

March 7th – Dr Georgina Dodd

On March 7th Dr Georgina Dodd talked about her doctoral research when she gave a talk entitled 'How components of diet affect cognitive decline.' She pointed out that from our early years of childhood until our 20s there is strong cognitive growth; thereafter there is a slow but steady decline until the ageing process often leads to dementia /Alzheimers disease and sometimes Parkinson's disease, all diseases associated with memory loss, a gradual decline in the use of motor skills and, for many but not all, a decline in higher order cognitive functions. Given the age range of most of the Society's members this meeting was extremely well attended as we all were curious to know in what ways our diets might help or hinder our cognitive decline!

It was fascinating for some, but frustrating for others, because, apart from talking about the benefits of fruit and vegetables, especially citrus fruits, and other red fruits that have anti-inflammatory and anti-carcinogenic properties, the speaker also stressed the advantages of drinking tea and cocoa. More than anything, though, most of the talk was devoted to extolling the benefits of eating, or dinking the juice of blueberries. Through numerous experiments conducted with children, middle aged adults and the elderly it has been shown that the greatest impact of eating blueberries, in whatever form, is on the elderly. Not only is cognitive decline slowed but in most cases there was a noticeable improvement in physical well-being and motor skills. Whether or not there was a rush on blueberries from Waitrose in the days following is unknown, but we all gained some useful knowledge from this most interesting talk.