



Monday 4th June 2018
The Lion Hotel

Summary

o Introduction

There were 9 members of the Café Society group present at this meeting. Apologies had been received from too many to list. Phil K will not be present at the July meeting and it would be appreciated if a volunteer from the group would contact the group coordinator to oversee the drinks order in his absence. Thank you to Viv B for organising the drinks order this time around.

As we ran out of future discussion topics, the group spent the last 20 minutes of the meeting compiling questions for next time and decided that, from now on, the last 20 minutes of each meeting will always be dedicated to choosing next month's questions and used for discussing any last-minute/topical items that crop up.

A summary of the meeting's discussions follows.

Mike S

o Discussion Topics

Isn't it time we introduced ID cards in the UK?

- Members of the group were quick to point out that UK citizens already have various forms of ID cards like:
 - o Passports
 - o National identity cards/numbers
 - o Birth certificates
 - o Driving licenses
 - o Bus passes
- The question was therefore interpreted as being 'should it be compulsory to carry/produce ID cards'
- It was explained that in many other European countries (e.g. France), citizens are obliged to carry identity cards
- The question, 'What would be the benefits of being obliged to carry identity cards?', was put to the group and there was a struggle to come up with an answer. One suggestion was that the government might somehow use such a tactic to control immigration but it was quickly pointed out that identity cards affect people already living in a country and not those seeking to enter. One of the possible detrimental affects that was highlighted was the possibility that the government could make use of

identity cards to restrict movement around the country (such tactics were used during the miner's strikes in the 1980s and frequently in post-apartheid South Africa)

- When the group was asked if they were 'morally opposed to the concept of identity cards', most felt that they were but weren't too sure why. Suggestion for this resentment was simply that it was European mentality or that individuals don't like to be thought of as just a number
- It was believed that the only group of citizens who were keen on carrying identity cards were those young adults who needed to show proof of age in order to purchase and consume alcohol
- A big objection was raised to a scheme of compulsory identity cards if the citizens themselves would be charged in order to obtain them
- It was explained that the government has already placed responsibility of immigration issues on landlords and employers and this practise was not generally approved by the group
- It was mentioned that Winston Churchill was adamantly opposed to a system of identity cards
- The national insurance number system was believed to be the closest concept to identity cards already in existence but it was understood that there are way more N.I. numbers issued than real people due to faults in the system
- The new online Government Gateway number was quoted as another system in use that is similar to a national identity card. Some members of the group had had positive experiences in using their Government Gateway number in order to obtain passport and driving licence replacements
- A member of the group explained that ownership of a birth certificate was no concrete proof identification as anyone is permitted to obtain anybody else's birth certificate
- Not all members of the group were against the concept of identity cards but felt that it was important to have clear benefits and uses for the citizen
- Looking to the future, the group believed citizens might indeed be electronically tagged by futuristic methods like microchips inserted under the skin but for the time being, it was suggested that barcodes could be tattooed upon babies' bottoms

How has child obesity got so bad? How can it be tackled?

- The overwhelming blame for this situation was pointed at the food industry and the government for not taking action against it
- It was felt that the government has adopted an attitude that the consumption of food is purely the responsibility of the individual and enables the food manufacturing industry to encourage poor lifestyles by not placing appropriate controls
- The government however, bears the responsibility of maintaining the NHS which is heavily affected by obesity and poor diet, while the food manufacturers make no contribution
- The report expanded on further statistics that 98% of these educators are female and that the starting salary is £18,000
- With regards to children's' diets, the responsibility of parents was questioned. Sympathy was expressed for parents however, knowing that busy lifestyles with multiple jobs makes it all too easy to take the option of quick food that is the easiest to prepare and provide
- Increasing portion sizes were highlighted as a contributing factor to obesity – an influence believed to have been adopted from American culture
- Constant and aggressive marketing was blamed for the promotion of unhealthy food, particularly that aimed directly at children
- The notion of making school dinners healthy and compulsory was reinforced for a number of reasons including social issues
- Lack of exercise was cited as another reason for obesity. It was generally thought that children don't seem to 'play out' as they did in previous generations. It was however noted that those in their 30s-40s and 50s do appear to make more of a comparative effort to exercise

- The growing trend of eating in the street was criticised by some. Particularly the trend of pedestrians who always seem to have a can or bottle of fizzy drink in their hand
- It was believed that the government must be collecting vast sums of revenue from the new 'sugar tax' but concern was expressed about where this money was being spent
- Dismay was raised about the style of supermarket marketing - a whole aisle devoted to crisps and the positioning of chocolate and sweets at points of payment
- The group felt that obesity has become normalised and that change and improvement had to come from the government with little the individual can do about the situation except to join campaigns and boycott brands and chains
- A group member involved in the running of theatre bar passed around a biodegradable PLA drinking tumbler made from corn starch, which received glowing admiration from the group

Rwanda received £64 million in aid from Britain and spent £30million on a sponsorship deal with Arsenal football club to have 'Visit Rwanda' displayed on players' sleeves and advertisement screens. Is this right?

- The figure of £64million was disputed and some group members thought that this headline had been sensationalised
- It was clarified that the £30million spent by Rwanda was not connected to the £64million received in aid
- Opinions were voiced in defence of Rwanda, stating that the country has a vital dependence on tourism and needs to invest in promotion
- Some members of the group thought that the principle of donating money to a country but insisting how that country spends the money had 'colonial overtones'
- There was scepticism amongst the group about the current situation of overseas aid in general
- The group began to drift from this topic and talk about problems with wealth distribution, whereupon the book '[The Spirit Level](#)' by Kate Pickett was mentioned several times

Should Rahim Sterling be dropped from the English team after having a tattoo of an automatic rifle put on his leg?

- A group member thought it was laughable that such an issue was being made of this story when the UK government is one of the largest arms dealers in the world
- Other group members thought that prominent sportspeople have a duty to present themselves responsibly
- The group was asked to reconsider the question if the tattoo in question was of a swastika. This idea caused a lot more to think about and the many of the group thought that such a scenario would be unacceptable
- It was mentioned that figures released by the Premier League show that the average age of adults attending top-flight football games is 41
- The discussion deviated onto the general desirability of tattoos, the cost, and their increasing popularity in the younger generations, particularly with respect to females and fashion

Is Wimbledon right to insist on players wearing whites?

- The introduction of this question was immediately met with a resounding 'Yes!'
- Despite recent technicolour enhancements in other sports like cricket, the group overwhelmingly thought that a white Wimbledon was smart and traditional
- There were cries from the floor of, "It would be the end of civilisation as we know it", and, "I'm amazed we are even discussing it"

Should parents be allowed to take children out of school for holidays?

- *This topic was introduced as a last-minute time-filler*
- It was understood that this has become customary due to parents seeking to avoid expensive holiday prices during peak school holiday times and found it far more cost effective to pay school fines
- With a number of retired teachers in the group, this was identified as being a troublesome problem with detrimental effects
- One suggestion was to force holiday companies to reduce their prices accordingly but this was believed to be unachievable
- Another suggestion was to encourage a larger staggering of school holiday times to minimise the demand for a peak season
- Most of the group thought that parents should understand the importance of education. It was pointed out that the 1870 Education Act made education compulsory and free and that parents needed to be instrumental with their responsibility

○ Future Topics

The group has now agreed to reserve the last 20 minutes of each meeting as a time to discuss last-minute topical issues and decide upon the questions for discussion at the next meeting. Below is the list of topics that have been chosen for our next meeting. Hot topical issues should be emailed to the [group coordinator](#) prior to the next meeting.

- Has international tourism reached a climactic point?
- Is a two-tier society being created by IT?
- If you were forced to wear a tattoo, what would it be? Do a drawing to show all of us!
- What is the official definition of poverty?
- Is it time for cash to disappear?
- Is the dismantling of nuclear weaponry in North Korea a believable proposition?
- Is it morally right for Israelis to shoot unarmed Palestinian protesters?
- What would be a suitable job for Trump?

○ Next Meeting

The next Café Society meeting will be on **Monday 2nd July 2018** at 10.00am at The Lion Hotel (Tudor Bar room).

