MY FAVOURITE THINGS

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Category: Observations

My online friend Jenny (@stroopwaffle) recently wrote a blog post about her favourite things and asked others to do the same; so here is my belated response following her outline.

Television

Though I'm generally a big fan of the BBC, my favourite TV shows are the two hour crime dramas that ITV produces; Morse, Lewis, Midsomer Murders, Frost and so one. If someone is killed in mysterious circumstances in the first ten minutes and ninety minutes later I've guessed who did it, I consider it an evening well spent.

Only Connect on BBC4 is a wonderful quiz, and sometimes I can even answer some of the questions.

My guilty TV pleasures are Strictly Come Dancing and the Great British Bake Off.

Books

The Bible sort of falls into a category of its own, I don't read it or relate to it in the same way as I would a novel or history book.

Of other books, I suppose Lord of the Rings must come top of the list just because of the number of times I've read it. I pick it up to read in bed on a regular basis and I guess I've read through it once every year or two for the last forty years. The sheer familiarity of Middle Earth and its people makes it ideal bedtime reading.

To be honest, it can be hard to say which specific books are my favourites; but I can identify genres that I like.

Crime Fiction; as with TV, if there is a murder early on and a good mystery to solve, I'm a happy bunny. Peter Robinson's Inspector Banks series are my favourites, but there are plenty of good writers out there.

Military History; I enjoy good, factual accounts of armies, campaigns and battles. The Second World War and the Peninsular War are particular interests, but I'll read just about any history.

Popular Science; having once been a scientist, I like to read up on scientific advances; biology and medicine are particular interests, but I'm happy to delve into quantum mechanics when the mood arises.

Theology and Missiology; this sort of falls into the work area, but I'm very happy to read anything that is even tangentially related to Bible translation, mission or the Trinity.

It is hard to identify my favourite author, but it is probably either NT Wright or Peter Robinson - my reading is rather eclectic.

Jenny mentioned her favourite poems. I don't read a great deal of poetry, but when I do, I always return to Fern Hill by Dylan Thomas and the Naming of Parts by Â Henry Reed. Both are beautiful in their own way and ask deep questions about life.

Sport

These days, I don't play much sport, though I love to run and cycle. However, I'm happy to lose many hours in front of the TV watching rugby union, cricket or road cycling.

These days, football leaves me cold; too much money has robbed the game of most of its attraction for me - though I still want to know what Sunderland are up to.

Films

I'm not a great film fan and most of the films I do see are on those tiny screens on the back of the seat in front in economy class. If pushed, I would probably have to name The Longest Day, Tora Tora Tora and The Battle for Midway as my favourites. They are excellent and fairly accurate retellings of key events in the Second World War and well worth a watch. Getting more up to date, I enjoyed the Bourne series (far better than the books) and Daniel Craig's incarnation of James Bond.

The Lord of the Rings films were fun but ultimately unsatisfying as they changed some key parts of the story.

Miscellaneous

I like animals: full stop. But dogs have a special place in my affections; Bassam (of course) is the best (with all due respects to Jenny's dog Harry). I also have a great love of Cetans; dolphins and whales. This summer, Sue and I sat at Neist Point on Skye and a minke whale swam past just under the cliff where we were sitting; pure magic.

I suppose I should decide on my favourite mountain. For most of my life, that would have been easy; Glaramara in Borrowdale. I first climbed Glaramara in 1974 and I have returned as often as I could. However, over the last few years, Causey Pike in Newlands and Bla Bhein on Skye have increasingly stolen my affections. How to resolve the question? When my knees give up and I can't drag myself up the hills, which will I want to look at? Causey Pike loses on this one, but the choice between the view of Bla Bhein reflected in loch Slapin and the rocky slopes of Glaramara rising out of Borrowdale is a difficult one. But if I had to make a choice, I'd set my rocking chair in Borrowdale - Glaramara is still my favourite.

I really don't know how I would decide on my favourite music; it varies from hour to hour. I love seventies rock, blues, celtic folk, some opera and the list goes on.

If you are a blogger or a tweeter, why don't you make a list of your favourites and link to Jenny's blog so she can see what you think.