



**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016**  
The Lion Hotel

## Minutes

### o Introduction

Ken, Denise, Harold and Margaret H sent their apologies

Members present were:

Pam, Margaret T, Viv B, Helen, Marilyn, Sue Burton, Sue Batchelor, Irene, Pam W, Mike H, Libby, Joy, Mike S, and Helen

### o Discussion Topics

A short summary of the subjects and discussions follows:

#### Drugs and the Olympic Games

- This year's Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro were marred by the accusation that Russia, as a nation, were accepting, nay encouraging, their athletes to take drugs in order to outperform the other nations. The Olympic governing body however, stopped short of banning Russia from competing, and left it to individual sports to make their own decisions. Only one or two disciplines banned Russian entrants.
- Russia responded, as expected, by insisting that the West were conspiring against them.
- In the end, said Pam P, it's the drug companies that win.
- Another unfair situation, that of categorising the disabilities of athletes in the Paralympics, was mooted. Is it fair to have a one-legged athlete competing against an athlete with no legs? And although it was accepted that the Paralympics should be more about celebrating the courage and resilience of disabled athletes, competition is every bit as fierce as in the ordinary Olympics.
- What about anomalies between the genders of athletes? One member cited that case of a female athlete whose test showed she was genetically more male than female? Doesn't she have an unfair advantage over other female athletes?
- Despite the awareness that such intense competitiveness ruins 'the sporting spirit', it was acknowledged that the Olympics fulfils an excellent role in international diplomacy and brings other, sometimes little-known countries to world attention. A large majority

of the group watched the televised Olympics, but surprisingly, two of the three men present didn't.

### **What is the purpose of Art?**

- This question was an exercise in definitions. Pam started off with 'the creation of order out of chaos', which was quickly followed by 'a reflection of the social history of the times'. Thus, not only paintings and sculptures, but the work of Capability Brown is art too.
- Art is communication – commenting on life at a level beyond speech (Banksy comes to mind here).
- Thomas Hardy called art 'intensified expression' ('just like music', said Libby).
- Before photography, paintings were a record of our lives. Portrait paintings did exactly the job family photographs do now, which might explain why, after photography began to do the job much more accurately, quickly and cheaply, artists had to find other ways to depict that 'intensified expression' and so the expressionist and modernist movements began.
- Phil pointed out that art has always also been an expression of power and riches, which explains the ever-rising costs of sought-after works. From that, it follows the art is also an investment.
- The purpose of art may be to inspire and uplift, but if art is also an expression of riches, then it's purpose must also, to some degree and in some cases, be to make money.
- What about art in the form of tattoos? We agreed they were a way to communicate and an 'intensified expression', even 'a reflection of the social history of the times' but surely they cannot be said to 'create order out of chaos'.
- Perhaps rather cynically we acknowledged that 'art' is so personal an idea that it cannot be defined or judged. There are instances where a pile of bricks on the floor of a gallery were said to be 'art', or some random words said to be 'poetry'.
- Then there is Tracy Emin's bed.

### **Do we choose who we love?**

- Viv B started off rather curmudgeonly with the case of those beautiful girls on the arms of those older, unprepossessing but rich men. Could they simply not help themselves falling in love with these men? From this a large majority of us agreed that women are attracted to money and power. This may not have always been ruthless and greedy, but a way to assure a woman that any offspring would be well-provided for.
- In other cultures, other attractions prevail. In Africa, said Mike H, who took a group of youths out there on a charitable project, it's the plump girls who are the pin-ups. This is easily understood in a place where food is not plentiful and hard work is the norm.
- More controversially, it was suggested that everybody (men and women alike) wants to marry someone like their mother. The explanation for this was that we all experienced love firstly from our mothers and we want to replicate that.
- In any case, loving and falling in love are different; falling in love has some sexual connotation. There is also 'fancying' someone, which is a lighter, non-committal version of 'falling in love'. 'Falling in love' is like a disease; it attacks you like a disease and, even after the suffering stops, it takes two years to discover if you are cured.

- No-one suggested that we had a rational thought-out choice in the matter. Love is something that happens to us. Maybe that's why, as Phil told us, almost 50% of marriages end in divorce.

### Can you admit to a lie that you are glad that you told?

- It did not take long for us all to admit to 'white lies' – the sort of lie which does no harm, in fact does good; for example, complimenting a friend on her new dress.
- From there, most of us had recollections of falling in with the false reality of a relative with dementia. Again, we dubbed these as 'white' lies.
- Then came the lies which helped us and couldn't really be called 'white': Telling the boss you were ill, when really you just hadn't anyone to look after a child, telling lies on C.V.s which may have got you the job, and one member confessed to stealing a banana rather than have to explain why she didn't want to go to confession at church.
- one member pointed out that often it's the bluffers who come off best in life, but then, according to Mark Twain, 'If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything', which may be a relief as senility sets in.

### ○ Future Topics

- Should we disestablish the Church of England?
- Should we ban the burkini?
- 'Do as you would be done by' – Is it really the Golden Rule?

The group is always in need of new topics to discuss. Please email your suggestions to:  
[vivienne.barker@gmail.com](mailto:vivienne.barker@gmail.com)

### ○ Next Meeting

The next Café Society meeting will be on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 at 10.00 am at The Lion Hotel (Tudor Bar room).

