



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS
DELTA KAPPA GAMMA

GREAT BRITAIN NEWS



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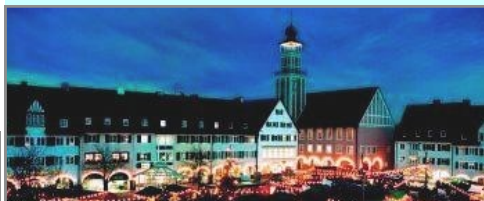
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At our State Conference in Canterbury we had some wonderful examples of members' artwork including embroidery, poetry, photography, writing and painting. Many members added to the wonderful display. This got me thinking about what members do with their 'spare' time. For this issue I asked some retired members this question and their responses show the 'colour in our lives',

Di Billam writes about the European Forum meeting. I was pleased to hand over to the new Forum Chair Eija Paukuri from Finland. There is nothing like face-to-face contact with people. The committee got through a great deal of work, but we did take time to visit the local market square in Freudenstadt, (Black Forest), which is Germany's largest market square.



Cover photos:

Bettina Kulsdom's painting 'Arctic Lights', Carol Dawson's church window (where her choir sing), and Damien Hirst's Beagle 2, to be found at The Royal Society.

Copy please for the Summer Edition, on education and school visits, to dbell_is@yahoo.co.uk by 24th April.

ELECTION OF OUR STATE PRESIDENT

Our current State President, Diane Billam, will complete her biennium in office on 1st July 2011. Nominations for her successor, and for a new Vice State President and Executive Secretary, are invited and a form is enclosed for this purpose. Please give careful thought to members who you would like to see considered for these important posts, and then have the courage to persuade them to stand for office!

Diane Billam

STATE ORGANISATION PRESIDENT: 2009-2011

It has been a busy time since our last Great Britain News. Having attended the very successful International Convention in Spokane in August, my sights are now set on what is happening this year. The Great Britain State Conference is to be held at the Soroptomists Club, Bayswater Road, on 9 April 2011. You will find a Registration Form with this Newsletter. You will remember that it was decided that this year's conference would be for one day only, to keep costs down, as we are very aware that funds, both for us as individuals and for the organisation, are stretched. I hope you will be able to attend, as I am sure we shall as always enjoy the day.



Photo by Jim Miller

I attended the European Forum meeting in Freudenstadt, Germany, in November. You will see my report elsewhere in GB News, together with a photo. As we are an English-language organisation, I thought it only fair that I should offer to take the minutes, along with my colleague from Estonia, as English is my first language, compared with its being the second, third, fourth or even fifth of some of the others! Kate York was also present, as our European Regional Director, together with Diana Bell, who attended as the outgoing European Forum Chair. We decided who should receive the European Achievement Award, which will be announced at the Regional Conference, discussed the budget, and decided that in order to plan the Forum's contribution to the Regional Conference, we would set up GoToMeeting, with help from DKG HQ. This system provides online any-time electronic meetings, to allow the conduct of business in a seamless web-based environment. Virtual meetings help save costs, extend meeting times for better convenience, and assist groups in completing tasks efficiently.

As this is an odd year (2011), we need to elect our new State President, Vice President, and Executive Secretary. You will find a nomination form herewith – don't forget that before nominating anyone, you need to gain their agreement. I am happy to say that our current Vice President, Sheila Roberts, has agreed to her nomination as State President being put forward. Dorcas Rogers (Alpha Chapter) and Robbie Scahill (Gamma Chapter) have agreed to be nominated as State Vice President and Executive Secretary respectively, although of course it is open to you to nominate others for these roles.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our Regional Conference in Steinbach, near Baden Baden, Germany, in August. I have already contacted several people to notify them that I should like them to attend various training sessions, representing Great Britain, before the official start of the conference. Further news and a registration form will appear in the March edition of DKG News.

I am so happy that our chapters continue to thrive, with regular talks and other meetings, including visits to such places as The Royal Society, Lanhydrock, and Glyndebourne. We also know how to enjoy ourselves at the Party held by each chapter before Christmas. More in our Chapter Reports. So the last few months have been busy, with the next few promising to be even more so. That's what it means to be part of a thriving organisation – let's all do our bit to get more members to join and share our activities with us.

Diane Billam *Gamma Chapter*

REGIONAL DIRECTOR - The first four months

As soon as the Spokane International Convention was over, the new Regional Directors began work on a 'crash course' or 'total immersion' into the duties which the new appointment involves! We worked through Sunday morning, then received our 'homework' to be completed before the really intensive training in Little Rock in mid-September. Corlea Plowman told us that she would definitely be able to tell if the work hadn't been done properly, so I came home armed with a Manual for Regional Directors and a copy of the Strategic Action Plan for the Society as required reading.



Carolyn Rants, Immediate Past International President, with Kate York (right).

In Little Rock, I didn't have a moment to venture outside the famous Peabody hotel from the time our training began until it ended. The training was thorough, well-planned and very intensive. Corlea could definitely tell if homework had been done or not – I was grateful for the long flight from Heathrow to Dallas to refresh my memory before I arrived. The sheer volume of paper which I accumulated was frightening, but I found the whole experience very useful and felt I was prepared for the next step, which was to be the first official meeting of the Steering Committee in Germany for planning the 2011 Regional Conference.

I duly flew to Karlsruhe-Baden airpark towards the end of October for a few days of preparation with Brigitte Wichmann, the State President and Chair of the Steering Committee. We visited the bank chosen for the conference account and managed to achieve the status of official signatory to the account, which was quite an achievement in itself. An agenda was constructed, and we had a meeting with the Co-Chair and the Treasurer to draw up a draft budget. We also visited the main conference venue, the site for the Banquet and the venue for the Night on the Town meal. These activities don't sound very exacting, but they seemed to take an inordinate amount of time.

On the morning of Saturday, 29th October, we had a 5-hour non-stop drive (and I do mean non-stop) from Kippenheim to Fulda for the meeting of the Steering Committee. This was the point at which I was exceedingly grateful for the

training sessions in Spokane and Little Rock, because I actually felt as if I (almost) knew what I was talking about. It really did help to have been a member of the steering committee for the 2007 European Regional. I had managed to prepare a 'job diagram' and 'job descriptions' for the majority of tasks involved in planning and running a regional conference and these turned out to be useful.

I flew home on Monday 1st November, to return to Germany on Friday the 5th for the meeting of the European Forum Committee. This meeting was very hard-working, and was chaired positively by Eija Paukkuri. We accomplished all the tasks on the agenda and had very valuable opportunities to exchange ideas and opinions. The minutes of the meeting are on the European website, so that you can see what was accomplished.

Returning home on 7th November, I then prepared to set off for Austin on the following Saturday. This visit had a three-fold purpose (well, four if you count a few days relaxation afterwards). We began on Sunday 14th with meetings for Regional Directors, which continued on Monday until lunchtime. At this point, I was involved in an interesting diversion to obtain a prescription for some medication that I had managed to leave at home. This involved a visit to a walk-in surgery and to a pharmacy which was in a 20-year time warp.

Medication ordered, the next timetabled event was the start of the Administrative Board meeting. We achieved a phenomenal amount in sessions which took place until Wednesday afternoon. On Thursday 18th, I attended a meeting of the International Speakers Fund Committee. We matched up requests with speakers, then launched into a major overhaul of ways to promote and develop the role and benefits of the committee. When the other committee members left on Thursday afternoon, I joined Corlea for a discussion about aspects of the European Regional which didn't need to include the rest of the Board or the Regional Directors.

The International Speakers Fund Committee in the drawing room at Headquarters in Austin:
Clockwise: Dr Jensi Souders, (International President), Kate York, Dr Lace Marie Brogden, Corlea Plowman, Claudia Estrada (Area Rep-Latin America) and Dr Barbara Baethé (Chair).



After supper that evening, I joined a friend for a few days of relaxation before coming home. Amongst other things we achieved was a visit to the phenomenal Catherine Davis in Fredericksburg, Texas, who has made an almost unbelievable recovery from a stroke early in July.



We also went on a river cruise organised by 'Vanishing Texas', during which some previously injured birds of prey were returned to the wild



Catherine Davis, left, Chair of the Revision of the Constitution Committee. Behind Kate York is Dr Karen Duke.

– a fabulous experience.

On Monday 22nd, I will admit to visiting *Chico's* rather successfully, before returning to Headquarters to complete business unfinished from the previous Thursday, involving exchange rates and block bookings for hotels. I flew home overnight, landing at Heathrow at 11.40am and was in school by 2.00pm for tutorial interviews with three Newly Qualified Teachers. Retirement? I think not!

Kate York Gamma Chapter

THE EUROPEAN FORUM: NOVEMBER 2010

The latest European Forum Committee meeting took place in Freudenstadt, Germany, in November. It was hosted by our German State Representative, Christa Dunker-Hopferwieser, who bravely put up six of us in her house, and fed ten of us all weekend – what a star!

There were representatives from our nine European Member States, some of whom send their State President, as we do. Others prefer to send someone else, to spread the load on the State President. There are pros and cons for these two approaches, but I think that with our current membership, it makes sense that the State President represents us, so that she is aware of what is going on in the European arena. Some of the other European member states have many more members and chapters than we do. Of course it is the responsibility of the Representative to ensure that everyone in her country gets to hear what has been discussed and decided. For this reason I have distributed the Minutes to members of the Executive Committee and to Chapter Presidents to pass on to their members. The Forum was also attended by Kate York, European Regional Director, and Diana Bell, past Forum Chair.

Maintaining and increasing membership is important across Europe, as we know, and we asked that Sweden and Iceland, both of whom are growing in membership, should pass on their knowledge to the rest of us, to develop a

coherent programme, and share ideas. The European website is now up and running, a major achievement, and a valuable communication tool for all European members – do make sure you access it to find out what is going on (www.dkgeurope.org). The minutes of all Forum meetings are available there.

There were three strong nominations for the European Achievement Award, and the Forum voted on, and selected, the winner, which will be announced at the Regional Conference.

It is noticeable that a very strong European ethos is developing in our Region, which all member states strive to nurture. This will be reinforced when we attend the European Regional Conference in Steinbach, near Baden Baden, Germany, in August, although of course we also hope that members from other parts of DKG will attend. Kate York told us how the planning was progressing for the conference. The International President has stipulated that one day of the conference must have a strong educational focus, while other days can be broader based. We looked at the budget: we receive \$3000 per year to cover costs of Forum meetings, which this year translated into €2110 after conversion, to which was added €315 carried over from the last event.

We discussed at length the plans for the next 2 years: increasing membership, celebrating World Teachers' Day, held last year in October, how to involve the media in our activities, setting up an exchange programme, and planning for the Pre-Regional Conference Seminar, which hopefully will be advanced via the medium of GoToMeeting, an online meeting group. We also need to plan the next session of the European Forum, attended by all European members at the European Regional Conference in August.

The next meeting of State Representatives will take place in Aalborg, Denmark, in November 2011. Please let me know if there is anything you think we should be doing in this Forum, or if you have anything to contribute. For instance, does anyone know how we celebrate World Teachers' Day in this country?

Diane Billam *Gamma Chapter*



The European Forum Committee: Back row, from left:

Christa Dunker-Hopferwieser (Germany), Mette Heiberg (Norway), Diane Billam (GB), Ingibjorg Jonasdottir (Iceland), Ruth Hjorth-Nielsen (Denmark).

Front row left:

Eija Paukkuri (Finland - Chair), Kate York (Regional Director), Vivian Repko (Netherlands), Catherine Bringselius-Nielsson (Sweden), Anu Aniste (Estonia).

SINGKREIS MALLOCA

Little did I think when I came to Mallorca some 20 months ago that I would now be conducting a German speaking choir.

When I first arrived I was looking for something to do in the small amount of time that I had left when I was not looking after my husband Peter. I found out that there was a choir that rehearsed in my village, Vilafranca, during the day. I was invited to join them and enjoyed singing with them each week. Soon after Peter died, the conductor asked me if I would take some of the rehearsals. Since then he has retired due to ill health and I have taken on the role of conductor.

There are some 20 members, although they do not all live full-time on the island and this does present a few problems. The other little problem is the language. However, one of the ladies in the choir speaks Spanish, English, German and French so is able to help me explain what should be happening. This is particularly helpful when organising events and travel arrangements.



La Cura

We sing at church services, including weddings, in many of the beautiful churches and sanctuaries found on the Island (see La Cura, left). We also perform at Residencias and every year we give a concert in the village. We are soon to celebrate the Golden Wedding of two of the mem-



bers in a stunning modern church, with beautiful stained glass, just outside Palma (see photo, front of GB News). After the weekly two hour sessions of rehearsals several of us stay to have lunch at the local restaurant together.

At the end of September the choir celebrated its 10th anniversary by going to Baden Baden. We stayed right in the old part of the town and divided our time up between performing, sightseeing, eating and drinking. We were well received, and in one place a lot of the audience joined in with the songs they knew in the second half of the concert.

I certainly feel I have taken on quite a challenging task and I can't pretend this is an easy exercise for me, the language difference being quite a hurdle because in my efforts to learn Spanish and understand Malloquin I seem to have forgotten the



Carol is on the left, facing the camera

German I knew. Fortunately I can still sing it. Also we could do with some younger members - a familiar cry!

One of the ladies in the village asked me to set up an English Conversation Group. In fact it has become an exchange session. I help them with their English and they attempt to teach me Malloquin. We meet over teatime and have a lot of fun. I am also attending a Spanish Language Course.

Carol Dawson *Gamma Chapter*

NEW SEASONS

In an email to Diana Bell I said that I would be looking forward to the new season activities in September and she asked me to write an article about what they might be. I reflected on this for a while and suddenly it struck me that it would sound odd to many people to be thinking of September as the 'new season'. Of course, I realised, that once a teacher, always a teacher and as the school year begins in September, I continue to think that way. In addition, the caravan season finishes at the end of October until 1st March, so the four months of the closed site are a separate time of year.

So what would this new season mean to me? With my mother more or less settled in her nursing home, theoretically I would now be free to re-start some of my regular activities and possibly start some new ones. Of course, what follows could also be interesting to those who wonder what they will do with their new retirement!

I began by looking at the prospectus for the local further education college. Adult education now seems to revolve around IT, Salsa, photography and foreign language courses. None of those appealed to me, so I will have to look elsewhere for philosophy or literature. In the meantime there is my usual art



Bettina with some of her pictures



group each week with its workshops and demonstrations. I have actually sold two of my pictures now – one an abstract watercolour entitled Arctic Lights, and the other, Storm at Sea, which I did not scan before I framed and sold it!

We have two exhibitions a year with the art group and I also sell my knitwear at these. The next one will be in November and I have been building up my stock of scarves, hats and blankets for this, (see picture right).



When I first began living permanently at Normans Bay in November 2006 I joined the local WI branch, Anderida. They have a monthly meeting with speaker, but there is also a monthly craft class, coffee morning and games afternoon. Other out-

ings, dinners, lunches, reading group and friends have emerged from this. I now also belong to the Gardening Club, attend a monthly charity quiz evening, try to get to the monthly historical society meetings and swim early on Monday mornings at the Sovereign Centre, (only during winter – swimming in the sea is still preferable and we do this from April onwards). Later in October I shall be attending a three day watercolour workshop in Alfriston – my fourth one. Based at Dean’s Place Country Hotel, we revel in the luxury of log fires and cordon bleu cooking, plus all day painting.

But what really took over this month of October was finally a new kitchen being installed which means that I shall have an electric cooker at last. For those who have not yet visited my cottage in Normans Bay, I should explain that I had a solid fuel Rayburn in the kitchen and open fire in the living room. This was wonderful except when the family or friends came to eat and I could only do (very tasty!) casseroles as I could not rely on the Rayburn to do anything but slow cooking.



I suspect the next month will be spent ridding the cottage of dust. As I write, the sink unit is being installed, so the water is turned off and the bath is full of the contents of the airing cupboard. Please come and visit to see the new kitchen and (hopefully) the new wood burner in the living room and enjoy a winter walk on the beach.

There is actually a PS because I went on Thursday last to our local swimming pool and gym, (the Sovereign Centre)

and joined their "Young at Heart". We can do short mat bowling, line dancing, swimming and aquarobics. There are also badminton, gym, sauna and steam rooms available.

Bettina Kulsdom Alpha Chapter

PLYMOUTH PROPRIETARY LIBRARY 1810-2010:

A tale of survival

Plymouth Proprietary Library, originally known as Plymouth Public Library, was established in 1810 as a subscription library for local gentlemen. John Foulston, a London-based architect who had won a competition to design a theatre and hotel complex in Plymouth was tasked with designing a library with Reading and Newspaper Rooms. Until this was completed in 1812, the library operated out of Plymouth Guildhall.

In 1850 the library helped to save a magnificent art collection for the people of Plymouth. The Cottonian Collection of paintings, drawings, sculpture, furniture, ceramics and learned books was offered to Plymouth Corporation with the proviso that it was kept intact and was made available for public viewing. The library established a subscription and built an annexe which met the bequest's requirements.

The library building and the entire book stock were destroyed in the blitz of 21st March 1941. Fortunately, the Cottonian collection had been rehoused in Plymouth Museum in 1916 and so it was saved. The library operated out of a member's lounge in nearby Yelverton until the present late-Victorian building was purchased in 1942.

I was introduced to the library in the early nineties by a family friend and fell completely under its spell. After some years as a committee member and trustee I took over as President in 2005 at a very uncertain time.

Did we have a role in the twenty-first century and would people still want to read books? As a retired teacher I lacked commercial and marketing experience and the learning curve was often very steep. Inspired by ideas from the Association of Independent Libraries I set out to foster links with Plymouth University, Plymouth Central Library, Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery and local charities and neighbourhood groups and get us more publicity. It was challenging and tiring but great fun. Membership increased from 82 in 2005 to over 120 when I retired in 2010. It gives me great satisfaction to have achieved this during a recession, especially as the trustees required membership fees to be increased twice during this period.

We have learned to be proud of our quirky, original features and to adapt to current needs. We now have a Writers' Circle, Book Group and regular literary lectures and are constantly seeking out new ways of promoting our unique and cherished product.



A picture of the library building from the Programme of the Association of Independent Libraries Annual Meeting in 2010

Muriel Hawton *Beta Chapter*

Do you need money for professional development?

Lucile Cornetet Professional Development Awards



Available to assist you this year

Apply Now!

Up to \$2,000 per Award

February, May and September deadlines

"The conference I attended was a valuable opportunity to better understand 21st century learners as well as to better appreciate the implications of expanding technology use for students, teachers and libraries. I am most grateful for this opportunity provided by my Lucile Cornetet Award."

Patricia G. Bologna, Alpha Upsilon state organization, Massachusetts

The Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation

www.educatoredge.org

www.dkg.org

THE GREAT BRITAIN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award, consisting of a rose brooch in silver and amber, is given biennially and is Great Britain's way of honouring a member for something special.

Nominations are now invited for the recipient of this special award for 2011.

The criteria are:

must have been an active GB member for at least five years.

must have shown one or more of the following:

professional achievement that has:

- ◇ raised the profile of the society in Great Britain
- ◇ raised the profile of Great Britain within the European Region and/or the International Society through service or achievement within the Society
- ◇ shown distinguished personal development or courage in adversity such that it provides motivation to others
- ◇ provided a special service for Great Britain State

Please submit any nominations, with a short citation (50 words), before 28th February 2011 to the State Vice President, Sheila Roberts, so that a postal ballot can be held before the State Conference on 9th April. The award will be announced at the GB General Meeting.

Previous recipients: Lillian Lynch (Gamma), Phyllis Kern (Alpha), Loetitia Stone (Beta), Pam Irons (Gamma).

NB This award is funded by donations from members which may be sent to State Treasurer, Kathy Hodgson, at any time. A collection towards the fund will be taken at the State Conference.

SHOUTING IT OUT

The lengths to which a person with reading and writing difficulties can go to hide their problems are many and various. This is wonderfully illustrated by Sue Torr and members of her group when they perform their play. For example – Sue wants to get £30 from her bank; she can't spell 'thirty', but she can spell 'ten' – so she has to go to cash a cheque three times – hoping that she won't have to face the same cashier. Ivan plucks up courage to ask about enrolling on a college course; he is told by a receptionist that all the information he needs is on the notice boards – he leaves and does not go back – a strong message for the literate to be more aware of literacy problems.



Sue and her group meet every week where they all are tutored in literary skills – Sue has recently passed her Level Two in Adult Literacy, and is an example of commitment and achievement to her group. Sue is also graduating from the School for Social Entrepreneurs in December (see the link below). This course exists to provide training and opportunities to enable individual entrepreneurs to use their creative and entrepreneurial abilities more fully for social benefit.

As the deviser and director of her plays, Sue has a sure touch – encouraging her cast in the very difficult task of learning and memorising. In the past she has had literate people acting in her plays, but to experience a performance by those who have literacy problems brings out a conviction and a truth that the other performances could not achieve. As the purpose of the play is to encourage other literacy-challenged people to come forward, it is clear that this strategy works, giving confidence to people to come forward and share their secret, and the courage to SHOUT IT OUT.

Jess Curtis *Beta Chapter*

www.sse.org.uk

'Secrets' by Sue Torr is published by Gatehouse Books.

Sue Torr MBE is an honorary member of Beta Chapter.



Sue working alongside a member of her group

GREAT BRITAIN STATE CONFERENCE



On:
9th April 2011
At:
The Soroptomists Club
63 Bayswater Road
London W2 3PH

Promoting Learning

9.45 am

Coffee: in the Reception Area.

10.15 am

Start of Conference: in the Dining Room.

Introduction: Diane Billam, Great Britain State President.

10.20 am

Tricia Rogers: 'Promoting Learning in Mathematics'.



11.10 am

Dr Sally Hulin: 'Positive Learning Experiences for Jiggly Children'.

12 noon

Panel: Tricia and Sally will form a Panel, together with our third speaker, Corlea Plowman, which will be chaired by Diana Bell. Questions and discussion around the theme of 'Promoting Learning', and what our two speakers have said.



1.00 pm

Lunch: Sandwiches, salad and fruit will be served in the Dining Room. Drinks will be available from the bar.

2.00 pm

Reconvene: in the Dining Room.

2.05 pm

Corlea Plowman: Executive Director of the Executive Services Department of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, will give us the latest news from Headquarters.



3.00 pm

Europe: Diane Billam, Great Britain State President, will give an update on the European Region, and the latest information about the European Regional Conference to be held at Steinbach, Baden Baden, Germany, 3-6 August 2011.



3.30 pm

Tea

4.00 pm

Annual General Meeting

5.30 pm

Close

Those who have booked dinner will then go on to the reasonably priced Taormina Italian Restaurant, 19 Craven Terrace, London W2 3QH for dinner.



Safe journey everyone!

Accommodation

For those wishing to stay at Number 63 they offer three star AA rated Guest Accommodation which is open to everyone.

'The house, which was built in the 1870s and is a listed building, overlooks Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. It is virtually in the heart of London and is an ideal venue to stay whether you are visiting London for business or pleasure. There is a lounge with a bar and a small sitting room, both are on the ground floor.'

All rooms are en-suite and the cost of your stay includes breakfast. There is a licensed bar and snacks are available all day.

As their website says '**Number 63 is 2 minutes from Lancaster Gate underground station** and also the nearest bus stops. You can walk along Bayswater Road to Marble Arch and Oxford Street or stroll across Kensington Gardens to the Albert Hall, Victoria & Albert Museum, Natural History Museum or Science Museum'.

If you wish to stay then please make your own arrangements. Telephone: 0207 723 8575, or Email: info@soropclub63.org.uk

SOME ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH EDUCATION SYSTEM



After spending three decades in the English education system, I have now retired to France, my home country. My daughter is a teacher in South East London, and education is a common interest. She keeps me in the know of new developments in England. At the same time, I take a keen interest in what is happening here around me, not least because my new neighbours, who have become good friends, have just retired from teaching in local primary and secondary schools - and education is a favourite topic of conversation when we are together!

To summarize an education system in a few words is quite a task. Therefore, I will concentrate on some aspects and give a general overview of other features.

First, let's start with a bit of history. In 1882, Jules Ferry, who was Minister of Public Instruction, created a system that would be accessible to all. He created 'l'Ecole Gratuite, Laïque et Obligatoire'. The translation of the word 'laïque' is quite tricky - the closest word being 'secular'. Since the French Revolution, there had been various tensions between the Church and the State, which eventually resulted in a law in 1905 - la Loi de la Laïcité. This law established the separation of the State and the Church. Jules Ferry had already achieved this for the education system.

Thus, schooling became free, secular and compulsory for boys and girls. However, schools were shut one day a week in order to enable the children to get a religious education from their individual churches. The Church was also allowed to run its own schools.

The 'secular' education system has always been well supported, and it is felt that it has facilitated the integration of the various waves of immigrants who have been arriving in France since and before the beginning of the twentieth century.

However, in the 90's, France was faced with the Islamic scarf in its state schools. The concern was that if one allowed the veil, schools could become prey to 'communautarisme'. In short, it was feared that the veil, an external religious sign, could be a threat to 'laïcité', and after various consultations and reviews a second law of 'laïcité' was voted in 2004, prohibiting students from wearing prominent religious signs in state schools. 400 MPs voted for the law and only 32 voted against, showing how strong France is determined to protect its 'laïcité'. The wearing of discreet religious signs is allowed.

The education system in France is based on a single model. Children generally start school in the September of the year in which they are three. However, schooling is not compulsory until the September of the year in which they are six. Formal teaching starts at the age of six. The first phase of primary education is called 'Ecole Maternelle' and the next phase (6-11) 'Ecole Élémentaire'.

When children reach the age of 11, they enter the 'Collège', which has a cycle of four years. It is only when they get to the 'Lycée', normally at the age of 15, that proper selection takes place. The students will then attend a different type of lycée according to their aspirations and potential. At the end of a three-year-period, they sit the 'baccalauréat', which will be made up of different options according to the section that has been chosen. The acquisition of the baccalauréat is an automatic entry to university – but only for the faculty corresponding to the type of baccalauréat taken. For the young people who go to a 'lycée professionnel', the aim is to enable them to integrate into the job market with a practical qualification.

All primary and secondary schools follow the same national model. All schools are mixed. However, there is quite a bit of autonomy both at local and regional level. Also, headteachers are given some independence in the way they run their schools.

Maud Thompson *Gamma Chapter*

BRUSSELS, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COMMISSION

I wonder how many of us are aware that each Euro MP can invite his/her constituents to visit the European parliament, and also access an annual grant for this purpose? As guests of our MEP for South East England, we have just had three fascinating days in Brussels visiting both Parliament and the Commission.

The European parliament has three places of work: Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Brussels is the base for MEPs, Council of Ministers and the Euro Civil Servants. The European Court of Justice, consisting of one judge per member state, is based in Luxembourg, while the parliamentary plenary sessions take place one week per month at the official headquarters in Strasbourg. These locations in countries which were on the side of the victors in WW11 were established back in 1957. Strasbourg, on the border of France and Germany, symbolises the reconciliation of Europe after two world wars. It is an expensive symbol. The parliament building is spectacular but imagine for one week per month, 736 members from 27 EU countries have to pack up and travel hundreds of miles to Strasbourg, and also need to rent another place of accommodation. Presumably their families stay in Brussels?

We were privileged to hear presentations on various aspects of Parliament's work from a number of MEPs including a Maltese MEP who talked about the immigration problems Malta faces, an Irish MEP who not only talked about Ireland's current financial problems, but also queried the sense of David Cameron pulling out British Conservative MEPs from the majority Centre Right group and instead placing them on the fringe alongside ultra right wing factions which include UKIP, BNP members etc,- commonly known in Europe as 'The Nutters'. He pointed out that Britain is now the only country without representation in Parliament's majority Centre Right. A Welsh MEP talked about EU budgets. Every country pays

1.2% of its gross national income which amounts to 141.5 billion Euros per year. Of this amount,- 42% goes to agriculture; 45% to 'sustainable growth', ie jobs, research etc; 8% to development aid. 1% to security, freedom, justice, and 6% other, including administration.

The European parliament is the only multinational assembly in the world and is directly elected by Europe's citizens. Of the 736 members, one third are women. They are responsible for 75% of the laws in each member state. The other 25% covering areas such as taxation and moral and ethical issues are the responsibility of the individual state.

This is the second such visit we have made, as three years ago we went to the Strasbourg parliament which was equally fascinating, but marred by our group walking into a parliamentary session when Kilroy Silk was holding forth, - spewing a tirade of anti-Europe insults and abuse. Thankfully we didn't have the embarrassment of that this time.

Do find out about visits via your area MEP - you won't regret it.

Sheila Roberts *Gamma Chapter*

THE ROYAL SOCIETY: Summer Exhibition 2010

Annually, the Royal Society holds a free four-day Summer Science Exhibition, in its own building. This year, celebrating the 350th anniversary of the Society, the exhibition was held at the Southbank Centre and was the centrepiece of a 10-day Festival of Science and Arts.

I managed to get there one afternoon, and found the venue buzzing with activity - people of all ages and nationalities were clustered round the varied exhibits. The visitors, from small boys to families, were grilling the attendant demonstrators and scientists with all manner of queries, from the basic to the complex.

There were fascinating displays and demos of the cutting edge scientific developments, from companies, universities and schools. Often, the projects were collaborations between several groups, such as the one on the biomechanics of 'Pterosaurs - Dragons of the Air', between University of Portsmouth, and Griffon Hoverwork. Pterosaurs were an extremely successful group of flying reptiles, with fur as well as scales, varying in size from a mouse to a small fighter plane. They existed from 215 to 65 million years ago!

There was a demonstration of 'Sherlock Holmes meets Spiderman', London South Bank University's Robot Detective climbing up a wall - an extremely useful piece of equipment that can access remote pipelines, or hazardous areas, then deploy sensors to take readings, or find defects in wind-turbine blades or dams for example.

There were fascinating exhibits on astronomy and vulcanism, and also one on the Evolution of Africa's New Ocean, in the Afar area of Ethiopia. This is a NERC project, with the University of Leeds, and scientists from many British universities

collaborating with the Ethiopian government. The surface split in 2005 and there has been multiple volcanic activity since then. See www.leeds.ac.uk/afar to view the projected changes.

Other projects, 'Closer to home' dealt with 'Fat Body, Slim', and the molecular biological aspects of obesity and the links with other diseases. This was by Robert Gordon University at Aberdeen, collaborating with the British Heart Foundation and the Breast Cancer Campaign.

The RS also fosters links with schools and four schools had received a RS Partnership Grant and were working and developing their projects with scientists and engineers. I saw one of their projects, 'Design the Perfect Beehive', but there had been others in rotation including: 'How to become an Olympic athlete', 'Producing bio diesel', and 'Making a watermill'!

A fascinating exhibition, transporting me to other worlds, encouraging us to learn more. Roll on next year's exhibition.

Barbara Kern Alpha Chapter

THE ROYAL SOCIETY: A visit by Alpha Chapter

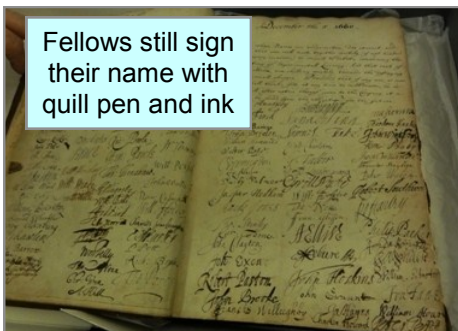
The Royal Society - even the name sounds posh - is a very prestigious place.

As we went round, an amazing variety of ideas came into my head especially from the women's perspective. I was incredibly drawn to a photograph of Florence Baker, who was purchased at a slave auction in Turkey by Samuel Baker White. (it made me wonder about some of the 'fellas' of the Society!). They married and she accompanied him on his quest to discover the source of the Nile. I wonder if she was happy, and what part she played in supporting his scientific ideas.



Florence Baker
1841-1916

I was fascinated with the Hook Manuscript, purchased only recently. It was spotted at Bonham's by a sharp-eyed girl, and luckily an important part of our heritage was saved. Sadly inserted pages had been removed and



Fellows still sign their name with quill pen and ink

a Royal Society Committee had to decide where they should be re-inserted.

Looking at the Founder Members' Charter under Jo's supervision, and seeing the famous names, including Charles II, Robert Boyle and Sir Christopher Wren, brought these people alive to me. The archives are mind-boggling. They are short of space and have now installed a rolling shelving system to accommodate all the papers.



We were very privileged to have Jo, the archivist, show us this precious hoard.

Lavinia Soul Alpha Chapter

Jo Corden in the archives room



Articles from Sir Isaac Newton. A lock of his hair, his death mask, and wood (they believe) from the apple tree in his garden. His writing, seen at the back of this picture, is about gravity and applying it to the motion of the earth and of the 'heavenly bodys'.

This Christmas top of my wish list for presents is *Seeing Further* – the story of science and The Royal Society. It is a wish inspired by Alpha Chapter's day at the Society's London home. I think we all anticipated our visit to The Royal Society would be a fascinating and impressive experience, but by the end of the afternoon in the beautiful building which is Jo Corden's work-place my feeling was that we had been highly privileged to have been given access to so many of the Society's treasures.

During our visit we had the opportunity to see items as diverse as a first edition of *The Voyage of the Beagle*, the signatures of every monarch from Charles II to Elizabeth II, Sir Humphrey Davy's miner's lamp and a painting by Damien Hirst. (see photograph on the front page). The Royal Society, however, is far more than a scientific archive and museum. Its library is a centre for study and research, its educational department supports and encourages scientific and mathematical development in our schools and colleges, and after 350 years The Royal Society is still the driving force for scientific discovery and endeavour in this country. To be a Fellow of The Royal Society is still a highly respected accolade.

Oh – and lunch in the Society's restaurant was excellent! Thank you Jo, I will be using my library card for future visits to the Library.

Joan Carroll Alpha Chapter

ALPHA CHAPTER

CHAPTER REPORTS

At our September meeting at St Mary's we welcomed Dr. Sally Hulin, CAMHS consultant for the London borough of Edgware and Barnet. The subject of her talk was 'Jiggly Children', a very timely and enlightening presentation about children whose behaviours make coping and learning in a mainstream school classroom impossible.

Her explanation about the differences between children with ADHD, an identifiable neurological condition, and those with other problem issues and disabilities caused by experiential, social, or other physical or mental conditions, clarified the confusion many of us had about the complex subject of children with special needs in schools. It certainly



Dr Hulin (3rd left) with Alpha members

made clear that the large numbers of difficult-to-teach children presenting in schools is not caused by inadequate and lazy teachers as the national press would have us believe. At the end of her talk Dr Hulin recommended *Kids in the Syndrome Mix* by Martin Kutscher for further reading.

Joan Carroll Alpha Chapter

Our October meeting, the first we have had at London South Bank University, began with Liz Day and Dorcas Rogers showing us around the part where they both work. We visited two hospital rooms where nurses train. These had 'patients' with real features and they could, for example, sweat or cry. Included was an operating table. The 'patients' were used in various ways and if not looked after carefully they could 'die'. We then visited Liz's education department offices and nearby well-equipped IT room.



Alpha members at LSBU

At the meeting Martin Biron, Head of the School of Construction, College of North West London, spoke about 'Second Life' interactive learning - how to teach a class from home using computers/IT.

Martin, who started as a lecturer in gas uses e-learning one evening a week with his eighteen learners. They use Linden Labs *Second Life* learning. This virtual environment, where avatars are used by both lecturer and learners, can be an advantage for those with disabilities, both physical and mental, and saves on physical costs, lighting, heating etc. Co-operation and collaboration in the virtual environment are used so learners and lecturer can work with and help each other. The sound is in stereo and learners speak using the computer microphone, areas can be 'zoned' to allow smaller groups to communicate together. It all happens in 'real' time. Work and classes are available at other times, but this is a taught session of one hour per week.

Diana Bell Alpha Chapter

Our November speaker at Dulwich Hamlet Junior School was Sue Patey, Deputy Chief Pharmacist at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, who gave a talk on the history of Great Ormond Street Hospital and the role of the children's pharmacist. This first class presentation dealt with the history of the hospital from its opening in 1852 with beds for just 10 children through its development and growth through the 19th and 20th centuries, with the help of famous sponsors such as Charles Dickens and Sir James Barrie, to the present day.

Sue explained the differences between training for the pharmacist and the pharmacy technician, their roles and the expertise and responsibility each role carries. Questions for Sue were only ended by the shortage of time available.

Joan Carroll Alpha Chapter

Forthcoming meetings:

22nd January 2011: Linda Osborn will speak about her International Inclusion Project. Dulwich Hamlet Junior School, Dulwich Village, London SE21 7AL. 2.00pm. Lunch from 12.15pm in the Crown & Greyhound, Dulwich Village.

26th February 2011: Guided walking tour of the City of London, guided by Tim Budgen. Meet at 10.30am under the departure board at Liverpool Street Station and finish with a curry in Brick Lane.

26th March 2011: Meet at Unity Harvey's House at 3.30pm for tea and a brief meeting. 5.00pm view the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race from the bank of the Thames. Dinner at a local restaurant for those who wish it.

9th April 2011: State Conference.

7th May 2011: Joint meeting with Gamma at London South Bank University.

18th June 2011: to be arranged.

Then 'Summer Visits' to places of interest around London.

Diana Bell Alpha Chapter

BETA CHAPTER

More good news to report: we have a new member, Sarah Chapman, who has already proved to be a great asset to the group. She is an experienced teacher of Drama and Music at various levels, having worked in schools, colleges and Arts venues as well as in a private capacity. She also has experience as chairman, treasurer and school Governor at various times. We know at first hand that she is an enthusiastic communicator, and look forward to our association with her.

Our Autumn meeting welcomed back Sue Torr and her 'Shout It Out' team – consisting of actors all with literacy issues, who come to Sue for creative writing classes. We are grateful to all of them for their time and their dedication, and for reminding us of the need to be aware not only of children but of adults for whom reading and writing present a challenge.

Forthcoming meetings:

11th December 2010: Christmas party.

Dates of meetings for 2011 will be decided in December; but we try to meet in the week following Executive Committee meetings, so information gets passed on soon.

All meetings held at 17 Hartley Avenue unless otherwise stated and include lunch.

Gail Gladwin *Beta Chapter*

Gamma Chapter

I really can't believe that it is time to write another report! Time certainly goes quickly as you get older. The first meeting of our new year was a fascinating talk by Kate York. We cruised around the World in forty five minutes, visiting the most amazing places, vividly brought to life by stunning photographs and a light hearted commentary of life on board ship. I think there were many people in the room who resolved to start saving immediately, perhaps 2011 could be 'Gamma Cruise Year'.

As I was unable to secure a speaker for October we took the opportunity to have an 'Open Forum' in order to discuss all the items and issues that we never really have time to discuss. Inevitably membership proved to be the topic most people wished to discuss. We aired several thoughts and ideas, just one of which was a questionnaire to teachers in local schools to ask them which topics would be of interest and encourage them to come along to our meetings. Their ideas will influence our programme next year – we'll let you know how effective this idea is.

Our speaker in November was Jill Grainger from the charity 2 by 2, a charity which offers a counseling service to children and young people in schools. It was very sobering to realize that they are only able to work with a very small number of the children who need this service and the number is growing. With cuts on the agenda it is quite likely that this might be one of the areas which will be axed and then what will happen to these children? Lots to think about.

Our Christmas meeting will be at Robbie's house. Celia Cooper will be demonstrating and helping us to make a traditional holly wreath.

Forthcoming meetings:

8th January 2011: Rachel Knapp will talk to us about her role as Chaplain in a faith school – she is at Bennett Memorial.

14th January 2011: A visit to the Valence School where Rebecca Large will show us around and we can watch her in action.

12th February 2011: Joanna Finlay works with adults who have learning difficulties. Her talk is entitled 'Thrown in at the deep end'.

19th March 2011: Jill Rowe is the Ethos Development and Resourcing Director for the charity Oasis. They now run thirteen academies and her talk is entitled 'Transforming lives, transforming communities'.

Carole Stirling *Gamma Chapter*



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Mission Statement

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.