

GB News in Brief

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Summer 2024

New DKG International President 2024—2026: Dr Beverly Hall-Maughan



Congratulations to our new International State President Dr Beverly Hall-Maughan, who was voted in at the DKG Convention in National Harbor, near Washington, this July. There were two candidates. The First Vice-President, Connie Rensink, was nominated from the floor, but the Second Vice-President, Dr Beverly Hall-Maughan, who had received the International Achievement Award earlier, collected many more votes.

Our new International President Beverly has served Tennessee State as president, vice president and recording secretary and in 2022 received their State Achievement Award. She has been a member of DKG for 21 years.

Diana Bell, GB State President.



The European contingent at the DKG Convention in National Harbor.

Visit to the Cinque Port of Rye



Sheila and Harry, our guides, knew just the place for lunch, where we lingered comfortably.

A super day, thank you Sheila.

Sandra Blacker, Gamma Chapter.

We were a small but determined DKG group, ready to explore the ancient Cinque Port of Rye; coffee first, of course, at The Old Grain Store, near the Brede River. Refreshed, we went to an imaginative Son et Lumiere presentation at the Rye Heritage Centre. The history of Rye is told via a fantastic display of models representing all the town's buildings. The models were built over four years by a husband and wife who subsequently sold them to Rye Council.

We then explored the real town, walking up picturesque Mermaid Street to St. Mary's Church. It's possible to climb up the tower. There's an amazing view of the river, sea and salt marshes from the gun gardens which house several cannons!



AGM Reflections

There's nothing more engaging than a good discussion about education and our Zoom meeting about our AGM showed just that. Our trip to Dulwich Hamlet Junior school, which is Ofsted Outstanding, got us talking about what makes a school shine out from the rest. A history of excellence helps, so heads can build on high standards. Headteacher Claire's enthusiasm and vision should be bottled and sold to others.

We talked about the crisis in teacher training. Should we put teachers straight into the classroom to learn? There were concerns that primary Maths really suffered, with new teachers lacking confidence, unclear about how to develop the building blocks of children's learning. Teachers trained within the classroom where they have, for example, worked as a support assistant, may find it hard to develop their own style.

Teachers are being scouted from countries such as Jamaica, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Although this diversity is positive, it also has an impact on the quality of learning in the teachers' poorer home countries. There can be differences in teaching styles from overseas teachers, although this may encourage pupils' flexibility.

A new Labour government promises to recruit 6,500 new teachers, although where they will come from is not yet clarified.

London schools are suffering from a fall in the birth rate and families are moving out from the centre due to high property prices and gentrification. Empty seats in the classroom means less funding. Meanwhile, schools in Kent, benefitting from the post-Covid flight from urban areas, are full to bursting.

Multi-academy trusts are not regulated, apart from visits from Ofsted. Advisors are no more. Whole curriculum areas – such as Religious Education – can be completely neglected and justified by an academy chain.

Other themes included the importance of the headteacher, weak and strong leadership, the importance of teamwork and Ofsted anxiety. We certainly didn't hold back in our views.

Anne Goldstein, Gamma Chapter.

The Great Exhibition Road Festival



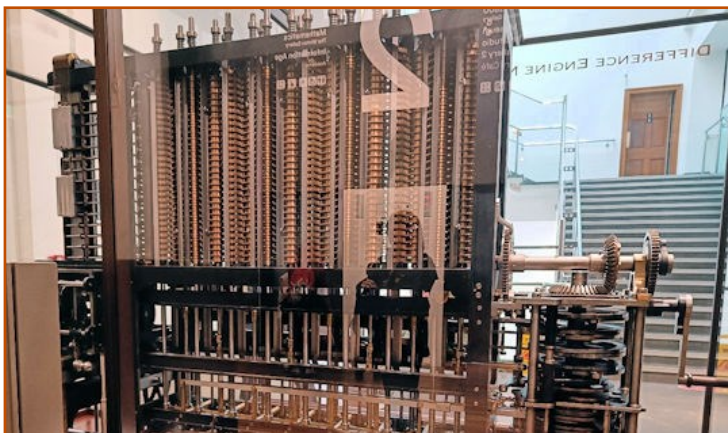
In June Diana had organised a visit to the Great Exhibition Road Festival. Seven of us, undaunted by the rain, visited various stalls along Exhibition Road, as well as the V&A Museum, and some of the science projects at Imperial College. Music students from the RCM played in a brass ensemble (under cover) and Albert's Band played jazz. A fun day, with a leisurely lunch together.

Barbara Kern, Alpha Chapter.

The pictures show us having coffee, and later lunch at Carluccios. Unfortunately Lavinia felt unwell and had to go home. Barbara is busy in Imperial College with an art and science project about brain cells. Everyone chose what they wanted to see and do, such as visit the V&A, before we met for lunch.

Editor.

Teenagers should be grateful their school bags don't contain one of these!



On a hot, sunny day in mid-June (I wish!) eight DKG members visited the Great Exhibition Road Festival in Kensington. Looking for cover from the blazing sun/incessant rain (delete as necessary), Penny and I dashed into the Science Museum, which was fascinating. We headed for the Maths section – no surprise there - and came across Babbage's Difference Engine No.2.

Interestingly, though Charles Babbage designed it between 1847-49, it was not built during his lifetime. Instead, it was made by the science museum in the 1980s. The museum followed his designs and ensured that the 4000 cast-iron, steel and bronze components were manufactured to the engineering standards of Babbage's day.

The engine made its first error-free calculation in 1991, 200 years after Babbage's birth. His vision was completed in 2002 with the addition of the printing mechanism.

The engine completes a complex calculation with every fourth turn of the handle. Each result can be a number up to 31 digits long, appearing on the cogs on the far left. The results can then be printed on paper.

Imagine trying to carry one around in your pocket – it makes my slide rule and book of log tables appear positively modern.

The day was rounded off over a late lunch in Carluccio's – very convivial!

Kathrin Hodgson, Gamma Chapter.



Visit to the University of Sussex - our conference venue

On Friday 21st June our Regional Director, Marie-Antoinette Hubers de Wolf, flew into Gatwick where I met her. We took the train to Brighton and a taxi straight to Bramber House where we met Wayne Spicer, Senior Conference and Events Manager for the University of Sussex.

Sandra Blacker and Kathy Hodgson then arrived and we all set off on the tour of the conference facilities. First to Jubilee Building's main Conference Centre - which is the area for the DKG **European Forum Conference**. This will take place on **Friday 18th – Saturday 20th July 2025**. The lobby, pictured below, is large and pleasant, this is where we will have our registration desk and reception for guests.



Lobby area

Our meals will be taken in the large area through the doors from the lobby, on the same ground floor level – there is also a café there. Moving on to the next area, we visited the pleasant workshop break-out rooms. We will use the ones on the ground floor.

We are hoping to have a BBQ outside on the first night, with the formal dinner on Saturday night.

From the Jubilee Building we walked down the path and straight across a roadway



Outside the accommodation.

to the steps which lead to the Bodiam Building. (we took the lift). Bodiam is where our accommodation is situated. Rooms are in groups of 8, with a kitchen, sitting and dining area for each group. All the rooms have their own en-suite facilities, wardrobe, cupboard and a larger than expected bed! Each room has its own key lock. It all felt very comfortable.

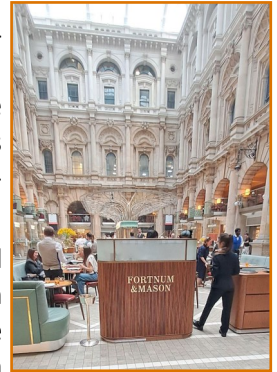
Diana Bell, Alpha Chapter.



Corridor with break-out rooms.

Visit to the Bank of England

I was a little apprehensive about this trip. The current image of London is that it is overcrowded with rude, unpleasant people, everything is vastly expensive and poor value and travelling by public transport can be a nightmare. The weather that day was promising to be very hot and the journey in on a packed commuter underground train confirmed my concerns about the day ahead. Once we emerged into the sunshine at Bank station in the City of London however, everything changed.



Coffee at Fortnum and Mason at the very posh shopping mall in the Royal Exchange was a delight. Courteous service in lovely surroundings and very good coffee at the same prices as any of the coffee house chains around the country.

The Bank of England museum was free and was another revelation. A most unusual exhibition

with lots of interactive exhibits about the history of banking, the changes in currency over the centuries, the move towards a virtually cashless society and the history and important role of gold. I could only lift the gold ingot on display about 1 millimetre. I'd never make a successful bank robber. The whole tour took just over an hour and I highly recommend it.

We then set off down narrow ancient side lanes to our lunch venue, the George and Vulture. It was a step back in time in terms of surroundings and décor and the menu was traditional too. The service was friendly, the food good, the portions huge and the prices no more expensive than any suburban pub restaurant.

Walking back to Bank station we stopped to take yet another photo of a little alley way. A passing business man stopped as he was about to enter it. "Oh, sorry, I've spoiled your shot", he apologised. "But did you know this is the narrowest and one of the oldest lanes in the City?" "In that case we'll put you in a top hat" my daughter replied. "Great!" he laughed. And that summed up what an enjoyable and surprising day it had been; interesting visits, good company with DKG friends and an experience of London that was so positive.

Joan Carroll, Alpha Chapter.



Plaque to Dickens who often dined there. It hasn't changed much!



This was a fascinating visit touring the exhibition at the Bank of England, especially as we were aware that we were walking over millions of pounds worth of gold bars stored in the vaults below us. Not that we had any access to these. No-one has managed to break into the Bank to steal any. However, in 1836 a sewer worker accidentally discovered an old drain that ran under the Bank of England's gold vault. He requested a meeting with the upper management of the bank, and popped out of the floor to greet them on the hour they specified. With today's technology and advanced security systems, this incident would probably not happen again. Although we weren't able to visit the vault, we could try to lift a gold bar (securely encased) using one hand. Each bar weighs 13kg. I did it!

The story of how gold was discovered and became such an important part of society and trade throughout the world was explained.

The exhibition also took us through the history of how the Bank came about and how it has evolved to the present day - from promises written on a piece of paper to the Internet Banking we use today. An interesting fact regarding the possibility of a cashless society predicted that by 2034 only 7% of transactions would involve cash.

Today's banknotes are printed on polymer which is a thin and flexible plastic material. A



range of security features includes features for blind and partially sighted people. As well as the higher the value of the note the larger it is, there are clusters of raised dots in the top left hand corner on the front of the note. The value can be identified by the number of clusters – the £5 has none, the £10 has two, the £20 has three and the £50 has four clusters.



I loved the fact that any damaged or misprinted polymer notes are shredded, turned into pellets and then made into useful items such as storage boxes or bird feeders for example.

Penny Kinnear, Alpha Chapter.

I most enjoyed finding out the multiple processes involved when I click my debit card on a screen and it comes back 'approved'. I thought it was between my bank and where I was paying - but it goes via the Bank of England as well. Wow - that fast.

Diane Billam, Gamma Chapter.



Visit to the Migration Museum

This free exhibition charted the history of the NHS from its creation in the 1940s to the present day and how, from those early years to the present day, the NHS has attracted staff from every continent in the world, from the tiniest islands to the greatest cities.

The exhibits told their stories, their experiences, the highs and the lows, There were displays of memorabilia, opportunities to listen to their voices talking about their lives and why they came and films about their roles in the NHS. There was an area for visitors to contribute their own thoughts and another with activities for children, plus a fantastic gift shop. We spent far longer there than we had anticipated. Fortunately Barbara had researched an excellent restaurant for lunch, Maggies. It was within easy walking distance



on a hot day and we even had an opportunity to visit Lewisham market on the way.

If someone had suggested going to Lewisham for a great day out I would have thought it was a joke but we are already checking on the museum's next exhibition and will, of course, include a visit to the market and lunch at Maggies. Thank you so much for organising this event.



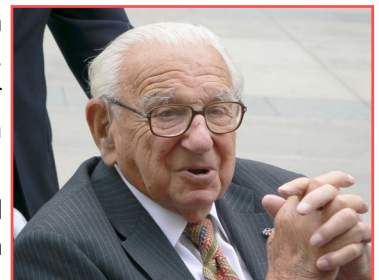
Joan Carroll, Alpha Chapter.

One life, many stories

Anne Goldstein gave us a very moving account of Jewish Czech children's rescue from the Nazis. The Kindertransport trains brought the children to Britain from April 1939. Sir Nicholas Winton, right, received a British Hero of the Holocaust award in 2010 for his work—he modestly said he was not brave but that he arranged everything from Hampstead.

669 children were rescued from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia. We were interested to hear about the little-known flights to Britain which began earlier than the trains, in January 1939. At least four flights went to Croydon airport. We saw a film of parents, with very sad faces, waving goodbye to their children from Ruzyně airport. Most of these parents did not survive. Sir Nicholas Winton is glimpsed in a short film showing the farewell at the airport.

Anne told us about the children who were sponsored by The Barbican Mission to the Jews. This organisation aimed to convert the children to Christianity and bring them to Chislehurst, later to be baptised. This aspect was controversial, but Nicholas Winton did say strongly that saving Jewish lives was the priority.



Although there was initially fear from some of the residents down the road about having child refugees living there, the local vicar encouraged congregants to support the children. Feelings changed. In 1989, 68 of the refugees had a reunion in Chislehurst and bought a bench with a dedication of thanks to the Reverend Isaac Emmanuel Davidson and his wife Lucy. Money was also collected for a piano for a special needs school.

We heard the stories of individual children, some of whom had become educators. A boy of 4, Pieter Niethammer, was on the first flight. He was from a mixed religious background. His parents had divorced and he lived with his Jewish mother and her parents near Prague. His father was a German Lutheran. Pieter changed his name to Needham and after Oriel College Oxford, taught at Magdalen and then Eton for 34 years. In his retirement, he translated the Paddington Bear and Harry Potter books into Latin.

During the flight Ilse Stein had looked after Peter. Her mother came over to the UK and worked as a domestic servant, later returning to her career as a teacher. Ilse's mother visited her at the mission, but was sometimes turned away due to prayer meetings, as there was a strong emphasis on church and Bible study. She later became a maths teacher. After St Hugh's College Oxford, she taught at Wandsworth and Kingston Colleges.

Trevor Chadwick, a Latin teacher in Swanage, Dorset, volunteered with refugees. He managed the Prague end of the rescue efforts and dealt with the SS and Gestapo. He brought back two Czech boys that his school sponsored. His mother Muriel paid £50 to sponsor Gerda Mayer, aged 12. She stayed with the Chadwicks. Gerda's mother died in Auschwitz and her father in a Soviet labour camp. Gerda in later life became a poet.



Another local story took place in July 1939 when Susi Loeffler, aged 15, arrived here on the Kindertransport train. She stayed with a violinist from Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra and trained as a nurse. She later emigrated to Australia.

Anne gave us a wonderful insight in the individual lives and stories about these children. It was fascinating, well-researched, moving and beautifully presented.

Diana Bell, Alpha Chapter.

Pictures of our excellent lunch at Sheila's House in Tenterden



Thank you Sheila for hosting a wonderful lunch. It was a lovely way to see old friends, catch up with some news and have a chat about next July's European Forum Conference.

Photos with thanks to Anne Goldstein, Aileen Dickson & Joan Carroll.



Our GB European Forum Representative for 2022—2024, Evelyn Goodsell, went to Norway in May for the EF Committee Meeting. Evie's notes are in the European Forum part of our website, www.dkggg.org.uk. The minutes are on the EF website at www.dkgeurope.org.