



Monday 7th September at 1000hrs
The Lion Hotel

Minutes

- Introduction

Ken, Phil and Vivienne (Shilton) sent their apologies. The following members were in attendance:

- Pam Pink
- Mike Smith
- Harold Bound
- Sue Burton
- Helen Taylor
- Margaret Howson
- Joy Kay
- Viv Barker

If any member feels they would like to drop out, please let Viv Barker know, as new people occasionally ring up to ask to join.

- Discussion Topics

A short summary of the subjects and discussions follows:

Should the UK accept immigrants and if so, where does it end?

- Whichever way you do the statistics, the UK is at the bottom of the other EU countries in regard to immigrants accepted last year and this year. Germany took in 180 000 this year up to August. However it is Sweden who have taken the most in relation to the local population: 7.8 immigrants per 1000 population whereas the UK has accepted 0.5 per 1000 population.
- There was no disagreement in the room. We should open our doors to these desperate people. Nor did we wish to discriminate between immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants or any other term. They are our fellow human beings. 'If you don't want refugees – don't bomb other countries.'
- But are we not desperately short of housing for our present population, and are we not over-crowded in the ratio of population to land area? Wales was proposed as an example in need of a population influx to regenerate the country. Moreover, the lack of money to provide housing was down to the alarming non-payment of taxes by the super-rich who manage to syphon their

wealth into other countries. If that money was brought back into the UK, we could do all we needed to provide social housing and run an efficient NHS and education system.

- Harold introduced a new ingredient into the rich/poor gap by saying that those ultra-rich and powerful people were more powerful than government and that they are linked to other ultra-rich and powerful people in other countries. And they have an agenda: Zionism – i.e. a desire to create a power base in Israel and to this end they provoke war in any countries around them that they can. Some people even describe the 9/11 disaster as a Zionist conspiracy.
- When pressed on the humanity angle, not only to insist that our country takes in many more refugees, but that we should be ready personally to accept some refugees into our own homes, our altruism faltered a little. The majority in the room applauded the slogan, 'People should be able to move and work wherever they like' but then we had to admit that we are far from this ideal situation at the moment (think how difficult it is to move to Australia for example).
- Back to a practical discussion of the here and now with the refugees at our door, everybody felt that Europe should decide together the % of refugees to take. We did feel that foreign development money is largely wasted and needed now for this urgent situation.
- David Cameron may have a valid point in saying that our aid will be directed at moving refugees out of the camps on the borders of Syria, rather than refugees already in Europe. After all, those people already in Europe must have had money to pay the smugglers, so who is going to help those left back in the camps because they haven't the wherewithal to pay?
- Finally, this is much more than a momentary blip in migration patterns. With TV and modern media, the whole world can see what life is like in other countries and, if they can, many more will want to go to better their lives.
- We will also have to get used to the idea of a much greater mixing of peoples in all countries if we factor in the effects of climate change and consider that peoples will want to move to more temperate climates.

Have some organised charities lost their charitable ethos?

- We have all been noticing the unacceptable figures which are now being paid to the CEOs of charities like Oxfam. It does not seem ethical when the majority of the 'coal-face' workers are working for nothing. Pam pointed out, moreover, that most of these volunteers are very well-educated and experienced professional people, who would be very capable themselves, of running the organisations at a local or even national level.
- Secondly, these big charities are employing commercial companies to increase their revenues. They do this by using hard commercial tactics, like phoning existing contributors to ask them to increase their direct debits, or selling on the details of contributors to other organisations. Recently we have read of cases where elderly persons have committed suicide after being pestered by charities.
- Another ruse used by charities is to pay people to collect money in town centres, which has resulted in the new term 'chugging' to denote more aggressive requesting of money in the streets. Pam was approached by a man in military uniform who asked for money, which she found quite daunting. In any case, shouldn't the government look after the 'heroes' it sends to fight on their behalf?
- Gift aid is all very well too, for charities, but what about Gift Aid claimed by Public Schools – they who pay no tax in the first place? OK they do a little for

the town schools now and then but they are too well-rewarded by the state in this manner. So, for every £20 000 fees they take in, they also claim a £4 000 tax 'refund' from the state.

How far should we judge people in high office by their private lives?

- We started by saying that what is done in private, if not illegal, is best left private. However, when we mentioned outrageous expenses claimed and considered the whisperings of child abuse in high places or even the illegality of war with the Chilcott report, we began to change our minds. Unfavourable information about people in high places is still being hidden from the public and the media, whether it be the newspapers or the TV are controlled by these people (Zionists were mentioned again here). We felt that our country would be a healthier place if it was all outed – whether to do with finances, sex or inordinate power.

Should the NHS pay for alternative medicine?

- We began by asserting that the NHS really hasn't the money to pay for extras like acupuncture and the like – especially where they are not proven to be curative in themselves. What about the placebo effect, which can be enormous? One member saw a TV programme where someone had open-heart surgery with no anaesthetic – only acupuncture.
- We could find no strict rule to apply here. More important was the over-subscribing of antibiotics and the necessity of R and D for new antibiotics.

Should the Naked Running man be allowed to continue?

- Comical though the subject seemed and although we all began by trying to assert this gentleman's right to (un)dress as he will, we couldn't avoid the fact that we live in a society and we must respect that society's mores. Finally, we felt that his ten years spent in prison doesn't really deserve our campaigning. There are people much more unjustly treated than him and after all, he can walk out a free man with the application of a cloth.

● **Future Discussion Topics**

- The 14 year-old's naked selfie sent to a girl
- Do visitors to the UK not have the right to freedom of speech?
- Should we abolish the House of Lords?
- Should there be a Minimum/Living Wage?
- Should we buy cheap chickens/cheap clothes?
- What is the future for the BBC?
- What is spirituality?

● **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on **Monday 5th October at 1000hrs** at The Lion Hotel. The topics for this discussion will be posted on the Café Society webpage nearer the time.

Meanwhile, the next Coffee Time at the Beaconsfield Club is on Friday 2nd October at 10.30am – 12.30pm. Pop in and see who's there, bring your laptop/tablet to the 'IT Corner' with any niggling questions you have, chat to others from different groups and help to inform any new or potential members.

U3A COFFEE TIME

Take a break from your shopping
Pop in for a tea or coffee and general
Shrewsbury U3A chit chat

Art Appreciation, Birdwatching, Bridge 1, Bridge 2, Chess, Cinema, Creative Writing, Digital Photography, Discussion, Fishing, Gardening, Golf Croquet, History, Music, Nature Watch, Reading, Science, Sewing, Society, Table Tennis, Travel, Visual Arts, Wine, Yoga, and more.

THE FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

10.30am to 12.30am
The Beaconsfield Club
Meadow Place opposite the bus station

Map labels: River, Smithfield Rd, Meadow Place, Castle Gates, Bus, Beaconsfield, Library, Train, Castle.

$E=mc^2$

