



# Coffee with the Vicar

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

## How many?!

The conversation goes something like this:

*'Are you still working?'*

*'Yes, but just part time.'*

*'What is it you do?'*

*'I'm a vicar.'*

*'Oh, right. Whereabouts is your church/parish?'*

*'Well, I have ten churches spread across eight parishes, between York and Malton, straddling the A64.'*

*'How many?! How the bloody he..., oops, sorry vicar. How do you manage that part time?'*

Now, at this point I could say that I am rushed off my feet, am really working full time, and life is so hard for us poor rural vicars, and probably, in doing so, solicit a free coffee.

But I don't. I tell the enquirer that ministering in an area the size of Guernsey across so many churches is made possible with the help of lots of wonderful people who do so much to keep things running smoothly and keep me in order. And it's a joy!



**A coffee I paid for myself.**

## There's a change brewing

As many of you will by now know, I like my coffee, and I like it real. When grinding, blending and percolating, in search of a perfect cup of Joe, my kitchen becomes like an alchemist's workshop.

However, things have had to change. During last year I was told by a doctor that my cholesterol is too high. I was prescribed statins and advised to look at my diet to try to reduce my intake of that pesky wrong type of cholesterol (LDL). I have done my best since.

You may imagine my reaction when I read a medical article informing that brewing fresh coffee without using a filter paper can actually raise one's cholesterol significantly. Using a filter paper actually filters out three cholesterol raising elements.

So, the stove-top percolator has been rehoused at the back of a kitchen cupboard, and a filter machine has been purchased. The style of coffee alchemy may have changed, but the outcome is just as flavoursome. Hoorah!



**Essential tip:**  
**Buy filter papers that are not bleached and do not contain polluting microplastics.**

## Peak District

### On our travels

My wife and I do like a trip out, and we can often be found wandering around a National Trust property and its gardens. If we manage to find a time when we are both not busy, we often head out to Nunnington, Benningborough or Goddards. We are also 'Friends' of Castle Howard, and we squeeze every last drop out of our annual membership, visiting several times throughout the year, including our pre-Christmas visit to marvel at the year's spectacular themed displays across the house. This year we enjoyed immersing ourselves into Alice's Wonderland.

Spring saw us having a couple of days in the Peak District, and in June we had a few days away with our eldest granddaughter in the Lake District, staying in a cottage in Coniston, with spectacular views across the lake.

Although we didn't manage a proper summer holiday, we did take ourselves off to north Cornwall for a week in October, and the weather, most of the time, was surprisingly good. It turned out to be worth the long drive.

Boxing day took us to Whitby. We drove out of the mist enshrouding the Vale of York and enjoyed a glorious sunny day, with a walk on the beach and the prom towards Sandsend. Our dog Bonnie shared some chips with us by the harbour in Whitby afterwards.

Topping off the year, we had a couple of nights away over New Year. I had decided I did not want to drive far, so we found hotel accommodation in Knaresborough. New Year's Day we explored the riverside walks and the town. I had forgotten what a lovely place it is. Clearly, living where we do, one does not have to travel far to enjoy some wonderful places.



Lady Bower Dam



Lady Bower Reservoir



Castleton



Cave Dale

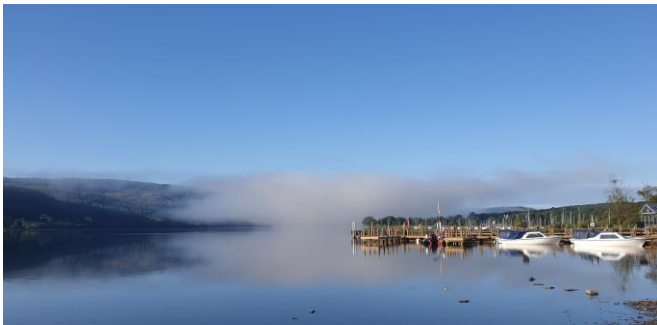


I bumped into a fellow vicar who I had trained with at Mirfield

## Coniston



The view from our accommodation  
It was so quiet and peaceful



## Cornwall

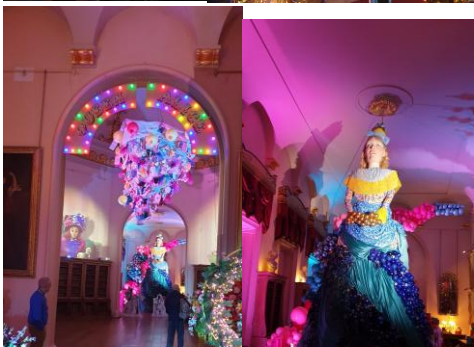


The Sea Pool at Bude



Wearing Doc Martens outside  
Doc Marten's house

**Castle Howard's Adventures in Wonderland  
was a riot of colour**



**Whitby was glorious on Boxing Day**



I had to stop to take in the beauty of these at  
Horcum

The whole of the Vale of York submerged in fog



## Knaresborough on New Year's Day



A dawn walk around the St John the Baptist church precinct with my dog the following day



A quick trip into Harrogate and a cuppa in the Victorian tearoom in the Valley Gardens before returning home



## Right to left conversion

Most people don't notice, but I am a digit down. I lost my left index finger as a result of a climbing accident in 1985. I've now been without said finger for longer than I was attached to it.

It hasn't generally bothered me very much. But one thing I was sorry about was no longer being able to play the guitar. I was never very good, but I enjoyed plucking away amateurishly at various tunes.

For a long time I just gave up on the idea of playing a stringed instrument. Then I discovered the Merlin Seagull, a Canadian made instrument which is basically a dulcimer which plays in the chord of D. It is difficult not to make music with it. The original idea was, because there are only four strings, three really as the two high Ds play the same note, I would learn right-handed. It didn't work out, so I exchanged for a left-handed model. Now I love it.

No, I'm not good, I found the conversion to playing left-handed initially quite difficult. But now I'm getting there and with right fingers getting used to forming chords, I am now giving the ukelele, with its extra string, a go. George Formby I am not, but I enjoy it.



## Music in my life

Music is so important to me. Sometimes I'm plugged in with headphones on, and completely immersed in whatever I'm listening to. Other times it's in the background as I work, perhaps the radio, or maybe Alexa is blasting out my choices. Sometimes I will search for new music, often using YouTube.

For me though, the best is live music. I have already booked tickets for this year's Magpie Festival in Sutton Park. It's in August. What made up my mind to go this year was the fact that the band Elephant Sessions is headlining one of the nights. I have loved their mix of Celtic-folk-rock for some time.

I'd like to share it with you. So, here's a link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZ3PINs2ays>

Just press control and left click to watch.

Of course I love to listen to faith music. Here is the wonderful Voces 8 with their version of 'O Magnum Mysterium' by Morten Lauridsen. It really is very soothing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZ-nuU-hda8>

## Coffee and prayer

I hope you have enjoyed this Coffee & Catch-up.

Before you clear away the cups let's just have a moment of prayer.

In a world so troubled as it presently is, this prayer taken from the Church Mission Society website seems very apt:

*Loving God,*

*We believe that you want peace.*

*We believe that you offer peace.*

*We believe that you bring peace.*

*We believe that you call us to find peace in you,*

*Live in peace with each other,*

*And pursue peace with those we*

*think of as our enemies*

*(but whose face is yours).*

*For if there is to be peace at all*

*There must be peace for all.*

*Please keep showing us the way*

*And give us the humble boldness to walk in it.*

*Don't let us give up.*

*In the name of Jesus the peacemaker we pray.*

*Amen.*