



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS  
**DELTA KAPPA GAMMA**

## **GREAT BRITAIN NEWS**



**AUTUMN 2009**

*Volume 12 No 1*

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### Ellen Rosier - *Alpha Chapter*

Ellen had a fall and broke her hip. Unfortunately it was all too much for her and she died on the 16th August. We will all miss her.

More on page 23.



## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this edition of GB News. As a new editor I looked over back issues with different eyes and saw how much work past editors have put into this publication. It is a steep learning curve for me to keep the standard so high. A special thank you to Kate and Gloria for their help and encouragement.

This edition is mainly about the European Regional Conference in Oslo. Thank you to all those who provided copy and photographs.



For the next edition of GB News I have been speaking to members, who are not necessarily teaching in school, about going into schools and thought you would be interested to hear about their varied experiences. Governors, parents, lecturers, visiting teachers, librarians, specialist teachers, even a judging role, takes us into schools. Do write about your experiences. Also any events in which your chapter has been involved.

Copy in by 30th November please.

**Diana Bell**

We congratulate **Elizabeth Chambers**, *Alpha Chapter*, on the arrival of her new baby boy.

**Cover picture:** Akershus Fortress by Tony York, taken during the 'Night on the Town' boat trip around Oslo Fjord.

**DIANE BILLAM**  
**STATE ORGANISATION PRESIDENT 2009-2011**

I feel very honoured to have been chosen by members to act as GB State President for the next 2 years. Diana and Kate are a very difficult act to follow, each having taken us forward as well as consolidating our success. Now is the time to reflect on what I hope we will achieve in the near future.



We have recently been successful in gaining new members into our existing chapters. Thanks to continuing efforts, a new chapter in Cambridge is still a possibility, following on from the excellent GB conference this year which introduced us to a number of potential new members, and them to us. Jensi Souders' session gave us the opportunity to reflect on the future, and I hope to incorporate some of this in our plans. We have also been generally successful in retaining existing members in spite of the considerable increase in dues last year. We are still very good value compared with similar organisations!

Every chapter has made efforts to ensure that members are kept involved by activities throughout the year, with the summer events involving visits to a number of interesting places. For instance, for me a highlight of the summer was Gamma's visit to Glyndebourne in June, a perfect social event in a wonderful setting, where we enjoyed companionship and glorious music.

Becoming State President has reminded me that we are part of a large organisation with plenty to offer members. Somehow we have to make sure that potential and existing members in our current, and hopefully new, chapters are all aware of what is available to them. Much of this comes down to Chapter Presidents, but we also need to have other means of keeping members up to date with the opportunities that are available. Obviously our excellent Newsletters and website are prime vehicles for these messages, and I shall be seeking members' views on what else we might do to enhance our involvement. *EuForia*, so ably produced by Joan Carroll, is excellent for keeping us in touch with other European states and their plans.

We are small by DKG standards, with many US States having very large numbers of members, but we more than hold our own in terms of involvement, particularly in European events and offices. This is very important, since it is easier for newer members to become involved in European events than International, simply because of the relative costs. That said, we had a large contingent in Oslo, including some partners, in spite of the expense! One reason for our next GB conference being held in Canterbury is that it is relatively easy for our European colleagues to come over, and some have already said that they intend to. I will also ensure that I get messages about our conference to Canterbury Christchurch University, where professional development for teachers remains a

strength, and that our speakers are such as to entice attendance from non-members.

We need to set up some State Committees for various aspects of our work, and I am consulting the Executive Committee on how to adapt and simplify the DKG system to suit our own needs, probably by merging committees into associated areas, such as Leadership Development with Personal Development and Professional Affairs. I would like us to involve newer members in these committees, and look forward to receiving suggestions from Chapter Presidents, or any other member who wants to make them, or indeed offer to serve.

There are multiple benefits in working with colleagues in a common cause, and we have to spread the word as much as we can. We shall be running some training sessions next year for incoming Chapter Presidents and Treasurers, which will perhaps encourage more members to volunteer and be involved. Other training events are also under consideration.

So to summarise: what do I hope for in the next two years? To maintain our current membership, increase it where possible within the existing chapters in particular with younger members, start at least one new chapter, and ensure that all members feel involved and enjoy everything they do within the organisation. We can do it!

**Diane Billam** *State President*

## **Pre-Conference Leadership Development STATE TREASURER**

Phyllis Hickey welcomed us warmly; there were representatives from five countries: Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Great Britain. It was interesting to hear how the other State Treasurers had found themselves in this position – one or two, like me, deliberately volunteered to avoid other positions in DKG!

As well as discussing the variety of forms and procedures that are involved, Phyllis ran through the eleven separate funds administered at International level; the opportunities available to members are truly immense and reinforced for me everything that I've heard at Chapter meetings about applying for awards or committee membership.

Having listened to Anne Marie Solstad, Norway's State Treasurer, I was rather relieved to have taken over one year after the Regional Conference in Great Britain, rather than one year before! Being State Treasurer, she assured us, is a doddle – she didn't use that exact word – compared with the work of Treasurer for the Regional Conference.

It was interesting to learn that the other European countries changed their Treasurer every two years; we were the only country attending that had decided to double the period. I'll let you know in two years' time whether or not I think that's a good idea!

**Kathrin Hodgson** *State Treasurer*

## EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE: THE OPENING CEREMONY

More than 240 members were present for the opening ceremony which took place in Oslo University College. There was a palpable sense of occasion from the outset as a trumpet fanfare heralded the entry of the conference guests. This was followed by the proud, dignified presentation of the national flags, led by our host country, Norway. As each flag was presented the national anthem of the appropriate country was sung by its members.



A short musical interlude followed and we were then welcomed to this, the sixth, European Regional conference by Birgit Svensson, Regional Director. Birgit explained that the theme for all five regional conferences this year is 'Activate your Vision'. She stressed the fact that this was a professional, international event with opportunities for everyone. We were urged to use our unique talents and fulfil our particular development or furtherance of the aims of the society.

Conference was next addressed by Barbro Sommerset, Conference Chair, whose opening words were, "Fantastic to see you, welcome and thank you". A very enthusiastic Barbro informed us that she knew all of our names but not our faces, a situation she hoped to rectify by the end of the conference. She went on to tell us how attendance at previous conferences had enriched her life, and trusted that we would all benefit similarly.

A roll call of states attending was then given by Mette Heiberg, Norway State President. Numbers attending were: USA 40, Denmark 2, Estonia 7, Finland 14, Germany 13, GB 20, Iceland 14, Netherlands 19, Sweden 59 and Norway 55. Norway was the first European country to join DKG, 38 years ago. Mette also paid tribute to GB's London Conference as an inspirational experience and example and extended a special welcome to Estonia, our newest member.

Mette was followed by Sissel Østberg, Principal of Oslo University College (OUC). Sissel welcomed us to the College and presented a broad-brush picture of its structure and courses. Established in 1994, following reorganisation of the Norwegian University College System, OUC was formed from the merger of 18 smaller university colleges. Today it is Norway's largest university college, and the fourth largest educational institution in the country. It caters for around 12,000 students and offers 36 Bachelor programmes, 18 master and one PhD programme. They aspire to offer 4 PhD programmes, which would make them eligible to apply to become a full university.

A delightful piano and violin recital gave time for reflection before the next welcome

from Dr Carolyn Rants, International President. Carolyn spoke passionately of her vision of the path the Society needs to take to move forward:-

- \* as a leader in innovation, use of technology and development of leadership skills;
- \* growing the membership and being more proactive in publicising DKG and its work;
- \* remaining challenging, informative, enjoyable, fun.

She highlighted the need for planning, but stressed that action was even more important – for without it nothing will happen. Carolyn concluded by outlining steps already taken, including a new design of logo, new brochures, and a new vision of moving forward.

The opening ceremony ended with an invitation to attend 'Norway Night' by Astrid Bie Skaaland, Norway's Immediate Past State President.

**Rosalind Price** *Gamma Chapter*

## THE INFO FAIR

The main function of the Info Fair is to explain and promote the work of the International Committees. That is how four of us from GB found ourselves on Tuesday evening armed with all the necessary equipment to put up a display!

Kate York had a variety of ornamental shoes to highlight the "Shoe-In" challenge set by the Membership Committee. Evelyn Goodsell, as a member of the Personal Growth and Services Committee, was tasked with finding out what we personally did to protect our environment. My display highlighted very brightly (and with sweets) the Leadership/Management Seminar to be held next June. Much of the material had already been sent to me and so, with the help of Carole Stirling, it was quite straightforward to assemble. In fact, basically, I just watched! Mary Wardrop (far right) with the help of Kathy Hodgson (right) informed us of the procedures for nominating International Officers with a very striking display.



But it was the Communications Committee which went to special lengths. 'Create the Buzz' was the theme and buzzing around the table was a swarm of 'bees', led by Bev Helms.

Downstairs there were vendors selling wonderful Norwegian knitwear, glassware, and African artefacts.

**Gloria Redston** *Gamma Chapter*



## A QUIET MOMENT

Birgit Svensson (right), Regional Director, and Barbro Sommerset, Conference Chair, enjoy a quiet moment during one evening.

## ESTONIAN MEMBERS RECEIVE THE CANTERBURY AWARD

Two Estonian Members received some financial support towards presenting workshops at the Regional Conference in Oslo thanks to Kate York receiving this year's Canterbury Award.

Diana Bell, Immediate Past President GB, presented their certificates.



## Pre-Conference Training: STATE PRESIDENT

Sessions of Leadership Development for incoming State officers are held at each of the Regional Conferences in odd-numbered years. As your new State President, I joined in with my counterparts from the other European member countries for two days of intensive training, led by a member of the Leadership Development Committee. We each gained a 'bible' for the next two years which aims to give us everything we need to keep the show on the road! It gives basic information on how the Society is organised and our financial responsibilities, but just as importantly leads us to consider how we might play this role for our members.

I very much enjoyed the sessions on 'The Role of the President', 'Leading Change', and 'Vision, Mission, Goals', as these aspects had been the ones I was most nervous of. We often worked in twos and, as always, it was sobering to discuss quite complex matters in English with another for whom it was not her native language, but could more than hold her own. We were quietly grouped and regrouped to ensure that we worked with all the others during the two days, which was very rewarding. The more I got to know of my fellow State Presidents, the more I admired them. During the conference we had learned that the non-US members of the organisation are only about 3% of the total membership, yet these European State Presidents are remarkable professional women who give a very good impression of our Region. The European States have a much smaller membership than most of the US ones, yet the same tasks have to be undertaken, and at the same time.

Our session started with an inspirational video presentation which led to animated discussions: how to make people feel special, look for the good in people, don't tell yourself you'll fail or you will! We all know the people who don't really listen to what we are saying to them, but are just waiting for the gap so that they can come in with what they were going to say anyway. I have both undertaken and led a great number of training events in my time; this was good. We started in apprehension, and finished as a united team of women who felt much more confident, and looked forward to the next two years. What more could we have asked?

**Diane Billam** *State President*

## NORWAY IN A NUTSHELL

Fourteen Great Britain members joined twenty-eight other members from Holland, Norway, Sweden and America to experience a most amazing journey through beautiful scenery and spectacular views. After three days of glorious sunshine in Oslo we woke up to a very grey morning. However our spirits were not dampened and we boarded the train for Myrdal. We travelled through open countryside and wooded valleys and as we went along the sun came out and the scenery became more and more spectacular.



The railway climbed above the tree line to the mountain plateau scattered with stunted trees, patches of snow, holiday cabins and a glacier. We stopped at Finse station which, at an altitude of 1222 metres above sea level, is the highest station in Norway. On to Myrdal where we changed to the Flåm railway and descended twenty kilometres to Flåm. The train stopped at a

majestic waterfall to allow us to get out and take photographs. There was a Huldra high up on a rock attempting to lure the gentlemen into the forest. Luckily none of them was tempted because they were in such good company with the Delta Kappa Gamma ladies.



We arrived at Flåm, a small village at the head of the Aurlandsfjord, having descended to 2 metres above sea level. We deposited our luggage at the Flåmsbrygga Hotel and left straightaway, by coach, for the tiny village of Undredal, famous for making goats' cheese. After tasting the cheese and other local produce, we were entertained with stories about the mythological Trolls and Huldras and local traditions and culture. These were accompanied by folk songs in which we joined in the choruses.

On arriving back in Flåm, we were allocated our rooms in the hotel, which was new and very comfortable with individual balconies looking up the fjord. A few people stayed in a nearby hotel, where in one room the theme 'in a nutshell' was applied a little too literally. A camp bed had been put next to the other two beds, making it only possible to get into bed from the end. However, the hotel found the three ladies involved a bigger, very pleasant room.

In the morning, we watched a cruise ship leave and make way for the most enormous liner to tie up. This emphasised the great depth of the fjord.



Aurlandsfjord



We boarded a much smaller vessel and set off up the fjord marvelling at the wonderful scenery and villages on either side. We turned into the Nærøyfjord which is on UNESCO's World Heritage List and the narrowest and most dramatic fjord in Europe.

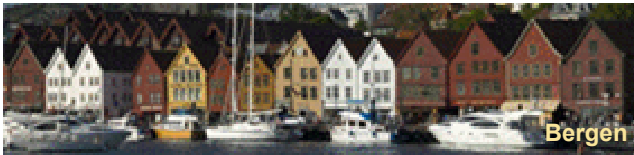
The next leg of the journey was probably the most spectacular. At Gudvangen we got off the boat and onto a bus.

It took us to Voss via a very steep road with numerous hairpin bends and breathtaking views of two waterfalls and the valley below. The driver received a relieved cheer when we got to the bottom. At Voss we took the train to Bergen.

In Bergen we had a tour round the city and learnt a little of its history. We visited the market and made some last minute purchases. The following morning it was very overcast as we took an early train back to Oslo. We realised how lucky we had been to have had such a wonderful trip in such beautiful weather.



**Robbie Scahill** *Gamma Chapter*



## THE FIRST GENERAL SESSION

Having held the Opening Session of the Conference on Wednesday with the Ceremony of Flags and the Welcoming Speeches, we came to the first Business Session on Thursday morning. Diana Bell, of Great Britain, was the gracious Presiding official.

The first presentation was innovative and most effective in introducing an inspirational message to us in a Nordic manner. Anna Handeland and Ellen Breen read us a Nordic poem or prose, intoned in a typical manner, and followed by music from Grieg – quite a moving way of preparing us for thought and inspiration.

The Keynote lecture was presented by Arni Hole, Director General of the Ministry of Children and Equality since 2001. Arni is a dynamic example of the power and influence of women in public positions in Norway, and her lecture was

entitled *Gender Equality gives a Competitive Edge*.



The Gender Equality Act was passed in Norway in 1979, thirty years ago, forbidding discrimination on the basis of gender in all sections of life, and promoting women's interests. Arni has been Director General of her Ministry as a result of this Act.

Arni made us realize just how much progress we need to make in gender equality in our own countries, and how only strict supervision can ensure that the law is carried out.

State appointed committees, working groups, delegations etc must all have 40% of the members women, and the committees *may not* be appointed until this point is satisfied. Since 2003, all large business companies must follow this ruling – Norway being the first country in the world to establish this by law – and now all state and municipal companies (eg water, sewage etc) must also follow this ruling.

In Norway, 80% of women work, so legislation for family support is very liberal and must be adhered to. Parental leave for maternity is a total of 56 weeks on 80% pay, shared between parents. A mother-to-be must take 9 weeks leave of absence, to include 3 before the birth of the baby. For fathers, the compulsory 10-week leave of absence on 80% pay has a 90% uptake. Parents may divide the rest of the leave between them as they wish.

Added to this, every parent has 10 days paid leave annually for every child under 12 years. For children with special needs, a year's leave of absence applies, with job security guaranteed at the end of it, if this is needed.

Many of us were amazed at the comprehensiveness of the laws to ensure gender equality, and were aware that this would make a tremendous boost to the maintenance of family life and security for children.

The International President, Dr Carolyn Rants, then gave us a brief reminder that 2010 is the year when Constitutional change may take place at the International Convention. She reminded us that a Constitution should not be a static, historical document, but should move with the times. We must, therefore, seriously consider any changes which we feel are necessary to help us face the future, and prepare for discussion and proposals for 2010.

Berit Skinningsrud invited us all to the Info Fair, emphasizing the importance of catching up on the work of our committees, and Astrid Bie Skaaland explained about arrangements and the locality of the varied and innovative workshops to be presented.

Our final, and most exciting invitation, and one to which we had all received an official invitation card, was to the Civic Reception that evening, held in the magnificent City Hall overlooking Oslo Harbour. Glamour with a capital G!

**Dorothy Haley** *Gamma Chapter*

## VOYAGE ON THE HURTIGRUTEN

As a pupil in junior school, about sixty years ago, I listened to geography radio programmes which were accompanied by a black and white glossy booklet. One of these about Norway held me spellbound – snow capped mountains with teeming waterfalls cascading down seemingly impossible high cliffs to the sea, places



to climb and explore. The Norwegians in bright national costumes, were shown living in picturesque grass roofed, wooden houses. On the small high farms precious grass dried on long wires, whilst by the sea there were lots of boats and fish drying



on rectangular wire racks. There were even Lapps and reindeer. I had to go there.

Many years later a Norwegian headteacher visited the School Sports Centre where my husband worked. He invited us, with our three tiny children, to stay with his wife and their four very young children. Did he really mean it? Can you imagine my excitement? Then followed many happy exchange holidays; the Norwegian family explored London city life and our children learned to fish, row, sail and ski. We explored the countryside with its narrow, winding roads, camping or staying in “hytter” overnight. We were thrilled to see the Nordic wild creatures and plants. We made more new friends and learned local history and customs. We tasted local culinary delights and I even knitted gloves to a Norwegian pattern. Over time the roads became easier, well surfaced and wider with long comforting tunnels to complement the many ferries. My recent endeavour to learn the language would be easier if my memory was better but it matters not if I don't succeed, the links in the language in themselves, hold my attention.

Oslo, a place that I had not previously visited, was the venue for the DKG Regional Conference. I knew the area could not be as spectacular and beautiful as the western part but it was vibrant and fulfilled my expectations. Of course it was good to be part of the conference and meet colleagues again but why this title, “Voyage on the Hurtigruten?”

Because “Norge er et land av superlativer,” and the six day voyage from Bergen to Kirkenes on a ferry/cruise ship is an ideal way to see it. The ships with huge panoramic windows are fitted with good quality cabins, and provide a variety of food for any taste.



At the many ports en route, passengers can go on prearranged tours or stroll around while goods are unloaded. I would like all my friends to be able to enjoy this holiday. I feel that it is even worth staying at home one year to finance this cruise the next.

This year my husband and I persuaded Diana and Brian, with Kate and Tony, to come with us. To me it was important that they enjoy the time there, particularly as it is so expensive.



The journey began with mists and rain, soft grey colours which became shiny like steel as the warm light came through. As we moved north we had more daylight and more sun, the bright red midnight sun. We saw the fjords and “fjelltopper”, the glaciers and “saltstraumen”; land with many trees, land with shrubs and mosses, land clad in lichens and forms of bare rock. Diana was relaxing while Brian was busy taking photos. Kate and Tony often went ashore on

excursions, anxious to see more and more. I particularly enjoyed a special boat trip to see the bird colonies: puffins, kittiwakes and gannets with the majestic sea eagles soaring above them round the mountain tops. At that time, the others visited the most northern land point, “Nordkapp” (*right*), which I’d seen before.

Perhaps the highlight of our cruise was the magical evening at “Trollfjorden”, where one can almost touch the fjord sides from the decks and one wonders how such a huge ship can return to the open sea. Everything was so calm - enhanced by the soft, glowing red light - and we were at peace with the world.

Did we enjoy it? Just ask us!



**Unity Harvey Alpha Chapter**

## **Pre-Conference Training: STATE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRS**

As the GB representative at this training session, I found myself in a circle of people enthusiastic about the society and what it could offer new members.

Initial introductions revealed an intriguing mix of backgrounds and interests....Jenny whose group is working with boys in prison and Rita working with women teachers in Uganda and actively encouraging a group of Ugandan women teachers to be interested in joining the society. With the exception of Denmark, whose school term was to begin within three days, there were representatives from all states.

Leading us were Kate York from GB and Barbara Devenport from the USA. They quickly and expertly focused us on to the business of “Advancing the Society.” The balance of the current membership was put into perspective. Texas has 300 chapters in contrast to Europe where there are less than 50 in total, with Iceland the smallest nation having the greatest proportion of European members for its population, and a total of 10 chapters.

The following list of concerns about membership was drawn up at the beginning of the session:

- How to attract **young** members
- How to facilitate young members for membership
- How to establish a new chapter
- How to retain membership of chapters
- Raising the profile of DKG
- What is specific about DKG

This list promoted a lively debate, with the importance of raising the profile of DKG within Europe emerging as one of the keys to attracting new members to the society.

It was agreed that the society must find new members or it would fade away. However, new members should have the qualities that reflect the meaning of the name 'Leading Women Educators' and we must not lose sight of the fact that we are an 'honour' society. Indeed promoting this could help encourage people to belong.

The meat of the workshop was encapsulated into an excellent pre-prepared booklet entitled "Activate Your Vision." It answered many of the concerns of the participating members and contained a myriad of ideas: from mission statement to music, with material to inspire chapter members to value and expand the society, i.e. nurturing members, valuing all generations and an inspiring example of the Alpha Chapter's programme for 2008/2009

It was felt that, in order to expand the society, chapters need to keep membership on the agenda of all meetings, with time to discuss chapter growth. Retention of members was dealt with in the booklet, with the importance of running a vibrant and successful chapter the key to this issue. A bullet point page of ideas for running a successful chapter is provided. We are warned to be aware of not becoming a cosy club for old members and to introduce new things that are relevant to new members. A renewal plan for chapter revitalisation is included in the booklet.

There was much talk as to: 'Who are to be the new members?' and 'Where to look for new members'. Again many ideas are presented in the book. Talking to potential members is dealt with expertly, with a section on "Why belong to this International Society?", another listing 15 ways to attract new members and, finally, how to respond to.....**"I don't have time."**

As establishing a new chapter had not been dealt with in the booklet, time was spent clarifying the procedure and discussing ideas of how to do this. It was felt that all chapters should have a member to receive information, relating to advancing the society, with electronic communication being the key to sharing the ideas.

The training session was very helpful and if the ideas mooted are put into practice I feel that the reward will be a renewed, enlarged and vibrant society.

**Lavinia Soul** *Alpha Chapter*

## Workshop

### LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP – IMPROVING OUR SCHOOLS

There were representatives from eight of the participating countries present to take part in Liz Day's workshop. After giving a brief outline of her work on teacher education at London South Bank University (LSBU) Liz asked us to identify the challenges in the education systems of each of our countries before revealing those she had identified in the British school system.



I don't think any of us were surprised to find out how many of those challenges were common to many of us whatever country we lived and taught in. One particular area of concern to all was motivation, not just in our pupils but in young teachers. This attitude particularly affected their professional development because it was noticeable that students now have less depth of knowledge, both in general and in relation to their specialist subjects than students of say, a decade ago and were also often less willing to work and carry out individual research to redress these gaps.

Liz then described the work she is doing at LSBU, running post graduate teacher training programmes and M.A. programmes. These are practical and school based rather than the traditional college based, theory dominated courses. Most of the post graduate students' time is spent learning in the classroom environment while, on the MA courses for serving teachers, it is the lecturers who go out to their students' schools to work with them rather than the students coming to the lecturer. The aim of the courses is to provide a more relevant way of achieving professional development for today's hard-pressed, time-poor young teachers.

Liz next asked us to consider three educational priorities for our own countries. Again there were similarities, the problem of governmental intervention and frequent changes of direction driven by political rather than educational needs, meeting the needs of pupils from the immigrant, multi-ethnic community, motivating pupils from the indigenous working class community to be ambitious educationally. Liz explained that the courses she is directing are geared to helping teachers to address many of these issues. Included in the initial teacher education course are modules dealing with equality, inclusion and citizenship and an alternative education setting placement. The Masters level programme includes units on Equality and Achievement, Teaching and Learning, Researching Education and School Effectiveness and Improvement. This Masters programme is aimed at and offered free to teachers in their first five years of teaching to encourage motivation for professional development. Liz ended the session by offering a list of suggested reading for our own further research.

This was a most thought-provoking workshop during which a great deal of discussion and exchange of ideas and experience developed. It was particularly interesting and helpful to any educator involved in succession planning and the professional development of teaching staff.

*Joan Carroll Alpha Chapter*

## NIGHT ON THE TOWN



Imagine for the second night in succession a stream of ladies heading back down through the town to the quayside to embark on SS Lady Mack to sail in the Oslo Fjord. This time, not attired in their Sunday best, but equipped for a possible cool evening aboard.

It was a beautiful evening, however, and first we motored to see the Opera House in her full marble glory. Then seawards past historic sites, new towns and holiday beaches. Only photographs can possibly do justice to the scenery and I include a couple here to give a flavour for those who were not there to see it for themselves.



The Opera House



Commentary from Bjørg Nakling, our hostess, kept us entertained as we sailed further and further down the fjord.

It was a wonderful opportunity to move around and mingle - I recall conversations

with many old friends from previous conferences, as well as enjoying the company of our own GB members.



Aboard SS Lady Mack



The food was fabulous, as always, being served as a buffet. We were pretty hungry, so there was something of a rugby scrum to begin with, but as more full plates replaced those emptying at an alarming rate, we settled into enjoying the northern fare.

As the sun set, we returned to the quay, relaxed and happy after an evening in good company, good food and memorable conversations.

**Bettina Kulsdom** *Alpha Chapter*



## NORWAY NIGHT

Astrid Bie Skaaland, (NSP 2007-2009) welcomed us to Norway Night.

We all made our way through the city to the City Hall, causing many curious stares from locals, where the Mayor of Oslo was waiting to greet us. The great hall, where we first assembled, was quite awesome, seeming even more so when we realised it was the place where many eminent people had received the Nobel Peace Prize. It was surrounded by murals and the floor had a geometric design of Norwegian marble. We were ushered up some grand stairs to a very imposing room, this one with a wonderful view of the harbour. The Mayor of Oslo greeted each one of us and, after a short welcoming speech, we were treated to a magnificent array of canapés and free-flowing alcohol!



Another delightful musical interlude followed. We listened as Sissel Sodal, daughter of a Norwegian member, beautifully sang songs from Shows. Following this we were divided into groups and given a guided tour of the City Hall. From the outside the Hall looks quite ugly but is more than compensated by the furnishings and decoration, all with Norwegian products, on the inside. We then trooped back to the College as Norway Night continued.

We were greeted there by tables weighed down with authentic Norwegian food. At first, many of us were rather cautious about trying a mixture described as 'porridge' but, after gamely taking the first mouthful, decided it was good especially accompanied by some delicious crisp breads. Fruit and fruit drinks rounded off the meal. Then followed more music, this time a little less cultured, members joining in the singing, actions and 'dancing'. For a small fee, I could tell you more about some members' antics!!!

It was an absolutely super evening and we retired to bed exhausted but happy.

**Evelyn Goodsell** *Gamma Chapter*

## Friday General Session

### THE ARTIST AND HIS WOMEN IN HENRY IBSEN'S DRAMA

On Friday August 7th, Dr Nina Schartum Alnaes delivered the keynote lecture entitled 'The Artist and his Woman in Henrik Ibsen's drama'. Her speciality is Ibsen, and we were entertained by this aspect that she highlighted in her academic presentation. She mentioned four plays :-

<i>The Feast at Solhaug</i>	1856
<i>Love's Comedy</i>	1862
<i>The Master Builder</i>	1892
<i>When We Dead Awaken</i>	1899 his last play

*The Feast at Solhaug* was his first publicly performed play and explored love and relationships but not the role of the artist. As he continued writing plays, he dealt with all aspects of the human



condition - religion, politics and art. His last three plays feature 'artists', all men who need the presence of a woman (of similar social standing ) to realise their own creativity.

The artist in *Love's Comedy* is the poetic idealist, Falk, who loves and is loved by Svanhild. He wants them to run off together; however she rejects the chance to become his muse, saying that poetry is only words. Yet this liberates his talent, revealing his untainted love in his poetry, whilst she marries conventionally and has only her memories.

*The Master Builder*, is one of Ibsen's more frequently performed works. It chronicles the career and personal relationships of Halvard Solness, a man who has not let anything stand in the way of his rampant ambition. At first he needs the love of Kaia, the bookkeeper in his office. As he struggles with the destructive consequences of his monomaniacal pursuit and his growing fear that he has lost his creative powers, a mysterious young woman, Hilda, appears. She is attracted to him because he is an artist. She will help Solness gain a glimpse of his former robust self as she leads him to his tragic fate. Her flattery lures his vanity beyond his faculties as an artist. He climbs the tower of a new house he has built for his (neglected) wife, encouraged by Hilda to 'build castles in the air... the most wonderful thing in the world '. He becomes dizzy and falls to his death.

Ibsen's final play is *When We Dead Awaken*, written seven years before he died. Arnold Rubek is a celebrated sculptor, no longer capable of the major works of his youth. He tells his wife Maia that a (metaphorical) casket holds his visions and he cannot get at the treasure. Rubek encounters Irene, a beautiful woman from his past. He believes she could revive his creativity. Irene, however, holds Rubek responsible for exploiting her when she was his model; he never touched her, kept his distance. He believed that this self-inflicted sexual inhibition and the consequent tension, stimulated his creative power. For Irene, this was a crime and she suffered because she loved him; but she was of no use to him as a woman. Although awakening memories, desires, and an acute existential crisis in Rubek, Irene is disappointed a second time and condemns his art 'I do not have the key' (to the casket). She leads him to a mountaintop. As they approach the summit, both are killed in an avalanche. From the valley below, Maia is heard singing exultantly.

A close friendship between Ibsen and a young woman he called his 'princess' developed in the last nine years of his life; it has been suggested that she may have been the model for Hilda and Irene. His wife, Susannah, burnt all his letters so there is no evidence of this 'muse'. However, Susannah herself was referred to as his 'eminence (grise)' because she was a faithful devoted support throughout his life.

Thus in life, and in his drama, Nina Alnaes said, "Ibsen demonstrates the way women can inspire the work of the artist - but this may not be without its problems!"

**Sandra Blacker Gamma Chapter**

## EUROPEAN FORUM, Saturday Morning

177 members and guests attended the European Forum on Saturday. As I gave out the Agenda booklets I was embarrassed to see that the printer had mistakenly not printed the final version. The corrected pages showing the updated agenda, International Standing rule 5.51 and the Regional Rules will be sent with *EuForia*.

Brigitte Wichmann gave an inspirational start to proceedings. In the business meeting Christa Dunker-Hopferwieser's concerns about the age limit for new members were well received, as were Dorothy Haley's thoughts about representation on the Forum. We also heard about the hopes for a European website.

The full minutes of the meeting will be on the GB website in due course.



### Dr Sigrún Klara Hannesdóttir received the European Achievement Award.

This award is given biennially to a member from any European State in recognition of distinguished service to the Society at the European level.

I was delighted to present it to Dr Sigrún Klara Hannesdóttir who was recognized as having 'extensive knowledge of the Society'. She has been involved from the time she became founder of the first chapter in Iceland in 1975, and has held many positions at chapter, state, regional and international levels.

Sigrún Klara is well known within the DKG Society and has served as the European Regional Director. During her biennium she visited most of the European States. This biennium she is the first European member to serve in the position of an international vice president on the Administrative Board. She is the former National Librarian of Iceland, the first woman to hold that position in the country. She is always ready to do work for the Society and is a very worthy representative of the European membership.

The designer had explained that the award was 'a design in silver - one woman is special and she is in gold and, in the centre of the group, is a ruby. The woman is cherished and supported by the organization of women, the other female symbols. The ruby can also be seen as the rose that symbolises the DKG Society'.



There being no other business we then listened to our speaker, **Meeri Sild**, from Estonia, who spoke about the need to be well informed and the best ways of using new technologies for strengthening and growing the organization through networking, virtual practice communities and electronic tools. For those of us who are 'digital immigrants, i.e. for those who are not 'digital natives', Meeri made it all sound very simple and very possible.

**Diana Bell** *Chair of the European Forum*

## THE FINAL FAREWELL

The Birthday Lunch at the Radisson completed a most successful Conference in Norway. The theme celebrated the 10th Anniversary of our European Region.

Christina Lindqvist (the first Regional Director for Europe, officiating in Breukelen, the Netherlands in 1999) now reminisced over the succeeding years: Malmö 2001, Reykjavik 2003, Turku 2005, and London 2007, culminating in Oslo 2009. Christina added some of her own personal suggestions for the future: a name to be recognised by all nations and expansion into further continents – Africa, Asia and Australasia. She expressed thanks to the current European Regional Director, Birgit Svensson, Barbro Sommerset and all her Norwegian team.

Turin Dahlman led us into an appropriate song for the occasion – ‘Congratulations’, Cliff Richard’s entry for the Eurovision Song Contest many years ago. At this point, Barbro announced, with characteristic good humour, that the dessert to be served shortly would be passion fruit MOUSSE...no-one was expected to eat MOUSE...as described on the menu!

Carolyn Rants offered congratulations to Barbara Day on her Achievement Award 2009 for service to the Society.

After all these speeches, it was a real pleasure to listen to an accomplished piano recital by Eva Lindblad. Having met the pianist previously, it was a particular joy to hear her masterful performance of ‘Rustle of Spring’ by Christian Sinding, the Norwegian composer. (It was a piece I had struggled to practise in a very amateur way.) To continue the Nordic theme, Eva played ‘Solöga’ by William Seymer (Sweden) and ‘Romanze Desdur in D<sup>b</sup>’ by Sibelius (Finland). A delightful interlude!

As the European member of the Society’s international Educator’s Award Committee, Ingrid Stjernquist announced the winner for 2009: Lois Brown Easton’s book *Engaging the Disengaged*. The author had encouraged educators to reflect and change the culture, curriculum and instruction in schools to promote academic, personal and social growth for struggling students.

Finally, in closing, Barbro announced that the collection for the Emergency Fund at the Conference had raised 6,500 NOK, the equivalent of over \$1,000.

Congratulations Europe on our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

**Mary Wardrop**  
Gamma Chapter



**GB Members ready for the  
Presidents Banquet  
on Friday night**

## Workshop: THE WANDERING MINSTREL OUR COMMON EUROPEAN INHERITANCE

What inspired this workshop was the thought that all of us attending these regional conferences are prepared to travel far and wide to share and celebrate together, a common ancestry with travellers from the past – pilgrims, scholars, traders, explorers - but most of all with the wandering minstrel of Medieval Europe, contributing to the joys of life in words and music.

Minstrels go by many different names and belong to many different countries; and I shall offer four examples. The first of these is the Ancient Bard from Homer's *Odyssey*, Book 8, c.700 BC. The very earliest bards were not wanderers but stayed close to their tribe and had a special place within it, attached to a noble household as part of an aristocratic warrior culture, praising heroes and heroic deeds. Indeed the name 'minstrel' comes from the Latin word 'ministerialis' meaning a permanent member of a noble household; and it was not until the Roman Empire opened up routes for trade and travel that it became usual for musicians to travel from place to place, with Latin the 'lingua franca' much as English is today.

The barbarian invasions of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD saw huge migrations of Germanic and Scandinavian peoples bringing their own traditions of heroic poetry. My second example comes from this tradition. *Widsith*, (meaning 'wide-wanderer') an Anglo-Saxon poem belonging to the same period as the more famous *Beowulf*, is sung by the 'scop' (pronounced 'shope') the Anglo-Saxon minstrel who provides a wonderful (and fanciful) catalogue of all the rulers and peoples he supposedly visited with his music, including Goths, Swedes, Danes, Finns and Vikings. My third example, from Troubadour music and poetry of the Middle Ages, introduces a completely new tradition, inspired by Arabic culture discovered as a result of the Crusades. The examples I gave were drawn from the legend concerning King Richard Coeur de Lion, himself both Troubadour and Crusader, and his faithful minstrel Blondel. So, finally, we returned to the Germanic tradition with 'The Cursed Carollers of Kolbigk' an example of popular entertainment known as the 'carole' – a ring dance with leader and refrain (nothing to do with the Christmas Carol in spite of the similarity in name). The workshop ended with participants composing and dancing their own 'carole'.

Gail Gladwin Beta Chapter

## IMPRESSIONS OF OSLO — AUGUST 2009

What were the strongest impressions I brought back from this year's European Regional Conference? Music and sunshine – wonderful music of all kinds, both vocal and instrumental, throughout every event and glorious weather for the whole of our time in Oslo. We could not have seen Norway's capital in more perfect weather.

What I felt also was a strong theme running through the whole conference about the importance of inclusion and relationships to our members.

When the issue of membership was discussed there were arguments for bringing younger educators into the Society to help them develop professionally and assisting them with mentoring and reduced membership fees.

At the other end of the career scale there was a strong plea at the European Forum for not rejecting good potential members on the grounds that they had retired from employment as teachers. Many of these women had moved on to other projects, directly or indirectly educational, and by refusing membership we were rejecting the store of knowledge and expertise they have to offer us. As Dr. Muriel O'Tuel wrote in her workshop handout on relationships:

'Retirement NO! Redirection YES!'

Certainly when we consider the life and career of the Woman of Vision, Dr. Elisabeth Mann Borgese whom Brigitte Wichmann told us about, she described a woman who had followed a varied and wide-ranging career, sometimes relating to education, sometimes not, and who was still lecturing when well into her 80s – but would she have met our criteria for Society membership? Whether young or old the message from members seems to be that we want all key women educators, or those with the potential to become key women educators, to be considered for membership, regardless of age and current educator status. We need to be more inclusive.

It was clear too from this conference that what we also treasure are the supportive friendships that we make as members and which last for a lifetime. One speaker summed this up by quoting Albert Camus:

'Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow.

Don't walk behind me, I may not lead.

Just walk beside me, And be my friend.'

I think this quotation sums up the value of Society membership. Regardless of our status in our individual professional worlds, as members of Delta Kappa Gamma we are all educators and value each other as equals in a supportive, non-judgmental setting and it is this that gives our Society its inspiration and power.

At the conference banquet, the Norwegian hostess at our table, Kirsten Sodal, presented us all with a poem she had written. In a most poignant way, it stressed the importance of human contact and friendship throughout life which I believe, as educators and members, we all share.

**Joan Carroll Alpha Chapter**  
(Kirsten's Poem is on page 23)



I could not complete this issue without a photograph of our International President, Dr Carolyn Rants (front, centre), and our Executive Co-ordinator, Corlea Plowman (right) enjoying, with GB members, the view of Oslo at night from the top of the SAS Radisson Hotel. Ed.

## CHAPTER REPORTS

### ALPHA CHAPTER

Alpha activities: At the May meeting, after an impromptu picnic, Dorcas Rogers spoke about essential Life-Saving Skills, demonstrating them to and on her audience. Also in May a few members, and friends, strode out, from Little Venice, along the Regent's Canal, as far as Camden Lock. The intention was to go twice as far, to Limehouse, but it was more of a scenic amble and the rest will wait for another occasion.

Two members (and a husband) enjoyed the Lewisham Choral Society's 4th July concert at Blackheath (Barbara Kern sang in it) with American themed music.

At the June meeting, at Amy Johnson School, we celebrated the Year of Reading hearing our youngest speaker yet, Eirinn Carroll, age 9, who eloquently spoke about her favourite author, Michael Morpurgo. After hearing from a staff member, Janet Carroll, about the school's reading programme, there was a general discussion on our own personal favourites

Our next meeting will be on **Saturday 19 September**, at St Mary's College, at 2pm. Dorcas Rogers will put forward a chapter project, and discuss strategies for members to support students with their application and interviewing skills.

### BETA CHAPTER

Highlights of the summer have been our outing to Greenway (right), the restored home of Agatha Christie, positioned overlooking the river Dart amongst some of Devon's loveliest countryside. It was very gratifying that so many members were able to come.



Our first official meeting got off to a brilliant start, attended not only by Kate York and Diana Bell, but by all members apart from Joanne Stone whose work required her in London. The occasion was the more memorable thanks to Jess Curtis's thought-provoking and humorous account of 'Studying for an MA when you're 70'. We are very proud of Sue Torr and of Ruth Jordan (recently retired) for their contributions to literacy issues in Plymouth, and of course look forward to Sue's forthcoming visit to the USA as International Speaker.

#### **Forthcoming meetings:**

**3 October 2009** 11.00 for coffee followed by discussion focussing on educational / membership issues. Please bring along a book that got you started on 'the adventure of reading'. Lunch will be served in the conservatory.

**12 December 2009** Christmas Party TBC.

*All meetings held at 17 Hartley Avenue PL3 5HP unless otherwise stated.*

### GAMMA CHAPTER

Eleven Gamma Chapter members and three husbands went to Oslo for the European Regional Conference. We had a wonderful time and were overwhelmed by the organisation, hospitality and stunning scenery. (For people's

comments see the web-site [www.deltakappagamma.org/GB](http://www.deltakappagamma.org/GB)).

*This year our meetings are at Beechwood School*

**12 September 2009** Evelyn Goodsell, (International Personal Growth & Services Committee), will be talking about our impact on the environment.

**17 October 2009** Elizabeth Allen will speak to us about 'The problems of Sex Trafficking'.

**21 November 2009** A talk by Pat Walker on the Southside Young Leaders' Academy (SYLA) which is a new initiative to help African and Afro-Caribbean boys who are in danger of being excluded from school.

**12 December 2009** Christmas lunch at Robbie's. Activity to be arranged.

### LIFE by Kirsten Sodal

The happy playtime Of our days Is side by side with sorrow. Our lifetime Flies so fast away, There are no days to borrow.	Which will be wrinkled, Old and grey, Before we understand.  But every hand In all the world, Hands of both young and old. Should never, Ever be alone, But have a hand to hold.
A tiny baby's Silken grip Will soon become a grown up hand,	

### Ellen Rosier

While writing for this edition, I heard the sad news of the death of **Ellen Rosier**, one of the staunchest members of the Society in Great Britain. I can see her now in her room at Strawberry Hill at our Regional Conference in 2007 busily wrapping all the conference gifts for our speakers, active as a member and as a supportive friend well into her 90s. Members like Ellen have given our Society its inspiration and its power. We must ensure that we do not miss the opportunity to invite the Ellens of the future into membership.



**Joan Carroll** *Alpha Chapter*

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Ellen Rosier on August 16th after breaking her hip in a fall. She, together with Judith Sutton, had been a Charter Member of Alpha Chapter from Great Britain's inauguration on November 19th 1977. Ellen was a staunch and active member even into her 90s, (we felt she would go on and on), and became a reserve member when they moved to the Isle of Wight four years ago. Our thoughts and sympathies go to Judith.

**Barbara Kern** *Alpha Chapter President*

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**DISTRIBUTION**

Kathy Hodgson

**PRINTER**

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

**Mission Statement**

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