



# Rev Nigel's Coffee & Catch-up

Take time out for a cuppa and catch up on Nigel's natter.

## Oh, how time flies!

It really doesn't seem all that long ago that Rev Chris was showing me round the benefice, and I was nervously thinking, 'How will I ever remember how to get to all these churches?' I can barely believe I've been in post for over ten months.

By the time we get to the end of March I will have been ministering in the Harton Benefice for a year, will have celebrated two Easters, and therefore completed a whole liturgical cycle.

How wonderful it has been, and I am so grateful to all of you who have made me so welcome. I am now getting used to breakfasting, Sundays and Wednesdays, on fruit cake and cheese. I can also find my way around the benefice without any problems (other than a rather scary semi-pirouette in my car on the ice on the way to Howsham).

The nicest part of it all has been getting to know people. What a lovely bunch!

As the weather improves, I'll be back on the Harley riding around the benefice area and stopping off in the villages to get to know more people.



## Rural Reverend declares 'It's not so much brewing a cup of coffee as performing some sort of alchemy.'

OK, I'll fess up, I'm a complete coffee snob. As far as I'm concerned there is no such thing as a decent cup of instant coffee! Despite all the guff about 'richness' and 'smoothness' being imparted in stylish TV adverts for instant coff..., no I can't bring myself to type it again, real coffee is created by the percolation of ground freshly roasted coffee beans.

When it comes to coffee beans, they can be blended or single source. I favour single source, many of which can be traced to the individual plantation. I love the process of choosing and blending, trying to make a perfect cup of coffee for how I am feeling on any particular day.

I don't use fancy coffee filtering machines, and certainly not pods, although they can be OK, provided they can be recycled. I use a simple stove top percolator. It really isn't just a case of simply brewing up a cup of Joe, it's, for me, a form of alchemy, constantly seeking to create the perfect cup of flavoursome coffee.



The alchemist's equipment

## Becoming an OAP



So called BIG birthdays have never bothered me. Turning 40 didn't bring with it the crises experienced by some I know. 50 went by without any bother, but I enjoyed the helicopter flying lesson my family bought me, even though I nearly put the tail rotor into the ground whilst carrying out a hover exercise!

60 was a cause for celebration, and a wonderful flight in a light aircraft over York. My 65<sup>th</sup> had me joyfully soaring over the White Horse of Kilburn in a glider. You may by now have gathered there is an aeronautical theme to my 'special' birthdays.

But, as I approached 66, I felt a little melancholy about the whole thing. What was it about this that made me feel slightly out of sorts? After all, I have for some time been in receipt of professionally accrued pensions and free prescriptions. I've even been taking advantage of some over 60s concessions. It was certainly not because I knew it was not a birthday that would bring another flying adventure, but because, I realized, the state was to deem me an 'Old Age Pensioner'. It was something I had for most of my previous life, believed would happen on my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, but I will steer clear of the politics. Now I am to be given this label by the state, and, in the eyes of some who write in our dreadfully biased press, I am now a burden to the country.

Of course, that is absolutely not true, and I know I will be one of the millions of 'OAPs' who contribute continuously to society, in so many ways. But it is a label, and for me, it doesn't stick well. Sure, I'm a pensioner, and if I'm honest I don't mind the money and the bus pass, but 'old', most certainly not. Age? As my dear late Dad, who was 97 when he died, said, '*It's just a number*'.

**I've seen a bit of the world, but the Lake District will always be my favourite place.**



**A view across Grasmere to Helm Crag**

I remember the first time I went to the Lake District. I was on a 'Youth Hostelling' weekend with my grammar school. We were going to stay in the hostel at Patterdale, and as our coach drove along the length of Ullswater, I was almost overwhelmed by the beauty.

That feeling has never gone away. I love the Lake District and return there as often as I can.

I have trekked across the glaciers of Norway, climbed up and skied down the mountains of Germany, been captivated by the beauty of Egyptian desert nights, sailed the stormy Baltic in a yacht, canoed the raging rivers of the French Massif Central, camped in the forests of the Eiffel, led expeditions in the Highlands and holidayed in the Austrian Alps. But nowhere holds, for me, as much beauty as our own Lake district.

Whenever I arrive there my very soul feels at peace. And so, it was on my and my wife's recent short break in the Lakes. Of course, one has to take the weather as it comes, the very name gives away the fact that it is likely to be quite wet at times. My wife's birthday was one of those days, which was a little disappointing, but we still made the most of it with a boat trip on Windermere, during which we were given a very

interesting commentary by the skipper. I had not previously known that during WWII Sunderland Flying Boats were manufactured on the shore of Windermere, and a whole village was built to house the workers, which included a shop and a dance hall. The village was completely demolished at the end of the war and the land returned to its original condition.

The weather on the other days allowed us to enjoy wonderful walks. I hope you enjoy some of the photographs I took on those walks.



**Rydal Water**



**Rydal Cave**

This is man made, the result of 19<sup>th</sup> Century slate mining.



**Stone barns on the side of the path to Upper Easedale.**



**Easedale Tarn**



**A view from above Easedale Tarn towards Helvellyn, which is the snow-covered flat peak in the far distance. It is the second highest mountain in England.**



**Looking down on Grasmere village from above Easedale Tarn.**



**Looking back up Easedale to the waterfall below the Tarn, from near to the entry to the Lancrigg grounds.**

## Music in my life

Music is important to me. I can often be found with earphones in listening to something on Amazon Music or watching music videos on YouTube. My tastes are eclectic. Classical music is often a background to reading or studying, contemporary jazz is a go to when I just want to think of nothing, and contemporary music. I will often listen to what's currently in the charts. I do have to say though, it is difficult to get excited about Lewis Capaldi or Ed Sheeran when you've grown up listening to the likes of Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Deep Purple and Genesis. I'll even admit to being a fan of Frank Zappa, although that might raise the odd eyebrow.

Revisiting eighties music reveals how brilliantly produced some of it was, particularly bands like Spandau Ballet and ABC.

I am always on the search for new contemporary Christian Music too, and I like to share my discoveries. So, here's a couple of links to YouTube videos of Christian music you might like to have a listen to:

This first one is 'Hallelujah Sing' by The Porter's Gate, a group of Christian musicians, all well-known, who gather occasionally to create amazing music and songs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMxkbdaJJiE>

This second one is a beautiful version of the Nunc Dimittis sung by Voces 8, a group of wonderful British a capella singers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwyqJoTmPCM>

## Coffee and prayer

I hope you have enjoyed this first edition of my Coffee & Catch-up.

Before you go off to wash up the cups let's just have a moment of prayer.

*Almighty God*

*Sun behind all suns,*

*soul within all souls.*

*Show to us everything we touch and in everyone we meet*

*the continued assurance of your presence around us,*

*lest ever we should think you absent.*

*In all created things you are there.*

*In every friend we have*

*the sunshine of your presence is shown forth.*

*In every enemy that seems to cross our path,*

*you are there within the cloud*

*to challenge us to love.*

*Show to us the glory in the grey.*

*Awake for us your presence in the very storm*

*until all our joys are seen as you*

*and all our trivial tasks emerge as priestly sacraments*

*in the universal temple of your love. Amen*

**This is a contemporized version of a prayer written by George Fielden MacLeod (1895-1991). He was responsible for the rebuilding of the Abbey on the island of Iona, which he saw as the rebuilding of the Celtic spirituality of St Columba.**

