



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS
DELTA KAPPA GAMMA™

GB News in Brief

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International Conference in Tampere, Finland

The lecture theatre was bright and airy. The background view was of beautiful trees. We had registered earlier, received our DKG information booklet, lanyard with our name and informing us of the meals we had ordered and been given our special recycled water bottles. The Regional Director Marie-Antoinette Hubers de Wolf then welcomed us and after that the trio started to play the most wonderful tango music. At that moment I wished for a dance partner and the right shoes!



Debbie LeBlanc, International President, pictured left, with Nita Scott our Executive Director, then welcomed us and spoke about the conference. There were 36 members from Finland, 6 from GB, 20 from Norway, 15 from Sweden, 12 from Estonia, 6 from Iceland, 13 from the Netherlands, 6 from Germany, 12 from Canada and 52 from the USA.

Tampere is the city of equality. Finland was the second country to give voting rights to women. it is the most want-

ed city in Finland to move to because of the culture and education system. When the applied science and technology universities merged it became the largest university in Finland.

After the opening ceremony we took coaches to a reception given by the deputy mayor of Tampere, who greeted us all individually. It was all very organised with the most gorgeous little snacks, beautifully presented.

The next two days were very full with some well chosen, interesting speakers. The conference theme was sustainability and the main speakers spoke confidently taking different aspects. There were also many interesting workshops to attend, these given by DKG members. One on working with refugees was of particular interest.

There were also a number of special meals and some wonderful entertainment. The conference finished on Saturday with some of our own members speaking on the conference theme. We finished with an excellent lunch.



GB members



Hostesses at the Banquet



Gymnasts at the Banquet

Diana Bell, Alpha Chapter.

DKG International Conference: Tampere, Finland, July 26-29

When she heard that our conference was in Finland, my daughter Debbie said she would love to come with me – so she did. She had not been to Helsinki, so we flew there and stayed for 3 nights at the Scandic Grand Central Hotel next to the station. Definitely the grandest hotel I have ever stayed in, full of Finnish style, it was wonderful. Then on the Wednesday, the first day of the conference, we took the two-tier train to Tampere – very luxurious. Debbie had paid extra for us to be in the quiet zone. Two hours of bliss! We were staying in another Scandic hotel, near to the railway station, so it was about a ten minute walk to the magnificent building, where the conference took place. We checked into our hotel, and went on to the conference to register, all very efficient.

The speakers were excellent. I was particularly impressed with two of them: Professor Minna Huotilainen, who applies her background as an engineer and Doctor of Technology to bring new approaches to educational research with neuroscience, and Dr Ulla Haggblom, who is a materials scientist with a particular interest in sustainability. They work with companies to develop new materials, making sure that the students are actively involved and feel that their contribution is valuable. These women cannot fail to inspire their students to achieve the very best that they can, and to ensure that they can make an important contribution to this work in the future. There were also a number of workshops scheduled, with good choice each time.

Debbie loves trams, and Tampere has two new tramlines, so of course we went on the longest journey we could find on one of them. Our aim was the tall tower on the highest point in the woods, Pynn timer, with steps to match to get there. There is a lift up to the enclosed space near the top, and we also climbed a step ladder to reach the open top with amazing views. It was breathtaking to be able to see all round at that height. I find the whole country inspiring – how a country and its people should be. If you haven't had the opportunity yet to visit, do make sure that you do at some time. Helsinki is particularly interesting.



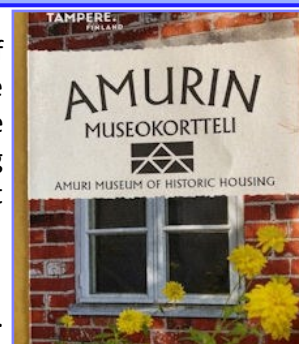
Diane Billam, Gamma Chapter.

Amuri Museum, Tampere

Whilst in Tampere for the DKG conference in Finland, there was time to enjoy places of interest around the city. I resisted a visit to the Moomin Museum but went with a couple of people to the Amuri Museum. It showcases the way of life from the 1860s till the 1970s. The reconstruction of the buildings was only done by craftsmen using the working methods of the past. The fictional residents were created for each apartment or house. It looked like they had only left their homes for a moment so we could look around.

It was a delightful place to visit and a contrast to the modernity of the city.

Sandra Blacker, Gamma Chapter.



My thoughts on the conference held in Tampere, Finland

It was a very well-organised, enjoyable Conference. The speakers were excellent and the choice of Workshops so difficult. I happily attended all that I could but the last one made a great impression on me. It was given by Muriel O' Tuel, a member from South Carolina. Her subject 'Best Friends Forever'.

She is, and I quote, 'A Speaker who inspires her listeners to leave positive footprints on the hearts of others'. She is highly qualified and has received many awards. She is a lively speaker and encouraged us, with many quotes, to make the best of our lives in the time we have been given.

Muriel inspired a lot of discussion, so much so, we went way over our time and nobody appeared in a hurry to leave!

She is the author of 'Footprints On The Heart' The Caring Path to Prosperity, a personal and professional growth book. Muriel left us with a final quote 'REMEMBER: Your behaviour is always YOUR CHOICE and the only person you can control is YOU!'

Evelyn Goodsell, Gamma Chapter.

I thought I recognised Muriel. She was a speaker at the Conference in Iceland, 2019, pictured right. I attended her workshop on Communicating the Language of Validation. She was amazing. Diana Bell



DKG Conference in Finland 2023

What a delight it was for me to attend the DKG Conference in Finland with Diana and Lavinia. As usual with such conferences we enjoyed a few extra days beforehand, this time in Lapland with scenic stops via the rail trip to Tampere.

The Marriott hotel staff welcomed us with three adjacent rooms and an extra key for me, the latter essential for a friend as I cannot hear without my hearing aids at night. The hotel/conference centre was set by trees and a lake which provided the beautiful backdrop in the main auditorium. Because of the thoughtful spacious design - plenty of lifts and other service facilities - conversation time available when walking between the goodly refreshments and finding the next venue for keynote speakers and workshops, was ample.

Two workshops stood out for me. The first given by Saskia Sadrak, was how the "Russian" children in East Estonia are being helped to integrate and find their identity. Saskia spoke with convincing ease in such difficult times; about how she does this through teaching history integrating civics, from the earliest times to the present day.

The second was the drawing workshop on the intertextuality of art presented by Jaana Tanskanen and Eija Liisa Sokka-Meaney. We were greeted with a most informative book about everyday life in the Arctic called Arctic Variety endorsed by the Arctic Council. It will certainly go on my bookshelf. We each collected paper and a couple of pencil crayons, then selected a picture from modern magazines and were asked to find the latest photo on our phones. Using an element from both pictures, we created our own new picture. We subsequently shared these with the group. Each one was very different and we all felt that we had had an enjoyable relaxing hour and that it was a good way to engage students.

As at all DKG Conferences we worked hard and played hard; it was good to learn about developments in education. For me, the best part was being with friends and meeting international friends again. It was so good to catch up with the news. It was sad to hear how old age has affected some but good to send messages where possible. Happily most news was good, making new friends likewise. I look forward to the next convention with pleasure.

Unity Harvey, Alpha Chapter.



We had fun:
Visiting the Moomin Museum, Kenguru dancers entertained us at the 'Night at the Park', and being a princess at the Town Hall Exhibition.



Our Visit to Somerset House

On 15 July a small group of us had a very enjoyable visit to Somerset House, and toured the Courtauld Gallery, which contains a number of my favourite pictures. All went well until I got to Faversham on the way home on the train, when we were thrown off 'owing to a signal failure'. It was about 6.30 by then, and I was two stops short of Canterbury East. Nobody seemed to know what was going on, or what we should do next, but I was very lucky – I was adopted by a lovely friendly hen party! They were dressed in not a lot, with silly heels, but they couldn't have been more helpful, and insisted on taking me under their wing.

A whole train load was trying to get a taxi, to get wherever they had intended to go, as it didn't look as if the railway was going to be taking us anywhere any time soon. We had to walk right down the road to try to pick up a bus, but soon realized there were more than a bus-load of us and the time of the last bus was approaching. My girls kept on trying for a taxi, and eventually managed to get one, and insisted I join them. En route they asked me if I was married – my usual reply to this is 'how long have you got', but that didn't seem appropriate when they were celebrating a wedding the next day. We chatted all the way to Canterbury – about life in general. They refused to take anything from me towards the fare (£37.50), then went on their way to a local bar to meet the rest of their party. I should add they had all been clutching cans of vodka and soda which was going down well. Obviously my lucky day – it was lovely to meet such a caring bunch of women.

Diane Billam, Gamma Chapter.



'Well-Learning—Changing Education with Perspectives from Well-Being and Global Learning'

Minna Huotilainen presented a fascinating keynote speech at the conference..

Minna works as a professor of education and as a brain researcher at Helsinki University. I was particularly interested in her account of the factors which influence the brain's cognitive skills. As a teacher I had read much about how IQ, environment and quality of teaching affects learning outcomes, but had never considered how neuroscience could enhance learning.

Minna began by showing us a diagram of the three most important things a brain needs to promote learning: FOOD, SLEEP, and ACTIVITY. I knew about the importance of good nutrition for a healthy functioning body and was well aware of the importance of sleep as it's currently being promoted as a foil against dementia. However, Minna expanded on how sleep is important for all age groups. It is during sleep that the brain consolidates memory, moving newly learnt information into the long term memory and also processes emotional information. Sleep is the key factor in neural resilience, which allows individuals to maintain psychological well being in the face of adversity.

I have always considered activity to be important for my physical well-being, I now know that it's very important for my brain health. Minna explained how new cells are born in the hippocampus when endurance training and resistance training takes place. This makes the brain memory areas grow and enhances memory functions.

Minna highlighted, one year long study, involving two groups of people - one group was sedentary, the second group walked for 40 minutes three times a week. Those in the sedentary group showed an aging brain with a shrinking hippocampus, while those who walked showed a growth in the hippocampus and better memory functions.

We now live in an era when many young people are sedentary at home, as they are glued to their social media and games on their phones and iPads. It is now more vital that the school timetable allows ample time for PE and games.

But, it's not just for the young. The research shows that the three key ingredients food, sleep and activity affect the brain all the way to old age. So, after a salad of home grown veg, I'm having an early night and I'm off to the gym in the morning.

Lavinia Soul, Alpha Chapter.



The Greening of Kings Cross



A modern oasis packed full of history is tucked behind Kings Cross/St Pancras Stations in the heart of London. Eight of us enjoyed a lovely day exploring Camley Street Natural Park (London Wildlife Trust), a walk alongside the canal and the tranquillity of the Jellicoe Islamic Garden, as well as other fascinating hidden gems in the area which Barbara had researched and shared with us.

What was once a vibrant industrial and commercial hub in the past for goods being transported

via the Regents Canal into London has been transformed into a leafy community with high-end shops etc and eateries (one of which we visited for a very tasty lunch). Amidst a range of



architectural styles from different decades, most of the original buildings still stand as testament to its past. One amazing and intriguing transformation

has been the old Gasometers – two of which are now upmarket apartments and a third has been turned into a lovely park.



Penny Kinnear, Alpha Chapter.

News of Members

Anna Evans, Alpha Chapter, called me replying to my message of concern as we hadn't heard from her. She was full of life as usual and told me that she has been travelling a great deal.

When in the USA – house swapping again, she visited Nashville. She had a day with her swappers and they took her to meet people she had already been in contact with. She had found an organization a bit like the U3A here, they took her behind the scenes at the Grand Ole Opry. She saw real country stars and heard them perform.

She has also spent ages in Ireland, the Caribbean and after her next trip to Ireland she will go to India. Unfortunately she isn't here often enough to keep up her membership, but I hope she may re-join in the future - and maybe write a little about her experiences in the meantime.

Diana Bell, Alpha Chapter.

Life in Normans Bay when you don't drive

I always knew the day would come when I didn't want to drive, but I didn't anticipate that at the same time everything else would slow down as well. I find my walking is limited, my hearing is selective and eyes don't like the bright sunlight. Not to mention the reduced energy. We don't have a bus and the train is too far so I no longer go to U3A and its groups, WI, art group, gardening club and related days out and Christmas lunches.

I'm adjusting to a slower way of life. The day starts with a slow, short walk on the beach. If I'm lucky, I will meet a neighbour for a chat. Over breakfast I do Wordle and share the results with family and friends.

I enjoy the dkg Zoom meetings and seeing friends on screen. The internet is a life saver. I recently had a series of video links with Health in Mind and the mentor has now connected me to a series of exercises on mindfulness. So still learning!

We have a village book group and recently began a weekly craft group.

I still have my caravan and have managed a few swims this summer, but we had an invasion of jellyfish during June which kept us out of the water. I'm slowly working my way through the "will read one day" books on the bookshelves but also being kept well supplied by friends and family.

How I would love to be in Finland for the conference, but look back with pleasure on all that DKG has given me.

Bettina Kulsdom, Gamma Chapter.

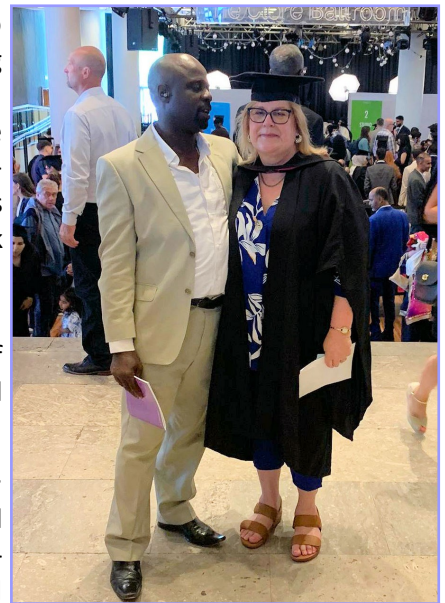
For our family this is one positive outcome from the pandemic.

When covid struck in 2020 Alison lost her NHS post because she was unable to volunteer to work on a Covid ward. Stuck at home with little prospect of being able to get back into employment in the near future, her husband, Sam, asked her what she would really like to do if she had the opportunity. Alison said she had always wanted to be a writer and had often looked longingly at the creative writing degrees universities now offered. He encouraged her to apply. As a delivery driver his job was in great demand, not at risk. He was hard at work throughout the pandemic.

Three hardworking but satisfying and enjoyable years later Alison graduated on 19th July 2023 with a first-class honour's degree from the University of Westminster at the Royal Festival Hall. She is currently finishing her first novel and is looking for an agent or publisher to place it with.

Joan Carroll. Joan and **Alison Ajayi** are both Alpha Chapter members.

Joan added 'This is the best photograph we can offer. It was the largest and most chaotic graduation ceremony I have ever experienced. Literally thousands of students and guests so we could not get anywhere near the official photographers, but it does give a flavour of our experience on that day'.



Alison with Sam at her graduation

Many congratulations to Alpha Chapter's **Claire Purcell** on her School's **Outstanding OFSTED**. Over coffee Claire, Headteacher of Dulwich Hamlet Junior School, described the latest system. It begins at the moment you receive a 'phone call from the inspectors, who ask many questions— this can take up to two hours!

Diana Bell

DKG promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education