

GB News in Brief

Number 7

Winter 2024

Season's greetings and all best wishes for a healthy and happy 2025

Pre-Christmas meal and visit to the Migration Museum with Alpha Chapter



A group of five members of Alpha enjoyed their pre-Christmas outing on November 30th. The unlikely destination was Lewisham, combining a lunch out with a visit to the Migration Museum.

Lunch was at Maggie's Restaurant, and luckily we had a reservation – this popular place was crowded! After a very convivial lunch (some enjoyed the Christmas option) we went on to the Migration Museum.

The Museum's latest exhibition - 'All our Stories' - was a composite of the museum's exhibitions over the last decade. These included the two most recent, 'Heart of the Nation' about the NHS, and 'Taking Care of Business' about migrant entrepreneurs. There is also an art exhibition with pictures by local artists, immigrants with a connection to Lewisham.

A poignant part of 'All our Stories' exhibition was a wall of notes left by visitors - brief descriptions of their journeys, or those of parents and grandparents, coming as immigrants to this country. Some journeys were made by choice, others by force of extreme circumstances.

Next time I visit, as there is much still to see, I may add my piece of family history, of my father and his parents who left Germany in 1936.

Barbara Kern, Alpha Chapter.



In the Migration Museum we saw a 'mock-up of a dwelling in the Calais Camp, pictured right, before the camp was burnt down by the authorities. The picture on the right of 'sushi and chips' says a lot about migration!

Alison Ajayi was looking at a book and found the author, Kolapo Akinola, standing next to her. We asked him if he would mind being part of our group photo.

Diana Bell, Alpha Chapter.

Pre-Christmas lunch with Gamma Chapter



I was delighted to join members of Gamma Chapter at Sandra Blacker's house for their pre-Christmas get together and lunch.

We started by making decoupage decorations with Niki, our tutor. She showed us how to stick pieces of paper napkin (with many different designs to choose from) on our chosen wooden shape. We covered it all in glue and then added other decorations. Some of us decided to make them

for our tree decorations. I'm not sure they turned out as well as we hoped! We had a fun time anyway, with a great 'bring and share' feast and lots of chat and laughter.

Diana Bell, State President.



Congratulations are in order to Dr Beverly Hall-Maughan, our International President, who received the 2024 Achievement Award. Her approachability and relatability were important criteria in her selection.

Dr Hall-Maughan is a retired high school principal. Her qualifications include: associate of applied Science in Nursing, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a Master of Education in Administration and Supervision and a doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership. She also holds a Bachelor of Business in Business Administration. Editor.

Visit to Walthamstow Wetlands



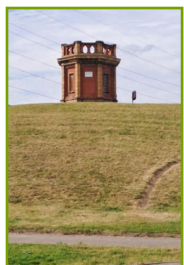
Wet weather was predicted but the Sun God decided to be kind to us on our visit to the Walthamstow Wetlands so the wind wasn't a problem.

Part of the London Wildlife Trust, the Walthamstow Wetlands is a fully operational 160 hectare Thames Water reservoir site which is the main source of water supply for 3.5 million people. It is also an internationally important nature reserve, providing home and shelter to a wide range of wildlife, from rare waterfowl to majestic birds of prey. Walthamstow Wetlands opened to the public in October 2017. This site is the largest urban wetland reserve in Europe, just 15 minutes from central London, at the end of the Victoria Line and free to visit.

We started at the Visitors' Centre Cafe in the Engine House for an invigorating "coffee and pastry" to set us up for our venture. Then a quick look around the shop before heading on. We decided, on Barbara's recommendation, to explore part of the lower section as the upper part would take longer. I noticed, close to the entrance is a Bee Bank, a large tangled grassy mound for ground nesting bees. Further along the edge of the upper pathway we stopped at a bird hide to talk to two of the volunteers who allowed us to look through their telescope at birds on the far side of the water. The largest number of birds at the site are Coots and we did see quite a lot of them.



Then we walked on to the Coppermill Tower with its viewing platform with views across London. By this time it was getting quite warm so we had a leisurely walk back along a lower pathway with many access points to the water's edge for fishermen (didn't see any women).



By now we were ready for lunch. So we made our way across the main road which divides the Wetlands, to a lovely pub – The Ferry Boat Inn (a grade 2 listed building). Feeling refreshed after our lunch, we ventured on to the upper part of the Wetlands as far as some fascinating Victorian "pump houses" on top of a hill. More amazing views.

Time to get the bus back to Blackhorse Road tube station and we had only seen a small portion of the Wetlands. Will have to go back again some day. A very enjoyable visit thanks to Barbara.

Penny Kinnear, Alpha Chapter.

Walthamstow Wetlands is a comparatively new addition to this part of East London. It is run by The Wildlife Trust and provides a remarkable and popular leisure area for the local community. It is a parkland surrounding two huge reservoirs and the river Lea in the Lea valley, open to the public from 9:00am to 5:30pm daily. No swimming, barbecues, or fires are allowed, only support dogs admitted and anglers must pay for a permit. Entry is free although donations to The Wildlife Trust are welcomed.

There have been industries based on parts of the site from the 11th to the 21st centuries. An old engine house now has a good café and gift shop and there are outstanding viewpoints across London from the former copper mill at

one end of the park and by the Victorian towers at the other. There are wide pathways around the whole wetlands with ample room for cyclists and joggers as well as those just out for a stroll. There are also footpaths by the lakes with little tracks down to the waterside with small jetties for the anglers.

On our stroll we saw a grassy area being cut with old fashioned scythes, visited a bird watchers' hide where volunteers helped us use the telescope and binoculars to view the range of water fowl and later saw a happy angler who had landed an enormous carp.



The weather was lovely on the day we visited and there were many people enjoying the sunshine but the atmosphere was calm and relaxing. Walthamstow has an asset in the Wetlands that is clearly popular and much appreciated.



Joan Carroll, Alpha Chapter.

BIBA Exhibition



A small group of Alpha Chapter attended the BIBA Exhibition in September. It was very interesting and gave a history of the extraordinary world of Biba and how it became a 'lifestyle' brand. It definitely took me down memory lane.

It would have been in the late 60's, when I was training to be a teacher, that I bought BIBA make up. I still have a few of the eyeshadows in my drawer! Penny also has kept some Biba items.

I wish I had bought some of their clothes!



Diana Bell, Alpha Chapter.



Penny's Biba Box



Now You See Us

This exhibition at Tate Britain was unique, consisting of the works of over 100 female artists with over 300 items including paintings in oils, watercolours, pastels, sculptures, etchings, book illustrations and more. It traces their work from the early 16th century to the early 20th century and their efforts to gain recognition and respect for their talents.



As the evidence from the 16th century shows, the view at that time was that females were incapable of producing the quality of art that a male artist could, and indeed it was improper and inappropriate for them to do so. They were allowed to copy miniatures and paintings produced by male artists with some modest changes of their own. There were some very good exhibits in this earliest section but one felt that in some cases their skills had not been given full rein because of restrictions society imposed.



In the sections on artists of the 17th and 18th centuries these restrictions lifted somewhat but those opportunities were mainly open to women who had grown up in families who already had male members working in the art world, women who had artist husbands who encouraged their talents or those wealthy enough to afford the time, materials and space to produce their work independently. For talented females who lacked such opportunities like Katherine Read, the Scottish artist, it was an uphill struggle for recognition. She could not afford to work in expensive oils but did produce beautiful paintings in pastels as the portrait of her niece, who later became a well known artist herself, shows.

In the works of the later 18th century and early 19th century the growing confidence and wider acknowledgement of what female artists could achieve is obvious. The boundaries of what was acceptable for a woman to produce were being pushed back and the subjects they chose more adventurous. By this time the Royal Academy had been established and some works by females accepted as having the quality for inclusion in their exhibitions. Old prejudices die hard, however, and as late as the 1860s, when the artist Elizabeth Butler was nominated for membership, she was rejected. She was already acclaimed for her painting "The Roll Call" which showed the reality of war in the Crimea. It was not the glorified image of "the gallant six hundred" in the poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade". It shocked the British public when it went on display, was acclaimed as brilliant and triggered changes to attitudes and procedures regarding support for all military personnel. Some of the existing members of the Royal Academy disapproved of the nomination and nominated two male artists knowing only one artist could be accepted. They then lobbied other members to choose a male artist, which they did, of course.



This kind of barrier could not last for much longer and as the 19th century moved towards the 20th century female artists were producing art in every form and taking subjects from every area of life and human experience, from the rural world of the New Forest Ponies by Lucy Kemp Welch, the Victorian school by Elizabeth Forbes to the poignant sign of change for women's roles in all walks of life in the painting by Anna Airy showing women working in a munitions factory in the First World War.



"Now You See Us" was a remarkable exhibition I am glad not to have missed. The determination and perseverance shown, as well as the beauty and talent of the exhibits, ran as a theme throughout as they fought for their rights for equality of recognition and respect for their work and their talent.

Joan Carroll, Alpha Chapter.

Zoom presentation on Iconography by Veronica Jones

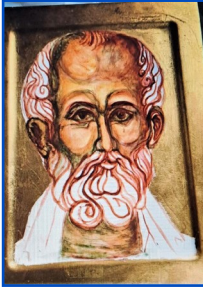


Veronica was an ex primary school teacher who went on to become a tutor on film sets overseas, thus enabling her to experience life in a variety of countries.

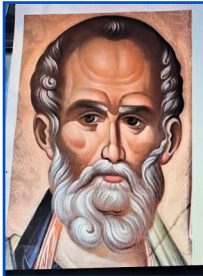
Now retired, she described her fascination and study of Iconography and her recent participation at a Belmont Abbey summer school class in Hereford making, or rather 'writing', icons. Her own creation of an icon of St Peter, which she showed us, was very good indeed.

She shared with us the whole process involved in making icons and their history and role in the spiritual life of communities.

Icons come in all shapes and sizes, from small portable types to the very large displayed in churches. Natural products are used in their creation, from the wood which forms their base, to the colours or pigments used, and the egg wash finish which seals them.



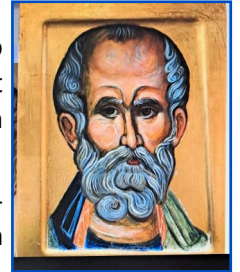
Her teacher at Belmont Abbey was a Peruvian Benedictine priest called Fr Alex. She showed us a BBC film clip of him demonstrating some of the techniques involved. The wood must be smooth and dense and the base prepared by covering it with a mix of rabbit skin glue, chalk and gypsum. The picture outline is traced onto the base and then gold leaf applied to the background. The colour pigments are all made with natural ingredients from the earth and mixed with egg yolk. The very fine brushes are made from squirrel hair. The final picture is washed with an egg wash made from fresh egg yolk which 'varnishes' it, and needs to be refreshed after a year.



Iconography has been in existence at least from the 2nd century. It is very established in the Greek church and hence into Russian Orthodox churches too.

Certain aspects or features are usually present - eg 'domes' on the forehead to indicate wisdom, defined large eyes, small mouth to indicate the person doesn't waste time chatting, elongated nose, and hand gestures, sometimes raised in blessing.

Veronica ended her presentation with pictures of famous icons like the Perpetual Succour (Our Lady of Perpetual Help), from Hereford Cathedral and which can be found in most Catholic churches throughout the world.



Veronica's talk was interesting, very informative and lively. Thank you.

Sheila Roberts, Gamma Chapter.

The Art of Icons

Veronica Jones gave a fascinating talk about icons, their role in the history of Christianity, and how she learned to "write", not paint, an icon in the required format on the course she attended.

Icons are representations of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the Holy Family, or saints. Traditionally they were holy images, often in miniature form, which were used when praying within a Christian family or community. They were easy to transport, or even hide and keep safe in times of religious persecution. Veronica attended a course on how to "write" an icon. She explained one must adhere to a strict format, whether the subject is of Jesus Christ, the Holy Family or a saint. When the image is finished it is surrounded in a dusting of gold leaf to complete it.

Historically the making of and reverence to icons dates back to the early years of Christianity in the Middle East and gradually moved west as Christianity spread into Europe. Traditionally an icon is displayed in an important place in its home and the eyes of the subject(s) appear to follow the viewer wherever they move. As forms of Christian faith and worship changed over the centuries so did the style of icons so that now there exists a Western and an Eastern style. The icon that Veronica learned to write during her course is in the traditional Western style.

I have an icon in my home. My daughter brought it for me as a gift from a visit she made to Corfu over 30 years ago. It is the same size as the miniature ones Veronica described but very different in structure. When I showed it to Veronica at the end of her presentation she told me it was a fine example of the Eastern style and was an image of Jesus Christ. On my icon, only the head of Christ is depicted in colour; his halo and the rest of his figure are covered in a protective silver mount. This style of presentation was to venerate the image, also to affirm that God did live on earth as a human being by portraying his face in this way.

I know that my icon was bought at the main Greek Orthodox church in Corfu Town. I have always liked and valued it and its place has always been on a shelf in my living room alongside all my most important family photographs. Coincidentally, that shelf faces east, and although I have never checked before, the eyes of Christ's image do follow one wherever one moves.



This was a very memorable presentation from a most engaging and knowledgeable speaker.

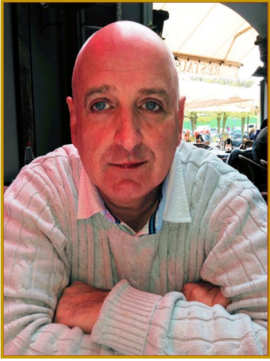
Joan Carroll, Alpha Chapter.



Congratulations to Alpha Chapter in Finland.
On 15th November 2024 they celebrated 50 years of being in DKG.



'Leading through Influence and Persuasion'



Alpha and Gamma Chapters welcomed Dennis Tourish, Professor of Leadership and Organisation Studies (Management) at the University of Sussex Business School to speak at a Zoom session on Saturday, 9th November.

Prof. Tourish started by considering how people are influenced, reminding us that everyone is influenced and persuaded whether aware or not that it is happening. He referred first to the Ancient Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, who had three elements in persuasion – Logos, logical proof; Pathos – emotional response; Ethos – personal response. Logos is less effective than we might think with Pathos and Ethos predominating in our responses and he gave the example of Trump in a recent interview, talking about immigrants 'poisoning the blood of our country', a phrase reminiscent of Hitler, with the aim of eliciting the response of fear.

Robert Cialdini is acknowledged as a leader in this subject and identifies Pre-suasion. That is a previous occurrence affecting how people act. He gives the example of an experiment where a girl asks for help after men had been asked for directions to Valentine Street, giving a feeling of romance, and then she receives the help she wanted from a number of people. But when a more neutral street name was used, fewer people offered to help her.

Cialdini cites six levers of influence –

1. Reciprocity – eg kindness receives kindness.
2. Consistency and commitment – people are motivated to be consistent with commitments they have already made.
3. Social proof – consensual validation so that others' ideas are followed eg if a majority seems to believe that the earth is flat, others are more likely to agree, the concept of a role model.
4. Authority – gives credibility – eg CEO, leaders, managers etc.
5. Attractiveness – people follow those they like and those who are attractive are seen as more intelligent, friendly, popular, successful and rated as higher in credibility, even to the extent that cars are seen as more desirable if an attractive model is in the advertisement.
6. Scarcity – the scarcer something is the more highly it is valued, hence selling methods indicating low supply 'Buy now while stocks last'.

Prof. Tourish ended on how delivery of persuasion is important, with enthusiasm, passion and humour playing a part. He added the well known saying 'Knowledge is power' with the punchline 'but enthusiasm pulls the switch' and reminded us that repetition hammers home a point and makes it memorable.

We had a very interesting and informative session, thank you Professor Tourish – you have made a difference to our thinking.

Hilary J Goy, Alpha Chapter.

Silk Roads Exhibition

The Silk Roads was a fascinating and very informative exhibition. A network of trade routes connecting China and the Far East with the Middle East and Europe was established when the Han Dynasty in China officially opened trade with the West in 130 B.C., and the Silk Road routes remained in use until A.D. 1453, when the Ottoman Empire boycotted trade with China and closed them.

Although it's been nearly 600 years since the Silk Road has been used for international trade, the routes had a lasting impact on commerce, culture and history that resonates even today. The network was used regularly and became very complex, eventually extending as far as Ireland.



Items traded from the East to the West included:- Tea, Dyes, Precious Stones, China, Porcelain, Spices, Bronze and Gold Artefacts, Perfumes, Ivory, Rice, Paper, Gunpowder and believe it or not, Women, who sometimes were traded twice! Exhibits on display were in incredible condition considering their age and how far they had originally travelled.

Mass produced Chinese bowl, AD 830s found in Belitung Shipwreck.



Penny Kinnear, Alpha Chapter.

The Silk Roads exhibition at the British Museum was a remarkable experience. It was so wide ranging historically that it was almost overwhelming. I think when most people hear the words “Silk Road” they think of Marco Polo and his travels east from Venice to China via Samarkand Uzbekistan, bringing back silks and spices to Europe, but it was so much more than that.

There were many silk roads to the centre of the silk producing areas of China. Traders made their way there from Japan, Korea, North and West Africa and from everywhere in Europe, from Spain to Scandinavia, from Russia to the west of Ireland. Over the centuries goods and skills were exchanged, ideas and religious faiths mingled and the stunning number, variety and quality of the exhibits on display were evidence of this. It is one of the British Museum’s exceptional exhibitions and I am glad I had the opportunity to visit it.

One last delightful surprise of the day was bumping into Lavinia and her husband David about half way round. Lavinia hasn’t been able to take part in many DKG events in recent times but had made a quick decision to book a visit when an opportunity arose.

Joan Carroll, Alpha Chapter.

Earliest known chess pieces, probably from India, found in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

The visit to the British Museum to see the Silk Roads Exhibition was a success for me as I saw other members, but the exhibition itself was a big disappointment. The Silk Road was taken to mean all the places the produce reached, not just from the Middle East to and from China, as far as Sweden and Africa, a trade which I knew about already.



I found looking at the seemingly plethora of old religious books boring after the first few; little was said about the commodities. Colours were drab – was that the pigments themselves or just time fade? Probably both. However, I was both surprised and impressed with the exquisite minute details on the painted/woven silk and on the carvings on ivory and wood. The makers would have needed perfect eyesight but then the average age of death was young in comparison with today. Most things were small - they had to be carried by foot, horse, or camel but the displayed items were exceptionally small. I believe that more large pictures of the varied landscapes and possible scenery could have enhanced the exhibition.

Unity Harvey, Alpha Chapter.

Travelling monk, Dunhuang ‘library’ cave, China. The cave was full of thousands of objects from distant lands.

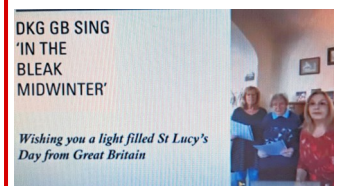
DKG News from your State President: Our **GB State Conference and AGM** is being held at Dulwich Hamlet Junior School on Saturday April 5th 2025. Please put this date in your diary.



Marie-Antoinette Hubers de Wolf, our Regional Director, is pictured signing the contract for the **first ever European Forum Conference** which will take place at the University of Sussex, Fulmer, Brighton, on 18th - 20th July 2025.

We have booked some very interesting speakers. The entertainment includes a Jazz trio, Morris dancers, Scottish dancing, a BBQ with a singalong and a formal dinner.

The Conference Website will be available in January with more information and the Registration form, plus direct links to accommodation at the university and hotels in Brighton.



Our thanks go to Kathy, Evie and Aileen who gave a great rendition of our carol for the St Lucia Day EF Celebrations.

On Saturday January 18th 2025 at 4.00pm Claire Smith will give a Zoom talk about her experience of schooling in the US and the UK.

Claire is a member who is 'a British ex-pat living in the Pacific Northwest of the USA'. She obtained her PGCE at the London Institute of Education and 'recently retired after 30+ years of teaching second and foreign languages'. Some of us may have met Claire at the International Conference in Spokane held in 2010!

Claire is currently Recording Secretary for the Washington State and has recently been appointed to the Editorial Board of the DKG Bulletin.

Claire will also explain her glorious headgear when we see her in January.

