



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS
DELTA KAPPA GAMMA

GREAT BRITAIN NEWS



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The picture on the front cover shows our European Regional Director, Marika Heimbach and our incoming (and returning!) Great Britain State President, Diana Bell. What a happy picture, taken on a great occasion—our Great State Conference in Tonbridge on 23 March 2013. Many of the contributions within are reports on the conference, as you will see.

Sheila Roberts writes her last article as our GB State President. There is a report on the excellent work completed by Dorothy Haley on the State Archives—thank you again, Dorothy, from all of us. There is some information on a most successful `Open Session` in London, organised by Alpha Chapter, with excellent speakers and a prestigious venue. State funds well spent. Evelyn Goodsell and Diane Billam had a most enjoyable visit to the Germany State Conference in Braunschweig, which is reported on page 17.

As always, please send any contributions to GB News which may be of interest to members. There will be a report on the European Regional Conference in Amsterdam in August (`volunteers` will be sought shortly!). Please send in any material by mid-August, in Word with photos etc. attached. Apologies, as always, to any members who sent in contributions which have not been included in this edition.
dbillam@hotmail.com

Sheila Roberts

STATE ORGANISATION PRESIDENT: 2011-2013

As I write this, it's mid-April and the sleet, wind and rain are lashing sideways and I've just come in from dog-walking wearing a woolly hat, gloves and a thick anorak. I hope by the time you read this issue of GB News that we will be basking in spring sunshine.



I am delighted that Diana Bell will be GB State President 2013-2015, and Kathy Hodgson will be State Vice President. They will make a great team. As this is my last message to you as State President I would like to thank all of you for your help and support during the last two years. I really do appreciate your invaluable help and guidance and know that Diana will receive that same level of support during her coming biennium. I think this generous and constant support is one of the outstanding features of GB members of Delta Kappa Gamma. Thank you to all of you.

This issue of GB News will contain a lot of reports on the conference in Tonbridge, which took place on another other bitterly cold wintry day! It was wonderful to see so many members and guests attend and I know all our speakers were delighted with their reception. I thought we were very privileged to have such first-rate speakers – so knowledgeable, entertaining and informative. Many thanks to Dorcas for arranging Pauline Maddison as one of our speakers, and Sandra for arranging for Kate Weedon. They, together with Adriana from Canada, are all very busy professionals who managed to fit our conference into their very demanding schedules. A big thank you too, to the Conference Committee, Gloria, Kathy and Robbie, for their wonderful support before and during the conference. My only regret was the time restriction a one day conference imposed.

The beginning of my biennium was marked with a superb Regional Conference in Baden-Baden and in this coming August we have a European Regional Conference to look forward to in the lively Dutch city of Amsterdam. I hope as many members as possible will be attending from Britain. It is an excellent venue and the conference promises to be as lively and interesting as always. I am really looking forward to 'Dutch Night', hoping to maybe see some Dutch folk dancing, but knowing that whatever our Dutch friends lay on will be very worthwhile – and not usually something we would experience as mere tourists. I remember vividly the wonderful dancing, music and singing in Baden- Baden

and thinking how lucky we were to experience, through the personal contacts of our German friends, entertainment so special and uniquely 'Black Forest'. I believe this sharing of culture to be such a great aspect of Delta Kappa Gamma.

Finally, but not least, I am delighted that Di Billam is continuing as editor for GB News for the next biennium. I am sure all of you join me in saying a big thank to her for producing such an excellent Society publication three times a year. We really do appreciate all your hard work Di.

Sheila Roberts

!THE NEW WEBSITE! www.dkggb.org.uk

After several steps forward and several ones back, we can now announce that we have a new up-dated website! Our original one was ten years old and the program we used out-dated. If something went wrong, it was no longer supported!

With considerable help from a young man, Geoff, with the design and the training of the management, Robbie Scahill and I think that we are ready to take up your suggestions. We must stress that feedback from you is most important. Ideas for new pages, news articles, pictures, comments on style, etc., are what we want to keep a vibrant and lively website.

We hope that you find your way around it easily. New features include a panoramic picture at the top of each page. (More needed. A good picture that we can crop into an elongated rectangle.) Also new is the option at the top left of each page to change the size of the font. We had not seen that before.

Please visit the website regularly and so 'keep us on our toes'!

Gloria Redston, Robbie Scahill

Webmasters GB

(Thanks, Gloria and Robbie, from all of us for everything you do to keep us up to date. We know how hard you have worked on this, and it is much appreciated. Ed.)

THE STATE ORGANISATION EXECUTIVE BOARD COMMITTEE

What is the Executive Board Committee and what does it do? You may have wondered who makes the decisions for our organisation; how are conferences organised, who deals with the finances etc. how do the three chapters cooperate?

The Committee is made up of the State President, Vice-President, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, Secretary and the three Chapter Presidents. These members have the right to vote should the occasion demand. Also on the committee are a Parliamentarian and the past State Presidents. These members are there for advice but do not have the right to vote unless specifically requested to do so.

The Committee meets three times a year for review and planning purposes. Agenda items would include information from Headquarters to be disseminated, a Treasurer's report, conference and speaker planning, and, most important, ideas for attracting new members. In our decision-making we are guided by the Constitution of DKG, the Byelaws of Great Britain and our Communication and Finance Guidelines.

All of these can be found on our website along with the Minutes of the meetings once they have been approved. It sounds very dry but actually we have lively meetings with many ideas shared as we endeavour to take GB State forward. Every member has a valuable contribution to make.

If you would like the committee to discuss a particular issue, please tell your chapter president.

Gloria Redston (*Gamma Chapter. Past State President*)

(The photograph overleaf shows the Executive Committee at its meeting at London South Bank University on 9 February 2013. Ed.)

GREAT BRITAIN STATE EXECUTIVE BOARD COMMITTEE



Back row, left to right: Unity Harvey, Gloria Redston, Diana Bell, Sheila Roberts, Mary Wardrop, Robbie Scahill, Carole Stirling.
Front row, left to right: Dorothy Haley, Joan Caroll, Evelyn Goodsell, Kathy Hodgson, Diane Billam, Dorcas Rogers, Barbara Kern.

GREAT BRITAIN STATE ARCHIVES

Gloria and I have enjoyed the challenge of formalising the Archives for Great Britain since its foundation as a State within The Delta Kappa Gamma Society in 1977. We have produced the official Parchment Manuscript, and a spare set of the Archives to give you the opportunity to borrow them to view at your leisure. Alternatively they can be e-mailed to you as an attachment and you can make your own copy. Also saved are all copies of GB News together with key important documents. The Archives should be retained by the State President, whose duty it will be to record the names of officers, and of those members who may have had awards and honours, and also to produce a brief statement of activities within her biennium.

It has been a great privilege to be trusted with this task and it is hoped that those of you who take the opportunity to view the Archives will find them interesting, and often very surprising. We feel that these Archives are a way in which we may thank, honour and pay tribute to all members of our State for their contributions to the growth of Great Britain as an important international element within Delta Kappa Gamma **Dorothy Haley** (*Gamma Chapter*)

My contribution can be compared to the editor of a biography whereas Dorothy was the researcher and compiler. In other words Dorothy's input was by far and away the most significant! **Gloria Redston** (*Gamma Chapter*)



The charter setting up, in November 1977, the Great Britain State Organisation of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, one of the earliest documents in our Archives.

THE CANTERBURY AWARD

Unfortunately we did not grant the Canterbury Award to anyone this year as there were no applicants, in spite of reminders being circulated. Let's hope we can gain more interest the next time the Award is due to be made. Just a reminder—there are two avenues which members might follow to be considered for the award: either an educational project, where up to £300 may be awarded, or, during years when the Award is not granted to support a project, it becomes available to members to assist them to attend a state, regional or international convention for the first time. In both cases, a report is ultimately required. Applications to be posted or emailed by 30 November to the Chairman of the Awards Committee, currently Carole Stirling..

OPEN SESSION IN LONDON, 20 APRIL 2013

Congratulations to Diana Bell and Dorcas Rogers for organising such an excellent day at the Institute of Education, London. There was such a good turnout, a very warm welcome, and really interesting speakers. It was particularly nice to see so many guests, many of whom wanted to find out more about DKG. We hope to welcome new members as a result of this superb initiative. Of the 25 people present, 12 were guests. Even the gloriously sunny day was auspicious!

Sheila Roberts (*State President*)

SELF-HELP GROUPS FOR PEOPLE WITH EARLY DEMENTIA

Cindy Glover is currently a group facilitator for the Mental Health Foundation. Her role is to run self-help groups for those in the early stages of dementia who live in sheltered housing accommodation. The groups are being evaluated to see if self-help groups do help people living with this diagnosis.

She outlined the challenges faced in setting up the project, as well as some of the wisdom of the group members and the ideas they have produced. *Extra care sheltered housing* allows people who are no longer able to live in their own home to live relatively independently. However, while physical care needs are met, tenants can become isolated. The dementia self-help groups bring tenants with dementia together to support themselves and each other. Group members learn practical coping methods and skills to increase their independent living skills. This positive approach enables the group to improve their quality of life and wellbeing, and make plans to retain their control and enjoyment of life.

She has seen first-hand increased confidence and enjoyment of life, and noticed the groups' ability to learn new skills, form friendships and explore difficult issues in a caring and supportive way with others facing similar challenges. Surprisingly, although all the group members have memory problems, their chief concerns remain: losing independence, loneliness and becoming a burden to others. Cindy emphasised that people living with dementia may forget things, but that does not stop them learning, and they have a great amount of wisdom to offer to others.

Cindy emphasised that social isolation is made worse if people have been moved away from home. The important thing is to make connections, whether



this be Arsenal Football Club or blues music, to talk about getting lost and aids such as maps and GPS, and being ready for possible hospital admissions with an `emergency bag`, including all the things people felt were essential. Cindy ended with these wise words: `See the person, not the symptoms`.

Diane Billam (Gamma Chapter)

Dorcas Rogers, Alpha Chapter President, presents Cindy with a gift to express our thanks for her contribution.

THE LONDON CHALLENGE PROJECT



Liz Day was Senior Lecturer and Deputy Course Director MA programmes for London South Bank University. She explained that under the last Labour Government London schools improved beyond expectations, as a result of the *London Challenge Project*, advocated by Tim Brighouse, the London Education Tsar, and then adopted by other urban centres. She explained what caused this improvement, with the lowest achieving schools improving the most, and in particular, how can we learn from the success of this project for the future?

Diane Billam (Gamma Chapter)

Liz Day after her presentation.

GREAT BRITAIN STATE CONFERENCE

23 MARCH 2013 AT THE RIVER CENTRE, TONBRIDGE

The theme was `RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT OF PUPILS` NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS`

Dr. Adriana Fishta-Bejko: "Teaching Everybody's Children"



Here was a highly qualified academic who demonstrated with every breath what good teaching was; and who must be one of DKG's best ambassadors – as she ranks her membership of the Society as the highest degree she has ever received. From an Albania nowhere-school she is now a Fulbright Scholar and World Fellowship recipient, part-funded from DKG.

Her main message was that in order to teach, one must learn. Teachers must learn from their mistakes by systematic reflection and what she calls Intentional Pedagogy, which applies equally to oneself and to one's pupils. Leaving learning to chance, to be absorbed by 'osmosis', is just not good enough. Specialising in the teaching of English to non-English speakers, she has produced a series of text books which make use of her pedagogic principles, which can be accessed via 12dracana@gmail.com.

Gail Gladwin (Beta Chapter)

Pauline Maddison: Improving the Life Chances of the most Vulnerable Children and Young People

Pauline has had a distinguished career in children's services in N.E. England, London and the Home Counties and is currently Director of Children's Services in Wokingham, Surrey. She explained that meeting the needs of those disadvantaged children in dysfunctional/disadvantaged families identified for the very first time as soon as possible is not only preferable in terms of quicker successful outcome for the child but also in cost, as it is often extremely expensive to meet the needs of severely disadvantaged children.

Her six categories of disadvantage were

1. economic;
2. ethnic/language acquisition;
3. Special Needs;
4. mental health and self esteem;
5. at risk of harm/ domestic violence and
- 6 in care.

Meeting the needs of those children focuses between educating and safeguarding them. Between 1998 and 2003, there were top-down national strategies to improve teaching and learning with targeted programmes (eg education action zones, excellence in cities) in areas of social disadvantage. There was specialist support and intensive OFSTED inspections of schools and local authorities.

After the Victoria Climbié case and Laming enquiry, necessary change came with the theme **Every Child Matters**. Guide outcomes were Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Well Being. It led to the 2004 Children Act and the merging of education with children's social care. Hence the formation of Local Children's Safeguarding Boards and one inspectorate – OFSTED. The focus was on early intervention, information-sharing and lead professionals with all the agencies inspected against the five outcomes. By 2009 media pressure led to the emphasis on the timeliness of assessments and data collection, a significant increase in the number of children on child protection plans or in care, a greater focus of local authorities on safeguarding, and OFSTED inspections of local authorities only on safeguarding and children in care.

Since 2010 and the New Government the Every Child Matters policy has been abandoned. There is a question on how academies and free schools with their greater independence can offer an appropriate curriculum to disadvantaged children and how these institutions will be monitored. The current emphasis on league tables, testing and planned totally academic 16+ examinations may not meet the needs of children who have faced difficulties in their academic life. Prescribed programmes, including national strategies, have ended. The focus is on **narrowing the gap of attainment** with the introduction of the pupil premium. OFSTED inspections of local authorities on the relationship with schools have been introduced and the OFSTED Chief Inspector proposes reintroduction of separate directors of education and social care.

Pauline indicated that whatever protective measures are put in place we cannot legislate for the rare abuser, paedophile or psychopath whose deviousness may enable him/her to outwit the protection system but that we are left with four challenges.:-

1. have we had the balance right between supporting those most at risk and providing universal services;
2. does the new school system help the most disadvantaged;
3. have we had the balance right between education and safeguarding;
4. has the effect of media involvement in notorious cases such as the Soham murders, Victoria Climbié and Saville cases caused over-emphasis on child safety to a point where we have become risk-averse?

We can also ask, are education priorities returning to those prior to 1998, with an emphasis on achievement and economic well-being?

Unity Harvey (*Alpha Chapter*)

OUR EUROPEAN REGIONAL DIRECTOR

I very pleased to see Marika's smiling face on arrival at the Conference as it reminded me of the great time we enjoyed at the Baden-Baden Conference.

Marika brought greetings from Dr. Beverley Helms, the International President, and exciting news of Estonia's new chapter formed with all young members. She stressed the importance of friendship across boundaries and expressed appreciation for the hospitality here in England where she always enjoys herself enormously.

Marika encouraged us to focus on the chapters by communicating and connecting, concentrating on retention and recruitment of members. She was also keen for us to increase our visibility with the use of technology such as on-line publication. Marika mentioned that every member should have the opportunity to have a voice and her mantra was “Vision with action can change the world”.

To conclude, Marika presented a poem by Hilde Domin 1909-2006 “Woman with Rose” translated from German into English, the last line of which was “Only a rose for support”. The poem seemed to encapsulate the essence of the whole day and Marika endorsed this by saying, “I feel very supported by you, thank you very much.”

Liz Malik (Gamma Chapter)

Dear UK members,

Sitting on the plane from Gatwick to Alicante I reflect the experience of the past days. After a heartwarming welcome by Sheila and Harry Roberts at the airport on Thursday afternoon, we chatted along the winding Kentish roads to their beautiful, comfortable home where I was greeted by Sashka, a huge white fluffy lady who graciously accepted my presence for the following days.

Sheila had arranged a get-together with “old and new” acquaintances and I was happy about the chance to look at the new, beautifully designed website, as well as to discuss the latest news concerning the upcoming Europe regional conference in Amsterdam.

On Saturday a full day of visiting with old friends and making new ones and listening to interesting, informative speeches awaited us, crowned with the prospect of introducing new members to our society. I congratulate you all on the excellent programmes provided for your membership on the chapter and state level. Your commitment truly fulfills the Society’s slogan “to promote professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education”.

Thank you for your generous hospitality, for the great programme, for the good talks, for the exquisite food and for your friendship. I look forward to seeing you in Amsterdam. With very best wishes to all of you.

Fondly, Marika.

GREAT BRITAIN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Mary Wardrop was awarded the Great Britain Achievement Award, a silver and amber rose brooch, for her outstanding work for DKG over a long time.



POST-CONFERENCE DINNER

Following an extremely informative and successful day, many of us gathered together at The Carpenters Arms for supper. The atmosphere was convivial, the food excellent and the surroundings comfortable, if a little cramped – though I prefer to think of it as cosy! The staff were able to reach most of us, with the assistance of the typically helpful DKG members – passing along plates of delicious smelling foodstuffs. The crab starter was particularly tasty, though I was tempted to hijack an alternative as it passed by!

Conversation and wine flowed in equal measure; old friendships were rekindled, new friendships established. Plans for Amsterdam were discussed – rail, road or air? Which of the tours were most inviting? But that is for the future.

I had promised to be home by 9:00 – in the event it was almost 11:00 before I dragged myself through the front door. Helping to organise a conference is demanding; tension that all will go well is wearying – but I wanted to stay right until the end. An evening spent with friends was a fitting way to round off a perfect day.

Kathrin Hodgson (Gamma Chapter)



Sheila Roberts, GB State President 2011-2013, passes the baton to Diana Bell, GB State President 2013-2015 at the Conference. Kathy Hodgson will add GB State Vice President to her existing responsibilities as State Treasurer. We look forward to another successful biennium.



Marika Heimbach, European Regional Director (left), and Kathy Hodgson, GB State Treasurer and State Vice President Elect for 2013-2015 (see above).

Picture below shows our Panel: from left: Kate Weedon, Pauline Maddison (speakers), Kate York (GB) in the Chair, Marika Heimbach (European Regional Director) and Dr Adriana Fishta-Bejko (speaker).



THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN AMSTERDAM FROM 7—10 AUGUST 2013.

This year Amsterdam is celebrating the 400th anniversary of its canals, with many events and festivals being organised. The conference hotel is the Holiday Inn Express, located next to Sloterdijk Station, and only 250 m from the Conference Centre where the conference takes place.



There is an easy train connection from Schipol Airport to Sloterdijk Station, taking only 7 minutes, and a metro connection to Amsterdam centre (2 stops). One great cause for celebration is that the famous Rijksmuseum has reopened after 10 years of being closed for extensive refurbishment, a `must see` for all art lovers.

So much to see and do—please come! Details and registration form were included in DKG News March/April 2013 edition, and are available on the website.

GERMANY STATE CONFERENCE, 11 MAY 2013



We enjoyed our trip to Braunschweig (Brunswick) for the Germany State Conference on 11 May 2013. It is always a pleasure to visit other DKG States` conference, which we can recommend to all GB members. It was not such a pleasure to get up at 02.30 the morning before for Evelyn to drive us to Heathrow

Airport – rather a shock to the system even to seasoned travellers like ourselves! We had booked an `Airport Hopper` taxi from Hannover Airport to our hotel, which was a very convenient way to travel, as it is 60 km from Hannover to Braunschweig and would have involved a train from the airport to the main railway station, another train to Braunschweig and then a bus.



The benches in the square had all got different lions supporting them. We loved this lioness and her cub!

Two German members, Daniela von Essen and Dagmar Ullman, kindly took charge of us for the afternoon. We had opted for a visit to the Dankerwode Castle, particularly to see a Vermeer painting we had not seen before, `Girl with a Wine Glass`, which proved to be well worth the visit. What a pity we cannot reproduce the postcard here – you would love it! We loved the story of Henry the Lion and his wife Mathilde, who was English, and we later saw their tomb in Braunschweig Cathedral. Henry was Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, living from 1129-1195, and his contacts ranged from England to the Byzantine Imperial Court. The cathedral is dedicated to St. Blasius, St John the Baptist and St Thomas of Canterbury.

We then had excellent coffee and cake in a pavement café on one of the town squares, listened to the bells of a nearby carillon striking the quarter hours, and enjoyed a tour of the town with the highlights pointed out to us. As in much of Germany, they have mainly rebuilt the city after wartime bombing to look similar to its pre-war appearance. Next a bus ride to the restaurant, `Greuner Jaeger`

on the edge of town for dinner. We walked some of the way back through the woods to catch two buses back to the hotel. A very enjoyable day.

On Saturday all conference proceedings were in German. The two Dutch members visiting were both fluent German speakers (aren't they always!) so we were the only non-German speakers there. We still got the gist of the business meeting in the morning, which is run in a very different way from our AGMs – apart from anything else it lasted three hours without a break for coffee! We thought we would have mutiny in the ranks at home! Two speakers followed. Katrin Ullmann on research into the effect of conflict on young people in the Balkans, and Ulrike Gottlob on `Solwodi`, an organisation which for nearly thirty years has helped women in both Kenya and Germany, lately providing assistance for women who have been trafficked into Germany. Both speakers were passionate about their subject and very knowledgeable – a most interesting afternoon, which ended with the induction of a new member (see photo).

Monika Hoernstein (centre) becomes a member of DKG Germany State. Monika Huber (State President) is on the left, Marika Heimbach (European Regional Director) on the right



Left to right: Evelyn Goodsell, DKG Germany member Claudia Quesnel, Diane Billam

Next year the Germany conference is in Rastatt, near Baden-Baden, in St Bernard Priory. We're making plans

Evelyn Goodsell and Diane Billam (Gamma Chapter)



Another new member for Alpha Chapter: left to right:: Dorcas Rogers (Chapter President), new member Anna Evans, Diana Bell

Pauline Maddison, speaker at the GB Conference (see page 11 for report) accepts a rose from Dorcas Rogers



Speaker at the Gamma meeting in March, Linda Lewis, with Chapter President, Sandra Blacker.

ALPHA CHAPTER REPORT

It seems impossible to think that we are already nearly half way through the year and yet spring is only just starting to make an appearance. The 2012 winter seems to have hung on long and hard and certainly affected a number of our planned chapter events over the last 4 months. Due to a combination of ill health and bad weather the normal Alpha chapter Christmas party had to be cancelled. As well as having an opportunity to get together over the festive season the party had also been a planned opportunity for Barbara Kern to talk about her experience signing in the opening ceremony of the London Paralympic games. I rescheduled the party for our meeting in January and had been able to invite Naomi Riches MBE who was a rowing gold medallist to join us. Many of Gamma were also going to join us. Unfortunately snow storms once again put paid to our plans and we cancelled yet again. Consequently it was a very slow start to the Gamma New Year meetings and events programme.

In February we were lucky enough to have an opportunity to listen to a young mother who is educating all 3 of her children at home. We all had some view or opinion on the subject of "home schooling" but our speaker's account of how she became almost by default the home educator of her 3 children and what she had learnt from that experience over the past 4 years challenged our previously held ideas and views. Perhaps for most of us the most surprising and disturbing fact we learnt was that it is not compulsory to register children for education. Whilst some children achieve well academically it was disquieting to realise that children can slip under the radar of educational, social and possibly medical services in this way. At the start of her talk our speaker asked us to introduce ourselves and give a brief outline of our educational backgrounds. The list of educational qualifications and expertise must have sounded daunting to someone who clearly did not see herself as a professional educator. However it was our speaker who taught us a great deal about an area of education about which little is understood and even less attention is paid.

Our March meeting was once again affected by poor weather and a number of members were either travelling in sunnier climes or had succumbed to winter colds. So it was only 4 of us who met at the Foundling Hospital at 40 Brunswick square. The first children were admitted to the Foundling Hospital on 25 March 1741, into a temporary house located in Hatton Garden. At first, no questions were asked about child or parent, but a distinguishing token was put on each child by the parent. These were often marked coins, trinkets, pieces of cotton or

ribbon, verses written on scraps of paper. Clothes, if any, were carefully recorded. One entry in the record reads, "Paper on the breast, clout on the head." The applications became too numerous, and a system of balloting with red, white and black balls was adopted. Children were seldom taken after they were twelve months old. In September 1742, the stone of the new Hospital was laid in the area known as Bloomsbury. The hospital was designed by Theodore Jacobsen as a plain brick building with two wings and a chapel built around an open courtyard. The western wing was finished in October 1745. An eastern wing was added in 1752 "in order that the girls might be kept separate from the boys". The hospital was demolished in 1926 but the Foundling Hospital still has a legacy on the original site. Seven acres of it were purchased for use as a playground for children. This area is now called Coram's Fields and is an area set aside for children in perpetuity and a sign at the entrance gate states "adults only allowed if accompanied by a child". We spent a very interesting couple of hours walking around the museum and had lunch in the museum cafe before going our separate ways.

One of my pledges to Alpha Chapter when I became president was to work towards increasing our membership numbers. We have been looking at different ways to run our meetings and over the next year will trial a new style of chapter programme. This will include having only one formal meeting every quarter but still keeping in contact by e-mail when there are important decisions to be made. Reducing the number of meetings means that we can increase the number of speakers we have and allow members to have a longer more productive time discussing issues raised by each speaker's varied experiences and presentations. Our April meeting was the first of this style of afternoon and involved two different speakers presenting at an "open session" at the Institute of Education in Bedford Way. We thank the DKG GB for helping us to pay for this venue and for the advertising. The event was a great success with approximately 30 people attending having an opportunity to listen to two extremely different speakers and meet with members from Gamma and Alpha chapter. We hope that the event not only raised our profile but will have also gained some new members.

Future Meetings and Events:

Saturday 15 June: 2.00pm - 4pm. London South Bank University quarterly meeting

Saturday 13 July: 12—5 pm: Summer garden party in the grounds of Holy Trinity Church Rotherhithe. A visit to the local city farm, a look around the church (view the mural by Hans Feibusch) lunch and afternoon talks from Barbara Kern and Naomi Riches MBE on their experiences at the London 2012 Paralympics. Opportunity to meet up and socialize.

We were due to have a talk by Sandra Doyle on her work as an illustrator and volunteer for the Natural History Museum. This was to have been in June but due to other work commitments Sandra had to cancel. She has kindly agreed to speak in October.

Dorcas Rogers (*Alpha Chapter President*)

BETA CHAPTER REPORT

Our Spring meeting for 2013 was appropriately enough on Easter Saturday, 30th March this year. The main purpose was to feature a lunch to meet our Dutch visitor, Yvonne van Buul; and to share with other members information about the recent State Conference in Tonbridge.

Rather like the weather, our chapter is in the state of marking time until it can gather the strength to blossom and grow again. With both Loetitia and Pat, for various reasons, 'hors de combat', our group feels somewhat depleted. However, there is much promising work to report, especially from Sue Blackburn whose studies in psycho-therapy are going well; Sue Torr, that bombshell of the literacy world; from Zoe who has used her combination of interests and skills in a most innovative development with the Reading Project, and Jess whose careful negotiations will, I hope, be furthering the links already made with Plymouth University.

On the cards for our summer meeting is a tour of the historic Naval Hospital building and grounds led by Sue Blackburn, the date to be announced later.

Gail Gladwin (*Beta Chapter President*)

GAMMA CHAPTER REPORT

When the request for GB News copy `pings` into my inbox, I think, `Surely I've only just produced a piece? Well, I've been `pinged`! What can I write about?

My previous writing described Gamma meetings, venue and prospective speakers up until end of the year 2012. Since then, Linda Lewis, Director of The Puppet Centre at Battersea Arts spoke Saturday 2 March. She described her role, and prefaced her talk thus – from 'War Horse' to 'Avenue', from 'Little Angel' to the National Theatre and the RSC, there's puppetry in nearly everything these days. As a theatrical art form, it is well and truly on the mainstream map in a way it has never been before. She explained that the **Puppet Centre** is a development agency for the art form of puppetry. The organisation was established in 1974 and it has been continuously working in the puppetry scene mentoring, networking, advocating and developing the work of puppeteers since then. Linda described a very successful collaboration, 'Puppetry in Opera' held last November. ([www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animations... when-puppetry-meets-opera](http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animations...when-puppetry-meets-opera)).

Well, what else can I write about? Ah yes, future events.

Saturday 29 June: a visit to Wakehurst Place, the National Trust's most visited place. Open throughout the year, Wakehurst is the country estate of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The varied landscape is of international significance for its beautiful botanical gardens and tree collections, as well as for its science-based plant conservation and research, including the Millenium Seed Bank. Meet at 11 am for a guided tour at 11.30 am.

Wednesday 28 August: a visit to Titsey Place which is especially noted for its fine collection of family portraits from such noted artists as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Peter Lely, many of which greet the visitor on first entering the main entrance hall. The gardens have always been a particular feature of Titsey Place and have been enjoyed by many generations. Standing on the upper terrace is the perfect place to enjoy the long views across the Darent valley which extends to the beginnings of the South Downs. Meet at 1 pm for a tour at 1.30 pm which cannot be pre-booked, first come first served. There are further tours during the afternoon.

Now my metaphorical pencil has been sucked and I cannot produce anything else! I await the next `ping`!

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