Our church is not a traditional church. Our beliefs are very close to your mainstream Anglican or Methodist church but not a lot else is the same. We serve fresh coffee and doughnuts after the service for instance, and I don’t wear a dog collar.

Some chaplains would be aghast that I wander round Home Park in an argyle shirt and not a dog collar. They would argue that the collar is the uniform of office, and it makes you stand out and easily recognised. That’s a fair point and I ummed and arred for a while with the big decision of what to wear on match day. Ultimately though for me chaplaincy, just like Christianity in general, is all about relationship. In a dog collar people instantly recognise me as God Squad, which can be helpful. Be after a while this is no longer an advantage and the collar can become a barrier to real relationship – especially with younger people.

No longer do people in this country have a cultural understanding of the Christian faith. Most people of today’s generation weren’t dragged along to church every Sunday throughout their childhood, and that’s probably a good thing, but it leaves me with a lot of explaining to do when I first meet them.

A lot of churches today are a lot more fun, a lot more meaningful and a lot more relevant than how people might remember them. I encourage you to give it a try sometime if you don’t already. I can’t promise fresh coffee and doughnuts in every church, and nowhere is perfect, but things have changed since grandad was a lad I can tell you.

Of course when I first became Argyle Chaplain the whole dog collar thing wasn’t a problem because I had by my side the redoubtable John Rowland. John and I shared the role of Chaplain, and he looked the part: with grey hair and a dog collar I used to call him Gandalf. But he didn’t just look the part – he was a fantastic people person and combined this with his encyclopaedic knowledge of football that went way back, I used to love walking around the ground with him on a Saturday afternoon. We were only in post together a matter of months before he got a permanent transfer to be with the Lord in Autumn 2011, but you can still hear him shouting at the referee from above Home Park if you listen carefully.

That was three years ago now. How time flies. I’ll have grey hair and a dog collar before too long.