

Discussion

We are interested in current affairs of a wide variety. Most members bring cuttings from various sources to the group. Sometimes TV and radio programmes might be the root for discussion. At times when we feel we are short of facts we may research a special topic. With up-to-date information we hope to gain understanding and it might even result in adjusting our earlier views. We are a very mixed group with a variety of past experiences in life and work. This results in great diversity of beliefs and attitudes and thus ensures a lively debate, sometimes controversial but always ending on friendly terms and looking forward to our next political, moral, international or domestic theme. Who knows what next month's news will bring!

French

We aim to update our earlier introduction to the French language by listening to contemporary French on cassettes, translating articles on French current affairs and through learning some grammar, modern vocabulary and facilitating conversation.

Garden

The aim of the Garden Group is not to physically garden but to admire and appreciate other people's efforts. We visit gardens open to the public, usually within a fifty mile radius, maximising the number of members to the willing drivers. We also visit gardens open under the National Gardens Scheme which are usually open at weekends. The day out invariably includes lunch and of course the buying of plants for our own gardens.

Genealogy

Members research their family history over a wide area of the UK, helping and supporting each other in our personal journey. Using Censuses, parish records, indexes and research avenues now available on line we have also been able to trace ancestors and their descendants who emigrated or started new lives further afield, and have discovered how they lived. If you have begun your adventure into your family history or would like to do so we would be pleased to have you join us.

History

The group is self led. The group as a whole chooses the historical period we wish to study and each person researches an aspect of this period and then presents a paper to the group. It is up to each member how much they read around the main subject. We have mainly studied English history with a little Welsh and Scottish history as it touches on events in England. We began in 2006 since when we have studied Victorian England, the Plantagenets and the Civil War.

Landscape Archaeology

The aim of the group is to look at a range of different landscapes during a walk, which will vary in length between 2.5 and 4 miles depending on the location of features under examination. Archaeology, architecture, geography, geology, history and natural history may feature in any walk. A pub lunch usually rounds off the expedition. No apologies are made for the occasional severity of the going on some walks but the aim is to see interesting features and the leader has no control over where nature or man has chosen to put them!

Language

The Language Group meets to discuss a wide ranging area of subjects and topics including derivation of words, varieties, uses and functions of language, grammar, semantics, spoken and written forms of language, indeed any aspect of language that interests us. Each month a member presents a topic that they have chosen to research and encourages the other members to participate in discussion of the topic.

Literature

The Literature Group reads and discusses works written in English, including translations of books written in other languages. It is wide ranging in its choice of authors and texts, engaging with writings from early times up to the present. We aim to cover examples of all genres and forms, comedy, tragedy, satire, stories, poems, biographies, autobiographies, plays etc, as well as themes and topics which interest us. The programme for the year is drawn up in advance and a member of the group introduces the subject chosen for each session.

Medieval Studies

The group looks at all things medieval, from costume to medicine, castles to social structure. We do not restrict ourselves to the history of the period but try to be as wide ranging as possible. Members take it in turns to research some aspect of medieval life, trades, professions, religion, law, food, agriculture, superstitions, science etc. They then present their findings to the group, encouraging group contributions, and the sharing of ideas and knowledge.

Painting

This is a relaxed activity group where individuals set their own pace and subject material. They are encouraged to paint in the medium they prefer. This ranges from water colour, pastel, acrylic through to oil. Members supply their own materials but help and instruction is given if required and standards are from beginner to accomplished. The accent is on friendliness first, and fellow artists actively encourage one another and provide a considerable amount of help to new comers.

Philosophy I

This group takes the form of a philosophical discussion among members. On the whole we use A. C. Grayling's series of essays on aspects of ethics, culture and ideas. Recently we have also refereed to John Fowle's book "The Aristos" and occasionally essays by Alan de Botton.

Philosophy II

The second Philosophy started as a result of demand and follows a similar pattern. Being newer we are behind the first group but no less analytical! Topics of the time and moment including newspaper articles have also featured in recent sessions.

Photography

A beginners guide to digital photography over a twelve month course. To understand Camera types, Downloading and archiving, What all the controls mean, Composition, Light and flash, Types of photography, Simple digital darkroom applications, Framing, Viewing and sharing your photographs.

Play Reading

The Play Reading for Pleasure group provides an opportunity for any member, whether experienced or not, who has a desire to "read" a play to be able to do so in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Plays are chosen with an open mind, whether they be comedy or tragedy, and consideration is given to plays that can be read in one session and which allow each member to participate.

Poetry

Joined by a love of poetry in all its forms we have taken a variety of themes such as "places, love, regrets, childhood" etc. to consider and explore the work of many different poets. Group members participate in finding and reading appropriate poems and occasionally leading. We have also made brief studies of selected poets.