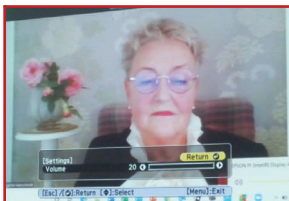




# INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS DELTA KAPPA GAMMA



Keeping in touch



**Autumn 2020**

**Volume 17 No 4**

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I could not have produced this edition without the help and support of Diana Bell – thank you Diana.

With no face to face meetings to report on (apart from our wonderful Conference) I thought it would be difficult to find copy, but those organising Zoom meetings came to our rescue.

For the next edition it would be good to have your stories of:-

- how you got into teaching,
- how you are keeping busy,
- anything else you think would be of interest to our members.

As always, photos are a bonus. All contributions for the Spring edition by the end of March please.

And thanks again to all who have contributed this time.

[dibillam@hotmail.com](mailto:dibillam@hotmail.com)

Most photographs, especially from the State Conference, were taken by Anne Goldstein.

**Evelyn Goodsell**  
**STATE ORGANISATION PRESIDENT 2019—2021**



Well, it happened! After months of uncertainty, we finally held our Annual State Conference at the 'The Holiday Inn' hotel at Wrotham Heath and what a relief.

Numbers were a little down due to the situation in the country, but those who did manage to make it enjoyed the opportunity to meet each other 'face to face'.

There was a joyful buzz of members greeting each (at a social distance of course) It seemed so long since our last meeting and we all had so much news to tell.

Our Theme of 'Wellbeing' was so topical and I was told it would be the Theme of the International in Finland next July. Our Speakers were excellent and well received.

We had the pleasure of an address from our Regional Director, Margarita Handschmitt via Zoom. This was thanks to Tony York who managed to connect us using a laptop and projector. Sadly, the sound did not carry to all parts of our large meeting room but, never underestimate the resourcefulness of teachers!! Several of us had tablets and were able to 'log in' so all was not lost and all members were able to see and hear her message.

Members who were unable to be with us were sadly missed but Diane has made sure you will be able to read the Reports of the Speakers in this edition of GB News.

Carole held a very successful raffle and raised £81.00. No decision has been made yet as to what it is for.

Liz was able to buy her usual beautiful red roses and included a white one in memory of dear Gloria. She was sadly missed.

At the beginning of my Biennium I asked for help and I certainly got it so, 'thank you' to the Conference Committee and to all who supported me.

From the reports I have received, the Conference went well and was enjoyable.

# Great Britain State Conference

## Well-Being

The theme of the Great Britain State Conference certainly linked with the difficult time we are living through. We would not have expected our 2020 conference to have taken place during a pandemic. Our hearts go out to our DKG members who have had challenging times in their personal lives this year.



A white rose symbolised the memory of Gloria Redston, who is much missed.

Lucy Adams from West Kent Mind gave an overview of the mental health charity and the services it offers. She gave an introduction to understanding our mental health and how to implement coping strategies to promote positive well-being.

Joe Mendell, a Dementia Friends Champion, taught us about the key messages of dementia, using some colourful examples. Dementia is not a natural part of ageing and is caused by brain disease. It isn't just about losing your memory, but can affect thinking, communicating and doing everyday tasks. You can live well with dementia and there is more to a person than this disease.

We welcomed Pat Robson, who shared a powerful story from her own life. She helped us reflect on how we bring our own life experiences to a story and how story-telling can be therapeutic. We all enjoyed sharing our stories and repeating a partner's story to another person, adding our own touches to the original tale.

Thanks to the tenacity and vision of our Evie Goodsell, Alpha and Gamma managed to meet together and gain strength from some amazing speakers.

As the Jewish saying goes, "Be strong, be strong and let us strengthen each other".

**Anne Goldstein**  
(Gamma Chapter)

*Members and guests socially distanced in the conference room .*



## West Kent MIND

### How Mental Health can be seen within our persona

Lucy Adams began by telling us that this has been the most challenging time ever for Mental Health due to Covid-19. She described how her own mother had suffered from Clinical Depression for some time which had been challenging as there wasn't much support available at the time. She herself worked in Media making TV programmes which she found challenging and stressful and during her last three years doing this she became unwell as it was such a busy job. So she decided six years ago to work with MIND which is linked to National MIND.

Lucy is passionate about letting people know that support is out there and not to be afraid to ask. Early intervention is very important in knowing how to raise self-esteem, recognising what is normal and when to seek help and support.



In the last six months due to Covid there has been a huge increase in people needing help and MIND are using Zoom for Support Groups. Counselling is done both by Zoom and by phone, and they are starting to bring groups back face to face. Figures for signs of depression have doubled and the charity was expecting to be overwhelmed but this didn't happen. However, the longevity of the current situation and uncertainty of outcomes is beginning to have an impact, so staff are offering training and workshops from their own homes.

Part of this training is Mental Health First Aid Training. Schools must have a First Aid person and MIND are pushing for this to be mandatory for every organisation. Training gives the ability to have the confidence "to have the conversation", "to listen and support", "to have an open culture" in order to be able to discuss. Empathy is essential in order to understand how it feels, when it is time to do something. Work in schools supports teachers so they can support pupils and also parents. Early intervention is key.

Lucy mentioned a range of behaviours relating to illness and depression. These can include OCD which is not just about neatness (it can be a worry that not completing these actions could lead to something terrible happening), aggression and bad temper (a sign of low level depression), frustration – not being able to enjoy life (result of lack of connection with family and friends).

We all have a "Stress Container" which is a different size for each of us – it can

have a high or a low threshold. Each of us has a “capacity”. Eventually we may hit that capacity level and emotional snapping is one of the first signs. Being able to recognise what is normal for yourself is important and it is okay to feel overwhelmed and find it difficult to cope, particularly with the current situation. We can note down what is in our Stress Capacity, look at patterns and develop healthy coping strategies rather than negative ones.

Lucy emphasised how important it is to be tenacious in making connections, following up with phone calls, being persistent, expressing concern, but resisting the urge to “rescue”. “When do we need to be concerned?” should be followed up with questions such as – How are you feeling?, How long have you felt like that?, How long has it been impacting your life?

Men and women may respond differently, as some women are better at talking about their problems, whereas men may need more encouragement to open up. Lucy stated that 75% of Mental Health problems start before the age of 18, so more is needed to be done in schools.

A very thought provoking presentation which made us all very aware of the scale of Mental Health today and how much we can play a part in supporting friends and family who may need our care and understanding.

Lucy was given a vote of thanks by Carole Stirling and presented with a gift and a rose.

***Penny Kinnear (Alpha Chapter)***

*Carole Stirling thanks Lucy Adams and offers her our customary gift—suitably distanced of course! At least we were all allowed to applaud as usual.*





## Report on the Canterbury Award

In the past at Churchill CE Primary School each class has had its own library, a form of organisation which the teaching staff agreed did not work very well for the range of children. They have therefore decided to have a central library, and it is to help with that that I applied for the Canterbury award.

The staff had a good discussion concerning in which area of the library they would like to enhance the stock first. Even a very generous award such as this will disappear quickly when purchasing books, so they felt it was important to know the area they were going to focus on. They have decided to look at diversity, as this is an area where they are focusing as a school on trying to improve their provision and an area which they hope children will wish to develop their understanding once Covid allows the library to be back in full use. They will be looking at a mix of informative fiction and non-fiction, with a bias towards non-fiction where possible, exploring other cultures, different types of families, different races, different religions etc.

They have managed to repurpose a computer from another part of the school which wasn't sufficient for its original purpose, but is quite happy running the library software, which doesn't require much power or memory. Not needing to replace this will hopefully free up some budget to supplement the grant, enabling them to decide on the next area of focus and buy in some more stock.

The Head was planning to visit Bluewater to go to Waterstones and browse for good quality books. She may buy at least some of them elsewhere, as sometimes online stores are better value, but she thinks it is important to see books in the flesh.

**Kate York** (*Gamma Chapter*)

*Kate York, second left, at lunch  
with husband Tony beside her.*



## The Role of Story in Wellbeing

At first glance at the programme one could perhaps query how storytelling fitted into the conference theme of “Wellbeing”. Pat Robson soon made that clear to us. She explained that at times of stress, trauma or any great emotion in our lives when we have had an experience that has affected us greatly we need to tell others about it. It may be a bereavement, an illness, a birth, a wedding. Telling someone else about it helps us make sense of it, come to terms with a difficult or bad experience, re-live our joy in an enjoyable one. When we listen to other such stories that are told to us we realise that we are not alone. Our own experience stories are not unique, others too have suffered or rejoiced in experiences that have affected them deeply too.

Pat asked us to tell a story from our own life experience to the person sitting nearest to us, then listen to their story. Afterwards we had to tell the story we had heard to someone else in the group. Many of us have been DKG friends for a very long time and know one another very well, but I think that a good many of us were surprised as well as fascinated by the stories we heard. Story telling has always been, and still remains, a basic human activity and a need, to communicate, to understand and be understood.

Reflecting on what we had learned from Pat's presentation I realised that telling stories is of course what human beings have always done to make sense of their lives and the world they lived in, their oral history. The role of the story teller, the balladeer in a community was important in past ages. We value listening to stories as an important activity for our children from their earliest years for their intellectual and emotional development. In many religious and self-help groups telling one's story or testimony to others is recognised as therapeutic to the teller and the listener.



*Penny Kinnear thanks Pat Robson for her fascinating talk*

It is important I believe at this very difficult time, when so many of us are prevented from meeting friends, colleagues, family in our daily lives that we remember the immense importance of communication. Even if physically distant from one another we can use the phone, the lap top, the I phone, to bridge the



gap to tell our stories and to listen, to laugh, to rant and to help us make sense of the confusing world of 2020. This is something we can all do to help our wellbeing at this time. I would like to thank Pat for bringing this important point home to us in such a clear and entertaining way.

**Joan Carroll** (Alpha Chapter)

## **Dementia Friends**

We were very fortunate that Joe Mendell agreed to step in after another speaker dropped out due to family circumstances. He introduced his talk by describing himself as a Dementia Friend, trying to spread information; he stressed that he was neither an expert nor a counsellor. The aim of the Dementia Friendly Society is to change people's attitudes and remove the fear sometimes associated with the word 'dementia'. They are sponsored and led by the Alzheimer's Association. Armed with a positive attitude, and provided with information, will enable those with dementia and their friends and families to deal with situations that may arise.

Initially, we were asked what words we associated with the word 'dementia': old age, forgetfulness, loss - these were the first three words mentioned, and Joe pointed out that this is how it is perceived, with mostly negative feelings.

Joe is keen on interaction, and we played a game of Bingo. Each of us was given a slip of paper that described a person of a certain age and situation. From the point of view of that person, Joe read out statements about dementia which we had to complete by choosing a word, or words, from the Bingo grid. From the game, we identified the:-



Part of the exercise. Penny Kinnear and Joe Mendell exchange papers.

### **Five key messages:**

- Dementia is not a natural part of ageing.
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain (apparently there has been much research recently in South America).
- Dementia is not just about losing your memory.

- It is possible to live well with dementia.
- There is more to the person than dementia.

### **Joe identified other important facts:**

- ◆ There are 100 different types of dementia.
- ◆ One in fourteen people over 65 has dementia.
- ◆ One common type of dementia is Alzheimer's.
- ◆ Dementia is progressive.
- ◆ Dementia usually begins by affecting people's short term memory.
- ◆ Dementia can affect people's perception: an example is of a black carpet at a doorway, that may appear to them as a large, black hole. Faced with this, the person with dementia may hesitate, fearing to fall in. How do those in the vicinity respond to this apparently strange action?
- ◆ Communication is key.
- ◆ Music and exercise can both have a positive impact.
- ◆ There is no physical aspect - people living with dementia do not look any different from anyone else.

At the end of this exercise, one person was asked to read out the description of the person on their piece of paper; it came as no surprise to discover that we all had exactly the same description.

Joe used the analogy of a bookcase, where shelves at head height would contain memories of recent events; shoulder height would contain memories of our 60s; at waist height would be those of our 20s; around our knees would be childhood memories; and at our feet, those from when we were babies – probably an almost empty shelf. Imagine, then, an earthquake. The bookcase would begin to shake, and the top shelf would move the most, dislodging books from the top first – our most recent memories - affecting the hippocampus, deep in the temporal lobe of each cerebral cortex.

Imagine, now, a second bookcase, that contains emotions, rather than memories. This doesn't shake as much – affecting a different part of the brain – the amygdala – which plays a key role in the processing of emotions. So the emotions remain much longer.

How does the person cope with everyday situations, such as making a cup of

tea – something which would probably have been an automatic action with little conscious thought required previously? How do they feel if they think the task is beyond them? Broken down into its constituent parts, there are numerous acts that may seem alien, So, we need to look at the needs, adapting the circumstances for them, changing their ability to complete an activity.

Joe concluded his talk by inviting us to complete a card to become a Dementia Friend, and asking us to commit to just one dementia friendly act.

It was a pleasure, and eye opening, to hear Joe speak on a matter that affects so many people in our ever ageing population.

**And finally: people live with dementia, they don't suffer from it!**

***Kathrin Hodgson (Gamma Chapter)***

*Joe Mendell has such a natural style of delivery that he made it so easy for all of us to engage with this very important subject.*



Joe meeting members during lunch.

## The Canterbury Award—Gender

I was delighted to receive the Canterbury Award to explore the area of Gender. The proposed schools work that I planned, which would lead to a film resource, was affected by lockdown and Covid-19. I had to rethink.

I have been carrying out interviews with young people who identify as gender non-binary/gender fluid. I have also been exploring the experiences of trans women and interviewing them about their lives.

I hope these ideas will come together in the November joint Alpha/Gamma Zoom meeting on Gender, when we welcome trans women and young people who have something to say about gender expectations.

I have also started investigating and buying resources that break down gender stereotypes. These will be given to the schools I have developed a relationship with during our Revitalisation push. These include 'An ABC of Equality' published by Frances Lincoln, 'Julian Is a Mermaid' by Jessica Love and 'Pink is for Boys' by Eda Kaban.

I intend to finally produce a list of recommended resources, links and short films which will support teachers in their work in this developing area, which perhaps could be hosted on the DKG website.

**Anne Goldstein** (Gamma chapter)

*Anne with  
her friend  
Tanya*



## Great Britain Achievement Award

This award, consisting of a rose brooch in silver and amber, is given biennially and is Great Britain's way of honouring a member for something special.



Nominations are now invited for the recipient of this award for 2021.

The criteria are:

Must have been an active GB member for at least five years.

Must have shown one or more of the following:

Professional achievement that has:

- Raised the profile of the society in Great Britain
- Raised the profile of Great Britain within the European Region and/or the International Society through service or achievement within the Society
- Shown distinguished personal development or courage in adversity such that it provides motivation to others
- Provided a special service for Great Britain State.

Please submit any nominations, with a short citation (50 words), before 28<sup>th</sup> February to the Chair of the GB Achievement Award Committee, Liz Malik, so that if necessary a postal ballot can be held before the Sate Conference. An acknowledgement of your nomination will be sent.

The Award will be announced at the GB Annual General Meeting. It is paid for out of State funds.

Previous recipients: Lilian Lynch (Gamma), Phyllis Kern (Alpha), Loetitia Stone (Beta), Pam Irons (Gamma), Gloria Redston (Gamma), Mary Wardrop (Gamma), Joan Carroll (Alpha), Evelyn Goodsell (Gamma), Diana Bell (Alpha).

***Evelyn Goodsell*** (*Great Britain State President*)

## Cultural Responsiveness—no longer an option

**Dr Itoka spoke on:-** Recommendations from the literature stated that teacher education programs must assist prospective teachers in becoming culturally responsive educators thereby, upholding the democratic intention of educational equity and social justice in public school classrooms.

The disproportionate rate of suspensions for African American and Latino male public school students may be related to the cultural responsive proficiencies of teachers.

The key questions which guided the review of the literature regarded what cultural responsive looked like in practice and what teachers and administrators did to keep students from being excluded from the benefits of a quality education. The conclusion of the review was that by preparing leaders and teacher educators to be culturally competent, improved student academic achievement could be accomplished.



Dr Linda L. Itoka, Ed.D, Sankofa Cultural Education Institute.

It was wonderful to hear and see her, even if we could not share her space. So much to think about, and very timely in both our countries.

### Responses to Dr Linda Itoka's presentation.

I believe a course on recognising different learning styles in pupils and how to adapt teaching styles to accommodate them is part of teacher training in the U.K. In recent years, however, it has been a policy to attract teachers from overseas to teach in this country to cope with the teacher shortage. This has had a positive effect for many schools and their pupils, but from anecdotal evidence I have come across there can be a mismatch between these teachers' expectations based on training and professional experience in their own countries because learning styles, communication skills, teacher/pupil interaction often differ widely from those they encounter in the U.K.

There seems to be a lack of necessary preparation to ensure the learning/



teaching experience a valuable one for all concerned that needs to be addressed.

***Joan Carroll (Alpha Chapter).***

She was a breath of fresh air-so enthusiastic and committed to her teaching in her aim to make it relevant and effective.

***Evelyn Goodsell (Gamma Chapter).***

A fascinating insight into an aspect of education in Indianapolis in the USA. Dr Linda Itoka's passion for her work shone through in all areas, from the belief she had in her students' potential to the way she honoured them as talented individuals. She taught them to believe in themselves as worthy citizens who had great futures ahead and was obviously proud of her own brother who had demonstrated that you don't have to be academic to be successful.

This was a very thought-provoking presentation, demonstrating that we all need to be self-reflecting regarding our own behaviours and attitudes towards cultural differences and expectations, in order to ensure that all students are not excluded from quality education. A serious subject but put across with passion and good humour.

***Penny Kinnear (Alpha Chapter).***

Linda was a real pleasure to listen to and gave us a very interesting talk. She explained cultural responsiveness and getting teachers to know and connect with the lived experience of their students, using this knowledge to address their learning styles and make learning more relevant and positive for them.

In this day and age teachers will meet students from many different backgrounds. Teachers should have training and be provided with development opportunities to prepare them to be able to be culturally competent.

Linda explained as one example that white teachers, who were unfamiliar with the interactions between African origin American males, meant the teachers were misinterpreting some actions as argumentative or combative and this was leading to a great disparity in their suspension rates from school. Only by teachers understanding more about their students' cultures will they be able to create equality and justice in the classroom.

***Diana Bell (Alpha Chapter).***

## Alpha & Gamma Chapter Report Autumn 2020

### Programme Changes

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 and Lockdown, the following Alpha Chapter meetings Summer 2020 were put on hold until a future date:

16<sup>th</sup> May: Angela Calvert - "Join the DOTS – Developing Digital Literacies across the Curriculum", Q & A Session to follow.

20<sup>th</sup> June: Alpha Summer Outing.

1<sup>st</sup> week July – Visit to the Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition.

In May, in order to keep the continuity of meetings, Alpha conducted their first meeting via Zoom. Dorcas delivered a presentation - "The Lived Experience in the Highs & Lows of the Rollercoaster that is COVID-19". Her talk began by covering the time between the 9<sup>th</sup> March (pre-lockdown) and the 22<sup>nd</sup> March. She and her family had spent 3 years planning their move out of London. However the threat of Lockdown put all these in turmoil. Dorcas showed a series of photos taken around her local area in London starting before Lockdown when they felt a sense of "unease" and decided to stay out of London. In their new/future location they wanted to do something for the local community and became volunteers delivering essentials to 51 people. Having received many thanks from neighbours, she now felt refreshed.

In June, Alpha, along with Gamma, enjoyed a presentation organised by Anne Goldstein – "The Joy of Jewish Food". Anne sent out a selection of Jewish recipes for different cakes and biscuits and we were asked to try and make one or two of these recipes to share virtually on the day. Photos were sent to Anne in advance of the meeting and also shown on the day. Anne talked about the importance and heritage of various Jewish foods and the session finished with a friend of Anne's demonstrating how to make the traditional Challah bread.

In July Alpha held their final Business meeting of the year via Zoom and it was very successful.

In August, Alpha members usually try to meet up for a visit. As this was not possible this year, a joint Alpha & Gamma Virtual Picnic Lunch & Quiz organised by Dorcas was held and thoroughly enjoyed. We were asked to bring our favourite food and tipple to partake during the session. Everyone managed to win a prize (to be distributed later).

## **2020-2021**

In September, we held our first joint Alpha & Gamma Virtual International Zoom meeting, where our speaker was Dr Linda Itoka from Indianapolis, USA. Her presentation was “Cultural Responsiveness – No longer an option”. The 5 hour time difference was no problem for Linda, who was happy to meet with us at breakfast time in Indianapolis.

We had a fascinating and informative talk by Linda about how she strives to ensure that her students feel valued and accepted for who they are, regardless of their background and ability, whether it be academic or practical. Dr Itoka is also passionate that there needs to be training for all educators in order for them to be able to understand different ethnic cultures and behaviours, particularly in young black males.

There were many interesting questions and much discussion during this session. Good to see so many members able to take part, including one member Zooming in from France.

Finally - Hooray to Evie, our State President, for her determination in making sure that we finally had our Annual Conference in October. Great speakers and a wonderful opportunity to once again meet up after such a long time, “in the flesh”, which will always supersede virtual reality.

## **Future Dates**

12<sup>th</sup> December: Joint Alpha & Gamma Virtual meeting. Topic - “Festivals of Light” Speakers – tbc.

***Penny Kinnear*** (Alpha Chapter President)



An apple cake made by Kathy Hodgson from one of the 'Joy of Jewish Food' recipes Provided by Anne Goldstein.

## Becoming State President

Little did I ever consider, when I joined Delta Kappa Gamma, thirty years ago, that I would one day be elected the President of GB! Nothing could have been further from my thoughts.

I had joined the Association quite by accident. Sandra Blacker and I were both infant teachers at a Primary school in Tonbridge and one day, we saw in our staff-room, a poster inviting teachers to Brenchley school, to explore different ways of using Unifix bricks. We decided we would go along and expected to know other teachers when we arrived. But no, the women we met were complete strangers to us although they obviously knew each other very well. They were very friendly and made us feel welcome so we stayed. At the end of the session, they all took out sandwiches and we took our leave and went to the pub puzzling who on earth these people were. Sometime later we received an invitation to meet them again and, after a good deal of trepidation, eventually joined DKG!

At that time I hadn't been a teacher for very long as circumstances had not permitted me to go on to University when I left Maidstone Grammar School at sixteen. I had to train as a Comptometer Operator at a college in London and start to earn my living.

It was not until long after I was married and had two children, who were now at school, that I decided I should capitalise on my education and do something more stimulating.

I had heard of this college in London, Sydney Webb, which trained 'mature students' to be teachers. It was part-time, two evenings a week and some Saturdays for three years, and full-time for the final year. I applied. I had to take an examination, and was accepted.

Not having enough money to give up my day job with The Charities Aid Foundation, I continued with it for the three years, dashing down to the station at the end of the day to catch the train to London.

At the end of the four years I gained my teacher's certificate and taught, quite happily, for the next thirty years

It was some time before I really understood the workings of DKG, and I must confess I nearly resigned, but once I had attended a Conference in Canterbury,

my understanding became clear and I have enjoyed the friendship of the members in GB and in all the other countries.

I have attended all the European Regional conferences and most of the International ones since Toronto and I have had the privilege of serving on an International Committee and being an International Speaker. I have been a Chapter Treasurer and President and GB State Treasurer, but never aspired to be State President

I had a very hard act to follow. Kathy was such a competent, efficient President. Even though I do my best, I know I need all your support.

***Evelyn Goodsell (State President)***

Rosalind, Kathy and Evelyn at the  
State Conference 2020



### **A Humorous Tale in Lockdown**

We clearly get our laughs where we can in these troubled times.

Lady in a U3A online social group explaining how she took up belly dancing. I should say she didn't look a likely candidate! She explained that she had been a tunnelling engineer overseeing the building of a sewer in Hastings. She was looking for things to do in her time off, and saw an advertisement for belly dancing. She answered it, and found herself in an assorted group of ladies with a very forceful leader who soon got them moving!

They got to the stage with the tunnel where the two ends met in the middle – always a great cause of celebration as you know you've got your sums right! Do you remember when the two ends of the Channel Tunnel met, and the Tricolour and Union Jack were exchanged with big grins under the sea? So there was a great big party and everyone was enjoying themselves – job well done. Then the MC announced that their chief engineer was going to entertain them with a belly dance! Proved to be no escape, so she took off a few clothes and performed. Then they had another bright idea – treat it as a charity fundraiser – so money was attached to her dress! The idea of course is that the money is then retrieved by a suitable person using their teeth! All went well – but a big cheer went up when the person retrieved a note from her cleavage! I've been giggling over this ever since!

***Diane Billam (Gamma Chapter)***

## How I became a teacher

I was living in Dover, with my two daughters aged 5 and 8. My husband having left us and disappeared, I was a single mother, not a good thing anytime, especially in 1964. I worked as a secretary in Dover Council Town Clerk's Department, for the Assistant Town Clerk, a job which I very much enjoyed. However, I was worried that with sole responsibility for the girls, I would find it difficult to cope with a full-time job, essential for financial reasons. At that time, Child Allowance was not paid for the first child. My mother worked full time for Pfizers, the pharmaceutical company, in Sandwich, and could not help with child care.

Then Christ Church Canterbury College opened, a Church of England teacher training college. A reference was required from a Church of England clergyman, and as we were not church goers, I was lucky that one of my mother's Bridge partners was a vicar from a local village, who knew me well enough to feel he could provide one. I was turned down in 1964, but with the advice that I could start in 1965, when my younger daughter was 5, I did.

My husband had emptied our joint bank account – never had one again! – but my parents kindly lent me enough to buy a Mini van, and Kent County Council awarded me a maintenance grant. I then drove every college day from Dover to Canterbury, 15 miles on what was not then dual carriageway all the way, so often quite tedious. I dropped my daughters at school, drove as fast as I could, and arrived breathless just in time for the first lecture.

There were 200 in our year, and at the end of the year I was joint first, something of a miracle as I was really out of practice, as it was 12 years since A levels and I had not gone on to university. There were 12 of us who were not school-leavers, and we became quite close. At the beginning the youngsters had looked at us as if we shouldn't be there, but they soon learned better, as we all did well. We had too much at stake not to make a success of it.

By our third year, the College was negotiating with the University of London, who awarded our Teachers' Certificates, to offer an Honours Degree. Twelve of us were told we could become eligible to apply, including myself, the only older student, depending on our results of course

So I had to decide: did I go for a teaching post, or apply for the degree? I could not do both. If I applied, and then found out that I had not qualified for the degree course, I would be lost. The biggest gamble of my life, which



succeeded. I started the degree course in 1968, completing all the degree level work in 9 months, and passed with a Upper II, which was probably the best I could have done in the circumstances.

I had applied for jobs, and was lucky enough to get a post at Barton Road Junior School, the head being a lovely Welshman, Mr Evans, who had come from the Valleys with his family, his father working in the Kent Pits – there were 4 in operation at the time. I liked my colleagues, and taught years 5 or 6, doing everything of course but specialising in music. We had a sizeable orchestra, as lessons were free, and instruments were provided. All my kids could swim and take successful geranium cuttings as well! We had a small garden. I also took the Year 6 boys for football, as neither of the men on the staff could be persuaded to. I also took the senior girls for netball, and we did well. After 4 years I decided it was time to move on, and use my Business skills, including shorthand. So I spent 4 happy years at the Dover branch of South Kent Further Education College.

That led to a short time in an Essex secondary school, which I hated, followed by 4 years at Paddington College and another 4 at Hammersmith and West London College, both very large Further Education Colleges in London. This was an eye opener! After that I diverted to spend 4 years as a trainer in the pub trade, then went to work at BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council, one of the biggest vocational education examining bodies), going on to become Director of Products and Quality (developing both the qualification and its assessment system). So now you know why I will always be grateful to Christ Church, now a very large university of course, for giving me such opportunities!

***Diane Billam (Gamma Chapter)***

For the Spring edition of GB News we would like members to write about  
how they became a teacher.

Copy to Di Billam [dibillam@hotmail.com](mailto:dibillam@hotmail.com) by the end of March please.

## Gender

Anne Goldstein, pictured centre top right, opened the meeting by welcoming our five German and one Dutch sister, making 31 members and guests participating. Anne was pleased that Zoom makes this possible. She introduced our speaker, Tanya, pictured top left



and with Anne on page 12, as an icon of Tunbridge Wells. Tanya said there were many variations of the journey she had had, based on biology, sexuality and gender preference. The broad view of gender recognises a range of men and women, and most people do not feel they need to change. Gender variance has been around for centuries, more acceptable in some societies than others, with some where it is totally unacceptable and punished severely. As late as the 1950s in England a person could be arrested for cross-dressing.

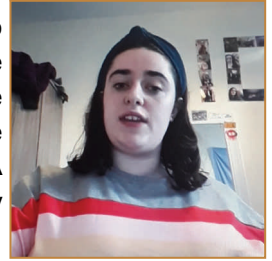
It is not easy to come out. Some face rejection by family or friends. Tanya grew up in London, with 2 older sisters, and knew by the age of 7 that something was wrong, wanting to play with girls rather than boys, remembering going to sleep and wanting to wake up as a girl. Nevertheless she was married for 29 years, and had 3 children. She kept her secret hidden, dressing up when possible, with a sense of shame that there must be something wrong. They agreed to separate and then divorced. In 2002 she met her partner Paula and moved to Wales. They lived happily together for 15 years, but gradually her feelings became stronger.

In January 2015 Tanya sought help with a counsellor: '3 seconds that changed my life', when the counsellor asked 'Are you male?'. Tanya hesitated to respond, but it gave her strength to act. She told Paula, who said she had always realised Tanya had a female side. Tanya then told 2 of her children who lived in Brighton, getting an amazingly positive response from her daughter. They then both told her son, who responded in a similar way, as did her other son.

Tanya moved back to Tunbridge Wells, living with her niece, who said 'Explore your options'. She moved into her own flat, working in a doctor's surgery and dressing androgenously. Her children took her out to lunch in 2016 with their

spouses, there was total acceptance, nothing to be frightened of, nor has anyone rejected her. Tanya is now 70, had heart surgery 2 years ago, has diabetes, does not want a man in her life, and is totally happy.

Anne introduced Isobel, pictured right, a student, who spoke of her work on 'The Politics of Gender'. She discussed biological determinism, the nature/nuture debate, are we born with gender, or grow into it? Carole Stirling spoke of a friend who felt 'not in the right body'. A marine, covered in tattoos, 6 foot tall, has had both surgery and hormone treatment, and now lives as Debbie.



Anne showed us some photos of Harry Styles wearing a variety of female garments: 'Clothes are there to have fun with'. Ben was introduced and spoke about changing pronouns and the use of 'it' rather than he or she. There were a number of interesting questions including one on the relationship with the homosexual community, which Tanya felt was sometimes rather fraught.

Anne thanked Tanya for such a thought provoking and moving talk, said how good it was to see our German and Dutch sisters, and said our next meeting was on 12 December on 'Festivals of Light' with a Christmas Quiz, for which invitations would be sent in due course.

**Diane Billam** (*Gamma Chapter*)

## Chickens and Eggs



Alpha member Lavinia, Soul, who lives in the country, decided that having chickens and fresh eggs would be a good idea to help her keep busy during lockdown. She bought 6 nice young chickens and they began laying

in May. The picture above shows some of their very fresh eggs laid in July. The enormous one at 100 grams (3.5oz) was from the chicken named Diana — who rules the roost! Later Diana produced an even larger one, pictured right.

**Diana Bell** (*Alpha Chapter*)



## **DKG Opportunities for all members**

- \* **Share and learn together in an international society especially for women in education.**
- \* **Enjoy annual international conferences with colleagues and friends from many different countries.**
- \* **Develop personal and professional skills, including leadership.**
- \* **Become an international speaker in North America or Europe with all expenses paid.**
- \* **Opportunities include:**
  - \* **Regular meetings with great speakers on interesting topics in London and Kent.**
  - \* **Scholarships available for individual projects.**
  - \* **Outstanding leadership & management training at The University of Texas. (Golden Gift).**

There are many more opportunities available – view the DKG websites for the full list.

**International Headquarters: [www.dkg.org](http://www.dkg.org)**

Details of GB meetings are on the website

**Great Britain: [www.dkggb.org.uk](http://www.dkggb.org.uk)**

Find out more about DKG in Europe

**Europe: [www.dkgeurope.org](http://www.dkgeurope.org)**

### **Mission Statement**

**The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.**