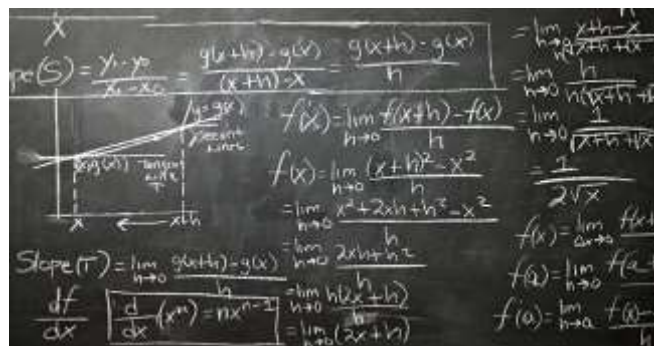


# Café Scientifique Headingley

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at 7:30pm

- **Mathematics: Invented, Discovered, or Neither?**  
by *Jack Woods, Simon Hewitt, and Rob Knowles*



**Outline:** Contemporary philosophy of mathematics tends to divide along three lines. First, there are those who treat mathematics—numbers, functions, shapes, Hilbert spaces, etc—as self-subsisting objects which, though neither concrete or psychological, are nevertheless as real as tables and thoughts. Second, there are those who deny that there are any such things and treat our mathematical practices as something akin to a game—albeit a game with very serious consequences for building bridges. Third, there are those (there are always those) who are unsatisfied with either answer and call into question the formulation of the problematic itself. These folks tend to stress that mathematics is *objective* even if it isn't about *mathematical objects* in any sense familiar from our other talk of objects.

The three participants, will each take up and defend one of these three positions. They'll spell out the reasons for their position, what the most plausible recent versions of it look like, and the particular problems each position faces. Our hope is that the back and forth between us, as representatives of each position, will give witness to the complexities and fascinating problems facing any account of mathematical discourse.

**Biogs:** *Jack Woods is University Academic Fellow and worked on issues involving the demarcation of the logical constants, mathematical structuralism, and proof-theoretic accounts of the logical constants. He doesn't believe in mathematical objects at least three days a week. Rob Knowles holds a British Academy postdoctoral fellowship. He works on issues relating to the applicability of mathematics in science. He looks at what we can conclude about the nature of mathematics based on the role it plays in scientific explanation and discovery. Simon Hewitt is Leverhulme Early Career Fellow. He is interested in the way mathematics raises questions about our basic ways of reasoning. He thinks that it is important not to lose sight of the fact that maths is a human practice, a tool we use together to explore the world around us, when we think about it philosophically. He's written particularly on logic and set theory. All 3 work at the University of Leeds*

**Venue:** The New Headingley Club, 56 St Michael's Rd., Leeds LS6 3BG

**Time:** Club opens at 7:00pm for drinks & the room at 7:30pm; talk begins promptly at 7:45pm

**Entry:** Donation please for room hire and expenses: **£3 at the door**



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