

What's it all about? - Alfie

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Well as it turned out, Alfie didn't know, which is hardly surprising. Philosophers have been puzzling over this question since the days of Socrates – roughly 2,000 years ago.

However, this has not stopped me and six other members of the U3A Philosophy Group gathering together in our leader's sitting room and concentrating our total brain power on this, and other problems.

Despite the fact that between us we have millions of neurons all fired up, we have not yet worked it out. Although we have had a little success, we are agreed that it is not 84 – or whatever number The Hitch Hiker arrived at when his guide got him to the end of the galaxy.

So why do we do it you might ask. Well, because there are seven of us then I suppose that, as we are tyro philosophers, there must be at least seven answers to that question and in my case quite a few.

To begin with: I think it sounds impressive when I tell people that I study philosophy at the U3A.

I also hope they will think that I am an intellectual and that my senior moments are really periods of deep thought, when I am merely trying to remember their names.

Seriously though, when I look back throughout these years there are times when I recognise that, thanks to Helen Henwood's style of leadership by example, I have learned more about philosophy than I realise – although I still cannot decide whether to believe that we are all determinists whose daily actions are controlled by our past, or existentialists responsible for all we think and do.

However, one reason must apply to us all and that is – based on the fact that most of us have been attending the meetings for about five years now – they must be enjoyable.

When I think about it, this is what the U3A for me is all about; learning new skills perhaps but above all, having an enjoyable time and making new friends.

