

GB News in Brief

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Winter 2023

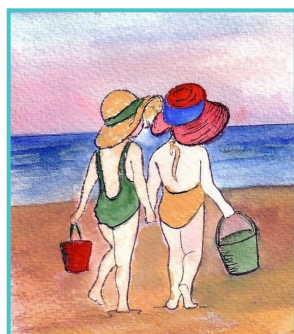


Artist of the Month: Bettina Kulsdom

Marika Heimbach, chair of the European Forum, pictured right, wrote to Bettina Kulsdom:-

‘This biennium I serve as chair of the EU Forum Committee. Last year we had a meeting at Ank Janssonius’ house in Amsterdam, and when I looked at her many paintings and art works I had the idea of having a new feature for our EU website: Artist of the Month.

There have been artists from our member countries presented on the website ever since the idea took form, and the committee would like you to show your work too.



At one meeting in England you offered cards made from your paintings. Among the ones I bought was the painting I attach (pictured left). When our youngest daughter had her third child, and they - Polly, Teddy and Leo - were about the age of the children you painted I sent the beautiful, sweet card to her. She had it framed, and it is hanging in her house.

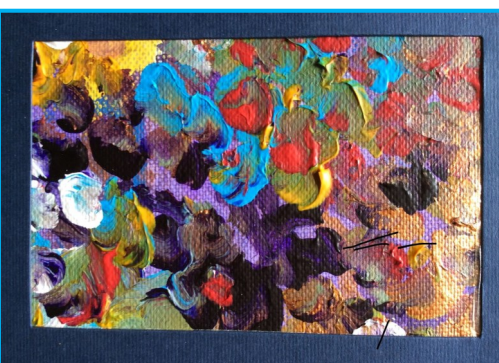
Please consider being our next artist of the month’.

A number of Bettina’s painting may be found on the European Website. Do take a look at www.dkgeurope.org

Bettina was asked to write a little piece about herself and send in some pictures. This is also on the European website.

‘My name is Bettina Kulsdom and I taught English in 11 to 16 comprehensive schools in Croydon from 1976 to 1997, retiring as Head of the English Department. In retirement I taught at Croydon Community College on a part time basis, while continuing my research in Narrative.

I have been a member of DKG since 1997. Originally I was in Alpha chapter but changed to Gamma when I moved to a small hamlet on the East Sussex coast in 2006. I live in a small terraced 19th century coastguard cottage giving me access to the beach. In 2007 I joined a local art group where I began painting at a regular weekly meeting. I began with water colour, attending a monthly water colour workshop for a year. When I exhibited my paintings at our bi-annual exhibition I had surprising success, selling a simple abstract painting entitled Arctic Lights. That gave me the motivation to create my own greetings cards from my paintings all of which have sold.



In recent years I have painted mostly in acrylic, becoming increasingly abstract. I enjoy experimenting with colour, starting with a limited palette and “seeing what happens”.

My DKG experiences have included Alpha Chapter President, and various other committee memberships. One of the most exciting posts was as International Communications Committee Chairperson when I experienced DKG International life. The European conferences have provided a rich learning curve. Sadly I’m sorry that age now prevents me from taking an active part in meetings but I have enjoyed the Zoom meetings.

I was awarded the GB Canterbury Scholarship when I wrote a short history of my village, Normans Bay. Published in 2015, we sold more than 500 copies through various local tourist outlets. DKG membership is responsible for much of this success.



Congratulations to **Bettina** on becoming 'Artist of the month'. Here are two more examples of her work, more of which can be seen at www.dkgeurope.org.



I know there are other artists amongst you who paint, write poetry, make jewellery etc. Do consider sending Marika Heimbach, Chair of the European Forum, some pictures of your work, and/or send them to me for GB News in Brief.

Diana Bell, Alpha Chapter.

DKG Zoom Meeting 9th September



What a great zoom session. Diana, Unity and Sandra shared their various experiences and the many aspects of their few days in Finland with wonderful photos and a lot of enthusiasm. I know I was left wishing I could have been there. I vividly remember the last Regional Conference which Finland hosted in Turku, especially the warm welcome accorded to all

This year's Conference was held at The Marriot Hotel which our speakers described as 'very good, and in a very convenient location'. It was intriguing to me to see the back drop of huge trees through a window of the Conference hall.

Diana gave a very positive overview of the whole conference, with about 178 delegates, including 33 new members, and superb speakers at all of the General Sessions, with fun exercise sessions between speakers.

She said there was a good balance between speakers and workshops which made choices easier for participants. Perhaps of great importance, the meals, whether buffet or banquet style were very good! I must say I enjoyed listening to the Tango music played at the start of a General Session and Diana said she had wished she could get up and dance. What a lively way to start a session

There were differences at this year's Regional Conference. There were no organised extra trips because of the very high costs, though the Night at the Park was memorable. There were no Opening or Closing Flag Ceremonies, applauded by some, and missed by others. There was no 'market hall'.

Diana, Sandra and Unity all praised the warmth of the welcome they received and were glad they had participated. The details of workshops, visits, entertainments, and the General Sessions, are covered in other sections on the Conference. (See GB News in Brief number 2).

Once again the cementation of close relationships with our continental members was successfully celebrated. We, in GB State will be hosting the next European Regional Conference and have received plenty of offers of help from the various countries that make up the European Region. We will warmly welcome them.

Sheila Roberts, Gamma Chapter.

Ightham Mote: Jewish Country Homes Exhibition



Members admire the tapestry of Moses striking the rock, which belonged to Sir Thomas.

Members of DKG Gamma had a lovely surprise at our Ightham Mote visit. Our member Aileen sat down at the Ightham Mote baby grand piano and delighted us with 'Étude' by Ukrainian composer Sergei Bortkiewicz. The piano was chosen by Mendelssohn himself for the noted contralto Mary Shaw née Postans, who performed in Verdi's first opera.

Our extremely knowledgeable guide, Amanda-Jane Doran, Collections and House manager, took us around the Jewish Country Homes exhibition, telling us the intriguing story of previous owners Sir Thomas and Lady Mary Colyer-Fergusson, née Cohen. Sir Thomas had a



Aileen plays Mary Shaw's piano, chosen for her by Mendelssohn.

lifelong interest in Jewish culture. He was, for example, a member of the Jewish Historical Society – not typical of

an English aristocrat – and he was fascinated by Jewish genealogy. His second wife, Mary Freda Cohen, was Jewish. Could Sir Thomas really have been Jewish himself? He had shared with the Haham Dr. Moses Gaster, leader of the Sephardi community, that he felt he was descended from the Mendes Da Costa family. The Colyer-Fergussons also welcomed German and Austrian Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis.



An exhibition of the collection of beautiful ECHO music boxes created by internationally acclaimed sculptor Sir Anish Kapoor, with music by his cousin Brian Elias, completed our trip. Well, not quite – we shared a delicious lunch together in the café and enjoyed each other's company.



Anne Goldstein, Gamma Chapter.

What a super day for the last visit before Springtime. The weather was glorious and thanks to Anne's wonderful contact, Amanda, the actual visit was so interesting, informative and worthwhile. It was so nice to all sit together for coffee and lunch too. A very big thank you to Anne for discovering the free ticket availability for those of us who are not NT members. It was much appreciated.

Also how privileged we were to have Aileen play for us on a very special grand piano - tuned by Anne's husband. I'm sure the other NT visitors were also delighted to hear the playing, by a very accomplished musician - Aileen. Thank you it was memorable. (Anne recorded it so look out for her email!)

Sheila Roberts, Gamma Chapter.

Mara Bergman

Mara Bergman is an American author, writer and editor. She was born in New York and as a child she was fascinated by words but frustrated that she couldn't read them. The fact that another child in her Kindergarten class could read, made her very envious.

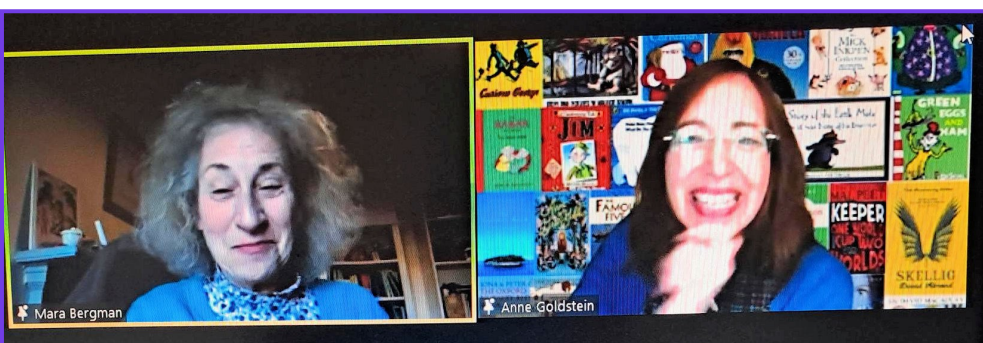
As a child she was always writing and at 13 years old she started writing poetry. She originally began working in children's books in New York but then moved to the UK with her British husband and got a job with Walkers Books. She is now Commissioning Editor for Walker Books.

With three children of her own she decided to write for children. It was hard at first to get started, to be accepted and to get published. She loves to see how illustrators interpret her stories. Mara's original inspiration came from her personal experience of not owning her own special teddy bear, so used this as the theme for her book - 'Bears Bears Everywhere'. It transpires that her books are not based on her children but on her own experiences, as in 'Oliver Who Would Not Sleep' - as she herself would not sleep. As her children had queried why she hadn't used their names in previous books, she decided to include them in her book - Snip Snap, Alligator!'. To date, Mara has published over 20 books. Her latest is 'The Seal on the Beach', it's due to be published in early 2024. It includes a credit from author Michael Morpurgo on the front cover. There was consensus that we look forward to seeing it when published.



Mara's talk to Alpha and Gamma's zoom meeting was fascinating and prompted lots of discussion and questions from members particularly about how to inspire and 'hook' children into reading, as well as sharing books which had inspired members as children themselves or working with children.

Penny Kinnear, Alpha Chapter.



Mara with Anne Goldstein, captured on Zoom. Behind Anne are a selection of the many wonderful books Mara has written.

Jess Levine - abstract artist and art tutor - an inclusive artist

Jess Levine, an abstract collage artist and art tutor, spoke to DKG about her life, work and philosophy. "Being an artist is almost the only thing I could be. It feels so natural to me and gives me a freedom that no other job can or has done. Its fundamental to who I am."

Jess lives in Ulverston, surrounded by alternative and creative people, where she feels true to herself and accepted. Her workshops mainly centre on print-making but she also runs short abstract art courses, exploring drawing, painting and mixed media.



Her parents were huge champions of the arts and supported her in following her creative dreams. She talked about her wonderful art teacher when she was in her first year of secondary school, "he rated me highly as a sensitive creative soul" and they still are good friends.

Jess spoke honestly about the impact of art on mental health. Her experiences give her an additional layer of understanding when she teaches in mental health services. She felt that psychiatric care can be controlling to the vulnerable and creativity can be stamped upon. This is why she always tries to create a "supportive, freeing, safe, open and encouraging" atmosphere in all her workshops so that everyone can grow together.



Jess mentioned the "art baggage" that

people can carry and this was confirmed in our discussion afterwards. Several of us had been affected by negative comments made by art teachers or even our own classmates. This is why Jess always ends her workshops with praise and appreciation for the work produced.

As Jess said, "Art is for everyone, and part of making it as accessible as possible is to understand and respond to the real and or perceived barriers. For me the 'having a go' part of art cannot be underestimated."

Anne Goldstein, Gamma Chapter.

Great Britain State Conference

Date for your Diary: Our GB State Conference will be held on **Saturday 20th April 2024** at Dulwich Hamlet Junior School, Dulwich Village, London SE21 7AL.

The day will start with coffee from 10.30 to 11.00am. Claire Purcell, Headteacher and Alpha Chapter member, will give us a tour of the school followed by telling us of her OFSTED experiences.

Lunch will follow at about 12.30pm—it's a 'Bring and Share' lunch. The Annual General Meeting will start at 1.45pm followed by coffee/tea, leaving for home at 3.30pm latest.

I will send transport links nearer the time.

Diana Bell, State President.

Visit to Sissinghurst Castle and gardens, organised by Evelyn



We were 8 intrepid souls who made the trek to Sissinghurst on Tuesday, 19th September. The hot early days of September had lulled us into a false sense of security about the weather. Instead of the expected warmth and sunshine, we had cold wind and lashing sporadic rain.

Despite the weather we enjoyed coffee outdoors at the café, as dogs were not allowed indoors, and Harry and Sheila had brought their dog with them. Then one group went to visit the gardens and the second, accompanied by an excited dog, walked around the lakes.



Sandra, Diana, Sheila, Evie, Liz and Barbara in the wind outside the café.



Vita Sackville-West's study in the tower.

On arriving back at the café just after 12.40 pm, Diana and Barbara arrived to join the group. Thanks to the many road works and closed roads it had taken them about 3 hours to drive down to join us.

It was decided that the time for more coffee and lunch had arrived! This time it was enjoyed indoors in the warmth.

At this point, Harry and Sheila left with their dog and further plans were being discussed for another visit to the gardens and castle.



Sissinghurst: Sandra, Pat and Sheila by the carved dragon's head on their lakeside walk.

It was very pleasant to meet up with each other and catch up on news even if the weather didn't play ball!!

Sheila Roberts, Gamma Chapter.

News of Members

The Winter issue of GB News in Brief just had to have Diana, Lavinia and Unity's picture of their wonderful visit to Santa! This was part of a delightful pre-conference trip last July.

You can read the full article, written by Unity Harvey, about their trip to the north of Finland in the next edition.

Evelyn, our State Editor, will be asking some of you to write about Zoom talks and outings, but please do send in your own news and articles to the editor at:- dbell_is@yahoo.co.uk



Birthdays in Belfast

I was set to travel to Belfast on Friday the 1st of September to join in the celebrations for my brother Colin's 70th birthday on Monday the 4th when four days before departure, Air Traffic Control went into meltdown. Flights in and out of the UK were suspended causing chaos. Oh dear! Just what I didn't need. However by the Friday, domestic flights were more or less back to normal. My flight was delayed by only 20 minutes due to the incoming flight from Inverness being late. As it happened, we touched down in Belfast's George Best City Airport practically on schedule!



The next day, my brother Bill and I headed into Belfast City Centre to visit 'The Friend at Hand', an amazing shop selling - 'whiskies for sale generally', 'whiskies often for sale', 'whiskies sometimes for sale' and 'whiskies never for sale'. We had decided that we would buy Colin a really nice bottle of whiskey and after the owner took us through several recommendations, we settled on a bottle of 12 year old Dunville's from a local distillery which had been rejuvenated a few years earlier. To accompany this whiskey, I had purchased a whiskey glass inscribed '1953' and Aged to Perfection.

Later that day there was a family gathering at Colin's house where he and wife Karen were joined by his son (daughter-in-law was celebrating her own birthday with her parents), his daughter and son-in-law, 5 grandchildren, two other brothers and their wives and of course, myself. The weather was definitely on our side and we celebrated in the garden well after it got dark.

I had been invited for a 'sleepover' with my Great nieces (Lana 6 years old and Lia almost 3 years old – going on teenager!), so we eventually headed off before they crashed out. The next day (Sunday), we drove to Hazelbank Park on the Northern shore of Belfast Lough, to visit 'The Coronation Garden' which had been opened in May by King Charles and Queen Camilla. Brother Bill, wife Maureen and daughter Hollie joined us.



'Located in the beautiful setting of Hazelbank Park, The Coronation Garden has been designed by award-winning gardener Diarmuid Gavin and is a floral tapestry with classical architecture style, planted in a pollinator friendly and sustainable way reflecting some of the great loves of His Royal Highness King Charles III.

Officially opened on Wednesday 24 May by King Charles III and Queen Camilla, the Coronation Garden is an ornate three floor pavilion topped by a crown. This magnificent Coronation Garden treats visitors to a musical performance of dancing topiary and spinning conical trees every fifteen minutes.'



Then we went for a walk along the beach collecting shells for Lana and Lia's growing collection and 'sea glass' for Bill's wife Maureen who uses these pieces for her crafting. As Sunday was also Maureen's birthday her daughter Hollie, son Gareth, wife Sarah and twin Grandchildren Abigail and Toby visited in the afternoon. Maureen and family had already celebrated her birthday with a meal out a few days earlier. We have a lot of family birthdays in September!

On Monday, the actual day of the 70th birthday, I was invited to join my brother Colin and his wife Karen for Afternoon Tea on the 20th 'Observation' floor of The Grand Central Hotel (featured on TV in a recent series about The Hastings Hotels Group). We bravely did our best with all the delicacies (accompanied by a glass of champagne) but we had to admit defeat and were given a box of what was left to take home.

Tuesday afternoon saw me back at George Best City Airport for a flight that got me into Heathrow 10 minutes ahead of schedule!



View over Belfast from Hotel with Belfast City Hall in bottom left corner and the iconic Samson and Delilah cranes (where the Titanic was built) in the middle distance.

Penny Kinnear, Alpha Chapter.

Maurice Cattoor.

It is with sadness that I have to report that Anne Cattoor's husband, Maurice, passed away on October 2nd. Maurice had an amazing early life. Born in Belgium in 1932, when war began he was sent to France, but later returned home with his mother to join his father, a resistance fighter, living in the woods for 4 years. Maurice later played football for the Belgian Army and the National Team. He moved to England to find work, met Anne and they married in 1977. He became MD of his own company. Many holidays and trips were organised by Anne and Maurice for the Kent retired headteachers. They retired to Taunton to be near family.

Maurice will be greatly missed by all who knew him, but especially **Anne**, to whom we send our condolences.

Diana Bell, State President