at the observatory
were all sold out for our trip however I'd
been itching to get my new telescope out for

play. Here was my chance. My highlight was viewing Vega- the star in which the film Contact receives extra terrestrial signals from.. cue some singing of that wonderful John Williams theme!

We wandered up 100 yards or so to Kielder Castle and set up. The sky was phenomenal. We saw the Milky Way with our naked eye, and thousands of stars. Absolutely breathtaking. Until a snowflake landed on my face. Then another. "Keith, did you just feel that" by the time he answered "Yes" we found ourselves in the middle of a snow storm! Northumbria, your weather is mental.

Monday 2nd Jan

We had another quiet yet cold night's sleep,

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the temperature dipped to -3c, but we were toasty inside. We both woke early, a little apprehensive that the snow shower we found ourselves in the middle of, may have settled, causing us problems getting out of Kielder. We needn't have worried, although there was an awful lot of ice on the ground, the road out of the forest park was clear. The weather again was gorgeous, a perfect winters day.



Our Brit Stop pitch in Kielder

About 12 miles away from Kielder, we passed a large car park and viewing area for Kielder Dam. We pulled in for a leg stretch, and slip

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slided our way across the footpath across the dam. I also managed to get some more good drone shots despite poor Jazz's protests, he's not a fan of the flying camera!



Kielder Dam



Aerial shot of Kielder Dam- taken from my Parrott Bebop drone with HD camera

The light was beautiful. After a cuppa and the last of my gingerbread house (Annie, it really is yummy!!) we hit the road once more- our destination was Hadrian's Wall.

Until next time

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