

# Our Town

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/  
20



## Newsletter of the De Beauvoir Association

Informing, supporting and enriching our community

Image: Inside  
De Beauvoir Block -  
our local hub of  
creativity



What's inside:  
De Beauvoir Tails  
Gardeners Club  
And much more ...

**THE NORTH  
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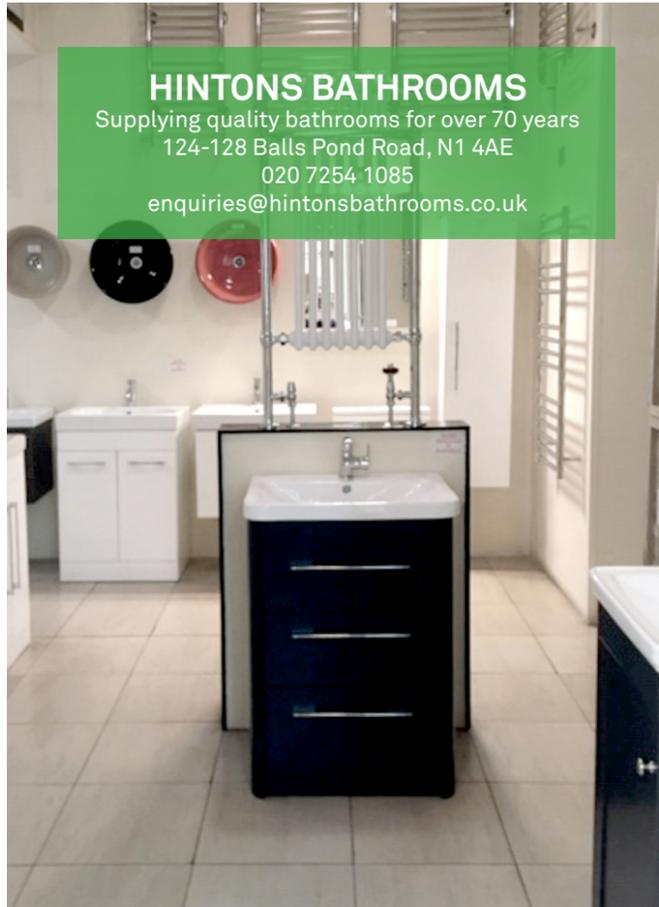
**Welcome!!**  
Enjoy yourself and star the weekend  
on a Wednesday!!

EVERY MONDAY : QUIZ NIGHT  
EVERY WEDNESDAY : THE JAZZ MASTERS  
EVERY THURSDAY : ALFRED'S COMEDY CLUB  
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## From the editor

'What's this that's landed?' I hear you say. There's so much going on in Our Town that the old-format newsletter couldn't do it all justice. And with more paid advertising in this magazine-style version, we plan to invest any surplus income in the DBA's social media presence.

Look forward to regular slots by old favourites, such as the Gardeners Club and the WI, as well as contributions from the ever-popular Balloon Debates team. The new Health and Wellbeing column will suggest inspiring ways to exercise your bodies and minds, and for parents of small children, our kids' column will keep you up-to-date on things to help entertain your little ones. And last but not least, canine friends Barney and Baxter will tell you all about the 'hood from their perspective. Let's just say, they've got their ears to the ground!

If you've got thoughts about articles you'd like to see covered in future issues, please email [info@debeauvoir.org.uk](mailto:info@debeauvoir.org.uk). And if you haven't already signed up to our weekly emailed newsletter, covering the hot topics and events of the week, visit [www.debeauvoir.org.uk](http://www.debeauvoir.org.uk).

[debeauvoir.org.uk](http://debeauvoir.org.uk), where you'll find a sign-up link on the first page. It's the place to hear about everything that's current, including planning applications and local campaigns. And if you're interested in joining/helping the brilliant team that brings you everything DBA-related, again, please email [info@debeauvoir.org.uk](mailto:info@debeauvoir.org.uk).

Finally, another really successful DBA Christmas Fair, held on 30 November 2019, made a profit of £1400. We proudly presented a cheque to our chosen charity, Just for Kids Law based in Leroy House on Essex Road.

For news of forthcoming DBA and other events, see page 14.

### Hilary Mandleberg



*“Compassionate minds and warm-heartedness foster a happy community”*

THE DALAI  
LAMA

## Published by the De Beauvoir Association

Established in 1968, the De Beauvoir Association informs our community on an abundance of things affecting our physical and social environment, and heritage. We gather and share information, impartially, through our newsletters and social media channels. We connect people through our programme of events, and are committed to inclusivity and sustainability.

We print and distribute 5000 copies, three times a year. Advertising is sold on an annual basis. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact [info@debeauvoir.org.uk](mailto:info@debeauvoir.org.uk)

contact [info@debeauvoir.org.uk](mailto:info@debeauvoir.org.uk) [www.debeauvoir.org.uk](http://www.debeauvoir.org.uk) @debeauvoirassn

## BALLOON DEBATE

# In or out?

Patricia Dow and Sarah Dallas, founders of the renowned De Beauvoir Balloon Debates, present the next contenders for staying in the balloon.

Buckle up! Thursday 26 March sees the De Beauvoir Balloon take off for another evening of debate – the first of four planned for 2020. De Beauvoir Block provides the elegant launch site for three guest speakers to present three different but equally important ideas. At the end of the evening, the audience decides by show of hands which idea they want to save for the future of humanity.

First balloonist, Manick Govinda, will explain the damage done to free expression by 'cancel culture'. An arts consultant, curator and journalist, Manick resists the increasing tendency to boycott or silence creative outputs on the basis of an artist's political views. Is it time to confront mob mentality, or should an artist's thoughts, words and deeds be judged alongside their art?

'We all need a savings revolution,' says Olivia Vinden, Fintech expert and a regular on the acclaimed Fintech Insider podcast. Olivia argues that the focus on equal pay is often inaccurate and misdirected, but gender inequality on retirement is real and being ignored. We need to talk pensions not salaries! With the third speaker to be confirmed shortly, registrations are now open online.

Thursday 26 March, 7.30pm (doors open 7pm), De Beauvoir Block, 92-96 De Beauvoir Rd, London N1 4EN. Free entry.

[debeauvoirdebates.com](http://debeauvoirdebates.com)



## WI

# Don't fear the smear

In a year when the National Federation Of Women's Institute's campaign is 'Don't Fear The Smear', The Vagina Museum proved a fitting destination for the first De Beauvoir WI trip of the year.

Nestled in a small corner in Camden Market's Stables is the world's first museum dedicated to gynaecological anatomy. Its current exhibition, 'Muff Busters: Vagina Myths And How To Fight Them', gives an introduction to how every woman and her body is unique, dispels the misinformation that prevails, and encourages conversations. On our guided tour we saw a suitcase filled with 'things we don't need' – all the wipes, creams and gels that are supposed to keep us 'acceptably' clean and hygienic 'down there'. As the vagina is self-cleaning, falling for these products is the equivalent of buying a self-cleaning oven, then investing in cleaning products that strip away the oven's self-cleaning lining.

Further exhibits highlighted the increasing demand for labiaplasty (surgery to reshape the labia). While some procedures are for medical reasons, most enquiries come from women and girls seeking some idealised 'designer vagina'. A shocking revelation was that there is no lower age limit and that girls as young as nine are seeking this very invasive surgery.

And the exhibition covered so much more, from medical textbooks still in use that perpetuate myths around multiple partners, to the function of the hymen and its links (or not) to virginity. We all emerged saying how we wished we'd been able to access information like this when we were teenagers struggling with our bodies and with the myths we were exposed to at that age.

Definitely worth a visit, 'Muff Busters' is on until the end of March. We look forward to making a return trip to the Vagina Museum when their next exhibition launches.

[debeauvoirwi.com](http://debeauvoirwi.com)

# Return to the precinct

In the last newsletter, Kevin Miller introduced us to the secrets of some of the businesses in the Rose Lipman precinct. On a chilly, damp January day, he went back for more —

It was uplifting! The cold outside was instantly replaced by the bright and colourful indoor world of Beavers Playgroup. I wished I was four years old again with a choice of playing in the sandpit, getting stuck into the table laden with hard hats, toy hammers and power tools, or the kitchen with its fantastic array of toy cookers, pots and pans. I bent down to hang my coat on one of the low-level coat-hooks and was warmly greeted by Aileen, who leads the playgroup, and Leanna one of her five assistants.

Beavers started more than 35 years ago [your editor can verify this as her sons, now 41 and 37 both attended] and has places for 20 children. The playgroup is always full and there is a waiting list of hopefuls: the youngest child joined the waiting list when just four months old! Beavers is a self-funded group and non-profit making. To pay for staffing and resources it relies on subscriptions, many funded by The Learning Trust, plus additional fundraising activities.

Aileen and Leanna clearly love their work at Beavers and I got the impression the children love being there, too. The hours are Monday to Friday, 9:30 to 14:30.

Ever wondered why the joinery opposite the Rose Lipman building is called White Cat Joinery? Well, in 2008 Kemal Senturk was at home working on names and logos for his new joinery business and one of his three white cats kept coming and sitting on his designs. So Kemal, the welcoming and engaging proprietor, gave up thinking of alternatives. His enterprising cat had made it clear the business needed to be named 'White Cat Joinery'.

Kemal, or Kem, was born in Germany, the son of a Turkish carpenter and joiner. He

began helping his father at the age of 13 and so acquired all the skills he would need. He came to London in 2002 at the time his father decided to return to his Turkish home on the shores of the Black Sea. Now a British citizen, Kem has a thriving business making and installing made-to-measure external joinery – windows and doors of various types.

In addition to his mainstay of domestic work, Kem is sometimes asked to make other things. His proudest achievement is the internal doors for Southwark Cathedral. As you can imagine, they had to be made to the highest standard and needed to complement the original internal woodwork that had been

They are passionate about rescuing tired but well-made furniture and giving sofas, armchairs and chaises longues an exciting contemporary rebirth. Using one-off quality fabric remnants that may have otherwise been scrapped, they craft many pieces for display and sale in their showroom, through galleries and online. Some pieces are rejuvenated in collaboration with the owner; Andrea and Patrizia love to support and empower owners to design their own unique upcycled piece of furniture.

They talked fondly to me of project No. 1 – an abandoned armchair that Andrea transformed and gave to Patrizia for a Christmas present many years ago.



in place for many years. There are limits though to what he will make; he once turned down a request to make someone's coffin!

Andrea and Patrizia started Urban Upholstery in 2007, recycling old furniture they found abandoned on the streets around us and in Dalston. Andrea trained at a well-regarded upholstery school at home in Milan, while Patrizia is a designer, architect and artist, with degrees in architecture and design from Italy, and in scenography from St Martin's in London.

No. 1 marked the beginning of this great business – and the armchair is still loved and used.

Next time you're nearby, please make a five-minute diversion to the precinct just behind the Rose Lipman building on the corner of De Beauvoir Road and Downham Road. Drop in to any of the people who work here and say you read about them in the De Beauvoir newsletter. I know they'll make you welcome, too.

# Weeds and (some) slugs welcome

Thinking of having a low-maintenance wildlife garden? Irene Slegt of the Gardeners Club ended up with one such garden almost by chance – and since then she hasn't looked back.

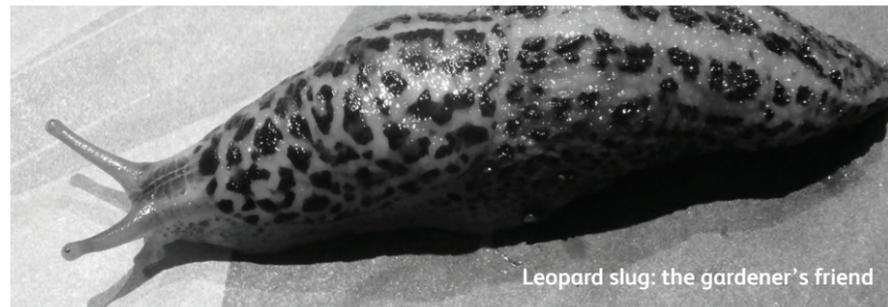
When I returned to De Beauvoir after many years overseas, I found my garden, with the children's climbing frame and trampoline, had turned into a grassy playground. Not having a huge budget for expensive ornamental plants, I took a different approach. I decided to create a wildlife-friendly garden just from seedlings that pop up in the cracks in pavements and that colonise wastelands. I reckoned if they were hardy enough to thrive there, they would survive no pampering and no chemicals in my plot.

Some of the tiny plants I collected I recognised: ox-eye daisies, Welsh poppies, chicory, forget-me-nots, marigolds, feverfew, asters, comfrey, and the more exotic, though toxic, spurges. Some, like alkanet, although liked by bees, I avoided; I knew that they spread like wildfire and are very difficult to pull up because of their deep-rooting rhizomes. I planted daisies in the bare patches that were left on the lawn by the playground equipment. Dandelions arrived on the wind and provided nectar for all kind of bees and plenty of tasty spring-time greens for stir-fries. The trick is to pick the flowers just before they turn into white, downy seedheads and parachute around the garden. The nettles I put in a large pot.

The result is a garden that looks after itself; it neither needs digging nor much watering. Some years a few plants disappear almost entirely because of a summer drought. But they reappear, miraculously again, after a long spell of rain. Others prefer dry heat and shrivel if there's too much rain. To my amazement, none of my plants have been wiped out by the snails and slugs that hide in the soil and in nooks and crannies in the stone walls. But to keep them under control, my son collects them by the bucketful during rainy summer nights, carefully avoiding our secret ally among them, the leopard slug. This exotic-looking creature, with its leopard spots, preys on its herbivorous cousins, so we're happy to leave it be.

If you also go on a snail-and-slug hunt and come across the yellow slug, you can report your findings to the RHS, which is running a survey on its website: <http://rhs.org.uk/slugsurvey>. Here we are told that there are 40 species of snails and slugs in the UK and that only half are pests. Some are even edible: my mother used to cook the brown snails after carefully preparing them for human consumption. Not everyone will be into this type of gardening. But every garden could harbour a little spot that can be left wild and will do wonders for wildlife. And spring is a good time to start, by sowing English wildflowers in a secluded area or even just in a large plant pot.

[debeauvoirden.org.uk](http://debeauvoirden.org.uk)



Leopard slug: the gardener's friend

## DE BEAUVOIR TAILS

# Meet Barney & Baxter



Hi, Barney here. I'm a black Cocker Spaniel and I'm going to be sharing this column with my friend Baxter, a brown Cocker Spaniel. I'm the normal-looking one on the left and Baxter is the one with the crazed look in his eyes... he's a lunatic! We both live in de Beauvoir and we want to use this space to tell you about what we're getting up to in the neighbourhood. We're busy, active dogs with loads of energy, and out and about all the time. We've lived here all our lives and know the area and its dogs pretty well.

Yesterday we went down to the canal. It was cold and wet, and far too cold to go swimming this time. I'll wait until it warms up a bit before going in. Loads of joggers down there yesterday too but unfortunately we're not allowed to chase them! We walked past the Barge House Cafe then through Kingsland Basin. I love this place because when you bark it sounds reaaaallly loud! We bumped into Lenny, a new friend (a gorgeous but somewhat nervous Cavapoo), with his mum Emma. The streets seemed pretty empty today but thankfully plenty of things to sniff at on the way home. See you next time!

# View from The Bakery



We first reported a year ago about the plans for new homes on the De Beauvoir Estate. Unsurprisingly, the plans are controversial. Here, from her home in The Bakery, Becky Colls offers her take —

Our home centres on the view from our living-room window. We live on the sixth floor of The Bakery, the block with multi-coloured windows, which mainly faces north looking up Southgate Road towards Stokey and beyond.

Everyone who comes to our flat always loves the view. The rest of our block is rather rude; we have our backs to Texryte House next door, and give the cold shoulder to the De Beauvoir Estate. Not that we have much choice in the matter. The windows in our rooms that don't face north are the size of high-up letter boxes. So our flat really is all about that view and the three rooms that look out onto it.

Most residents aren't against some new developments on the Estate, given the

housing need in Hackney. The feedback from the public consultation that was held in April 2019 backs this up: residents were supportive of the Council's plan for new homes on Downham Road, and trusted the overall process.

However, it came as a huge shock that the plan had grown so much by the second public consultation in November last year. There had been no input at all from The Bakery residents. The red line around the shipping containers had been crossed out entirely, and the proposed new building now spills out across most of the little park. The footprint had grown from rectangular to horseshoe shape, enclosing the space beyond what seemed reasonable. The size of the building had at least doubled.

In other words, for residents living in the immediate area, there is literally no improvement to the local environment at all. Just a tall building dropped on top of a little bit of green. It will mean denser living conditions that even contradict the advice from the architects themselves, loss of green space and biodiversity and, crucially for us, the loss of the view from our three rooms.

Views aren't protected in urban developments like these but should be. The sky isn't something you can own or make claim to. So, unlike a garden or a balcony, residents just have to suck it up when a view is taken away from them.

But fear not: there is a new concept emerging that could give some protection to people like us who live in 'single-aspect accommodations'.

It turns out what we are talking about isn't simply a room with a view, but a room with a 'visual amenity'. As soon as I heard that term, it made sense. Although we don't literally walk out onto the little bit of green every morning, we use the space above it every hour of the day. It's our world and it's been both my daughters' world since they were born.

My three-year-old and I have spent hours looking out of that living-room window, watching the seasons change, spying 'castles', inspiring a love of any kind of vehicle – especially dust-carts and helicopters – mapping out our regular haunts, the churches, cafes and pubs. We watch people, listen to birdsong and learn about life down there. The first time she saw a rainbow, she flung her arms round me in sheer joy. So we kind of do walk out of our window every morning and hover above you all, just as if we had a garden floating in the sky. Taking that away, which this new proposal will do, will completely change our lives. We will struggle to see horizons and most of our windows will be coloured in with building, with only a margin of sky to the side. We will feel like we are being bricked in.

My three-year-old came to the public consultation and I explained what we were talking about and why we were so worried. She looked at the wooden blocks on the architects' model, reached out her chubby hand, picked up the new block and plopped it down onto Rosemary Gardens. 'Why don't they just put it there?' 'Well,' I said, 'because it's ridiculously massive and it would smother most of the front bit of the park.' I picked the block up and dropped it back, shocked again by the size. I wish the planners could meet my little one and hear her simple logic, and then maybe they'd realise the enormity of what they're proposing to take away.

## Called to the bar – again!

**R**egular newsletter contributor Dan Turner was so happy to be given ‘permission’ to visit some of our local pubs for the last newsletter that he happily agreed to do more of the same. This time he took drinking companion Steve McCann along to ‘help’—

The Iron Duke has dozens of pubs named after him, but the Duke of Wellington must rank among the best. You could easily imagine him in here having a well-deserved post-Waterloo IPA.

A welcome find close to Dalston’s busy Kingsland Road, The Duke of Wellington – a classic corner pub with a modern twist – offers everything for the discerning punter. It blends a trendy Dalston feel with the charms and character of a classic local East-End nuclear sub [Ed’s note: If you don’t get this rather niche reference, think Cockney rhyming slang and / or the 1998 British crime comedy, *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*]. You can imagine that The Duke scrubs up well for Christmas.

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## JESSIE KNOWS A FEW THINGS ABOUT WHAT LOCALS WANT

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Featuring in the Londonist’s ‘A-Z pub crawl’, winning a coveted Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Award, and making an appearance in the Good Beer Guide, the Duke of Wellington reflects the dedication the owners have to quench the locals’ desire for real ale. The pub’s manager, Jessie, used to manage the iconic Notting Hill watering hole, The Westbourne, famed for its smattering of celebrity clientele and ground-zero carnival location. So Jessie knows a few things about what locals want as well as the importance of respecting local heritage. It’s a fine



balance to strike and it’s as obvious as it is disappointing when some pubs’ efforts are wide of the mark. Happily, the Duke of Wellington gets it just right. As well as food and drink, The Duke of Wellington hosts a wide range of events throughout the month. These include comedy nights, quiz nights and live music. The music takes place on the first Tuesday of the month on ‘The Rug’ (yes, it quite literally is a rug!). Follow the guys on Twitter @TheDukeN1 for hot-off-the-press updates.

Dogs are most welcome here if they’re accompanied by a human, and the classic bar offers a relaxed atmosphere while providing a wide array of sports on the multitude of TVs. The Duke of Wellington has proven a big hit with sports fans and was teaming with life during the international tournaments.

When it comes to food, Jessie is keen to highlight the importance of ingredients to his chef’s team, and the famed Duke of Wellington pizzas are testament to this. They really are showstoppers and are rightly considered some of the best around. The options are wide-ranging and cater to the ever-expanding niche requests of Dalston residents.

If you can manage to snap the booth on the left of the entrance – and even if you can’t – you will have the perfect East-End experience.

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### DUKE OF WELLINGTON

Address: 119 Balls Pond Road, London N1 4BL  
Website: [frontierpubs.co.uk/your-local/duke-of-wellington-dalston-pub](http://frontierpubs.co.uk/your-local/duke-of-wellington-dalston-pub)



Situated on an elongated triangular plot of land where Culford Road and Ardleigh Road meet is The Scolt Head, an absolute rip-roarer of a tavern that’s got a bit of everything. Google maps labels it as a gastropub but that’s a misnomer; The Scolt is a weird, wonderful mix of party pub, traditional boozier and sports saloon. And it does cracking food, too. If it sounds a bit mad, it is. But it works.

Demarcated by a bucolic hedge-fenced beer garden out front, the dog-friendly Scolt is owned and run by lifelong De Beauvoir resident Rosie Wesemann and her brother Richard Haines. The former runs it with the help of her right-hand woman Jackie Dalton, and it’s been that way for the past 12 years. Previously The Sussex, Wesemann purchased the pub after a tip-off from the perspicacious Harry Davies of the De Beauvoir Deli, and while she swiftly changed the name (Scolt Head Island is a barrier island off the coast of North Norfolk that Wesemann frequented with her family as a child), pretty much everything else, décor-wise, has stayed the same. It’s why The Scolt is a little rough round the edges, but in a good way. The wooden floorboards are well trodden, the stools around the bar have seen better days and the Gun Hill Bar at the back feels like a northern soul dance hall from Wigan circa 1977. So how does The Scolt manage to be all things to all people? Well, let’s start with the sport. The Scolt has licenses for BT Sport and Sky, so if you want to get out of the house and watch live Premiership football, Champions League games, Heineken Cup Rugby or even Masters golf (coming in April), The Scolt is where it’s at. There’s always a buzz about the place for heavyweight clashes (and for every Arsenal game!), and invariably big weekend matches are shown on the projector in the Gun Hill Bar. For major tournaments, the atmosphere is ratcheted up even further and it’ll be nothing short of electric for England games this summer when Harry Kane and co. play in the European Championships. And then there’s the song and dance. Literally.

Every Tuesday evening at 7pm there’s a swing dance class in the Gun Hill Bar (priced at a very reasonable £5 per person), before a cohort of musicians from The London Dance Orchestra arrive at 8pm. Anywhere from three to 13 maestros knock out hits from everyone from Count Basie to Glenn Miller, and dance-class attendees and seasoned swing dancers share the floor, ripping it up together. It’s raucous, relentless and about as much fun as you can have on a Tuesday evening.

Which brings us to the main event. Every last Thursday of the month is jazz night at The Scolt, and if you haven’t been, you really need to go. Music comes courtesy of Peter Werth & The Jazz Crew, one of the finest jazz ensembles in the capital. Every month Peter brings together some of London’s most talented and dexterous players, plus elite vocalists, for a jazz spectacular. The atmosphere’s convivial, the music scintillating and spontaneous, and it’s free. While you can pop in, have a pint, and dip your toes, to get the full experience it’s best to round up a group of friends, book a table, sit down for food and stay for the duration. With all this fun to be had it’d be easy to overlook the food at The Scolt, but you really shouldn’t. Head chef Lucaz has been running the kitchen since Wesemann took over the pub, and to say he does a mean Sunday lunch is an understatement. What’s more, the veggie roast is bona fide hit, the Polish dumplings (pierogi) are the top seller and just have to be tried, and The Scolt Head Cheeseburger – of which 50p from every one sold goes to the charity Just For Kids Law – is as good as you’ll find in N1.

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### THE SCOLT HEAD

Address: 107a Culford Road, London N1 4HT  
Website: [thescolthead.co.uk](http://thescolthead.co.uk)

HEALTH & WELLBEING

# The De Beauvoir Clinic welcomes you

**O**steopath Sundip Aujla of The De Beauvoir Clinic in the Crypt of St Peter's welcomes everyone and explains what you'll find if you come along.

The De Beauvoir Clinic is an established integrated health clinic in the heart of East London. Our team of clinical experts works together to provide the highest quality of patient care. Our specialists come from the fields of Osteopathy, Pain Psychology, Acupuncture, Nutritional Therapy and Clinical Pilates, ensuring that your physical and mental wellbeing are viewed from a 360-degree perspective. The De Beauvoir Clinic's aim is to become a hub for learning, health and rehabilitation for people of all ages and backgrounds in the community of De Beauvoir Town and surrounding areas. As well as providing private consultations, we have a number of open days and workshops running throughout the year that span the spectrum of health-related topics.

In addition, there are activities every mid-week day in De Beauvoir Town for people who are actively seeking to improve their overall wellbeing. The following classes take place in the Crypt at St Peter De Beauvoir:

- Monday evening Yoga, 7pm-8pm
- Tuesday evening Pilates, 7pm-8pm
- Wednesday evening Feldenkrais, 7pm-8pm
- Thursday morning Pilates, 9am-10am
- Friday morning Move For Health, 10:30am-11.30am

More information about the clinic can be found at [www.thedebeauvoirclinic.com](http://www.thedebeauvoirclinic.com)



Osteopath  
Sundip Aujla



Nutritional  
therapist Florence  
Wylde

## The under-5s challenge

With two under 5s of her own, Becky Colls is well placed to know what's on locally to entertain this age group. We have some great parks and the canal, (and its well-fed ducks), as well as hidden green spaces, like the Estate allotments, to toddle round. Then there are the plentiful child-friendly pubs and cafes. Becky recommends the brilliant Hoop app to find out what's on. Here are some of her personal suggestions..

**MONDAYS —**  
09.30-11.30, 0-5yrs, Mapledean Children's Centre, FREE

**TUESDAYS —**  
09.30-11.30, 0-5yrs, Comet Children's Centre and Mapledean Children's Centre, Stay and Play, FREE  
10-12.00, 0-2yrs, Bonding with Baby followed by Souper Tuesday in St Peter's Crypt, FREE

**WEDNESDAYS —**  
09.30-13.00, 0-18 months, Comet Children's Centre, Explore with Baby, FREE  
10.00-12.00, under 5s, Queensbridge Leisure Centre, Soft Play, £5  
10.15-11.00 and 11.15-12.00, under 5s, Hackney City Farm, The Frog Prince Music Group, £6 per adult  
13.00-15.00, all ages, Shoreditch Park, Hackney Playbus, FREE

**THURSDAYS —**  
10.00-12.00, under 5s, Queensbridge Leisure Centre, Toddlers World, £5  
10.15-11.00 and 11.15-12.00, under 5s, Hackney City Farm, The Frog Prince Music Group, £6 per adult

**FRIDAYS —**  
09.30-11.30, under 5s, Mapledean Children's Centre, Stay and Play, FREE  
12.00-14.30, Community Cafe in St Peter's Crypt (excellent cheap and delicious food prepared by local volunteers)

**SATURDAYS —**  
11.00, Ripley and Lambert Bookshop, Cartoon Club, FREE

**EVERY DAY —**  
Penguin Cafe on Kingsland Road (cafe with play area)  
Tokonoko, 28 Hertford Road (Japanese cafe with toys)  
Dalston Library and Shoreditch Library  
King Henry's Walk, Community Garden and allotments, membership £10/year  
Barbican U5s, 'Squash Space' is open every day and there's also a children's library, FREE

## Sackcloth to vintage

**I**f you pass by the old Thomas Briggs building at the canal corner of Southgate Road, you may well see Maurice Nugent, the dust-covered owner of 2and4, in his overalls, apron and face mask. Step inside to learn more from the man himself —

Although De Beauvoir Town was planned mainly as a residential area, this large red-and-yellow brick building was built in around 1815 and leased to Thomas Briggs (London) Ltd from 1823. The factory produced canvas, hessian, twines, coffee and sugar sacks, and later became famous as the sole tent maker for Her Majesty's War Office. During World War 2, parachutes and uniforms were also made here.

The building was used as a location for the 1960 film, Never Let Go, starring Peter Sellers, Richard Todd and Adam Faith. Today, it contains a more bohemian mix of artists and designers, and a number of fashion designer and makers.

The main frontage is now Maurice's thriving and vibrant mid-century interiors shop. Maurice studied furniture design at the University of Ulster in Belfast and for many years prior to opening 2and4, he would visit the Thomas Briggs building for metal spinning and fabricating work for his furniture designs. Having fallen in love with the area, he set up an office there in the 1990s and took over the main showroom area in 2008.

Maurice focuses on sourcing and painstakingly restoring items predominantly from 1950s to 1970s



Scandinavia and Britain. As he says, 'Fundamental to everything is choosing items that possess a timeless design and that will fit perfectly into today's homes. More often than not, our furniture is by established designers of the era – familiar names such as Robin Day, Hans Wegner, Joe Colombo and Ernest Race. But what's essential is the restoration process. This brings each item back to its former glory so it's ready for the next generation to enjoy and treasure.'

During his time at 'Thomas Briggs', Maurice has seen the neighbourhood

change dramatically. 'Thankfully, our uniqueness and passion for quality and sustainability have kept us relevant!'

So go into 2and4 some time and have a browse. You can also enjoy homemade cakes and sandwiches in their café area, which adds to the all-round pleasant experience.

Follow 2and4 on Instagram (@2and4vintage) for their latest items and updates.

# Pedestrian and cyclist head to head

Photo credit: Sasha Freemind



**L**iz Kohler believes there are far too many cyclists in and around De Beauvoir who, she believes, ride as if De Beauvoir were their own Tour de Londres Nord-Est. Here I gave Liz the chance to get matters off her chest by writing those cyclists a heated letter —

Dear cyclist,

Why, oh why do you cycle the way you do? You have your dedicated Cycle Superhighway, which I applaud. But many of you seem to forget that there are other road (and pavement – I'll get to that later) users.

**Pedestrian crossings:** The clue is in the name. Traffic light-controlled pedestrian crossings are phased to include a few moments when pedestrians can cross the road. Cyclists have a red light which they should obey while pedestrians cross. It is not reasonable for you to weave among pedestrians crossing the road and swear at anyone you think is 'in your way'. They are entitled to be there.

**Roundabouts, particularly at the junction of Southgate and Northchurch Roads:** There are clear guidelines set out in the Highway Code (sections 184–190) about how to use roundabouts. They don't include the right to cycle straight across the roundabout, heedless of buses or cars.

**Pavements:** These are explicitly for the use of pedestrians. The non-cycling roads around De Beauvoir can be very busy with traffic but it's not for you to decide to ride your bike along the pavements. Or, indeed, your e-scooter, though they're a different threat altogether. Parents of budding cyclists, I appreciate that your offspring need to learn to control their bikes, but you have Cycle Superhighway 1 in De Beauvoir. I know it's often used by cyclists who seem to want to record personal bests on their way to or from work. But challenge them! You should not be teaching your children to ride their bike on the pavement.

**Regent's Canal towpath:** This has been turned into a nightmare by cyclists, especially during commuting hours. Apart from along Andrews Road, there is a cycle lane beside the towpath. It's helpfully marked with white cycles painted on it. The towpath itself displays signs for pedestrian priority.

**Lights, mobile phones and handlebars:** You're supposed to have lights at night, you're not meant to be using your phones and you're supposed to hold the handlebars. You need control.

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## YOU SHOULD NOT BE TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN TO RIDE THEIR BIKE ON THE PAVEMENT

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**Manners:** If a pedestrian gives way to you, say, on the Regent's Canal towpath, it is polite to thank her/him. A couple of weeks ago I nearly fainted from shock when a cyclist thanked me. Let's make thanking the norm not a rarity.

Thanks and best wishes,

A pedestrian

[Ed's note: Shortly after Liz wrote this piece, she tripped and fell badly on the canal towpath. Three people came to help her and one was a cyclist, who stayed with her until he was sure she was able to walk home. Liz now recognises that not all cyclists are bad!]

**A**s the editor, it's my prerogative to give people the right to reply in this newsletter – within reason! So here I've allowed Denise Brewster, a cyclist friend, to write a riposte to Liz Kohler, the pedestrian, who penned the letter on the opposite page —

Dear pedestrian,

I, like you, am often on foot. There's nothing like a good walk to clear the head, journey from A to B and get to know your local area. But I'm also a regular cyclist and if I had one request for pedestrians as I cycle around, it would be, 'Look around you!'

I find it so frustrating. People walking around staring at their devices, like phone zombies, oblivious to their surroundings and their fellow street users. Quite possibly they're doing something useful like using Google Maps to check their location, but I suspect they're actually just checking Instagram. Or phones are clamped to ears; yes, I can see (and hear) that you're having a vital conversation but look out – you've just stepped out into the road without looking and we're going to collide.



Photo credit: Swaminathan Jayaraman

Does anyone remember the Green Cross Code – stop, look and listen? Please take the time to think and find an appropriate and safe place to cross the road. And if you're on a lights-controlled crossing, wait for the green man – that's what he's there for. Why do people randomly step out into the road with a vacant stare, or just not looking at all, and expect me (and other vehicles) to stop for them? What bothers me most is

when people pushing prams do this; you'd think it would make people more cautious, but apparently it doesn't. I have to say, I agree with you on the subject of the Regent's Canal. It's my least favourite place to ride and to be honest I feel safer on a main road. I do so wish other cyclists would stop treating it like a motorway. But I also wish pedestrians would not stop suddenly to take a selfie or squat down right in the middle of the towpath to take an arty photo of some wildfowl. And please turn your headphones down enough so that you can hear me (politely) ringing my bell to alert you to my presence.

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## I ALWAYS TRY TO SAY THANK YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGE PEDESTRIANS AND DRIVERS WHEN THEY DO ME A GOOD TURN

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When it comes to riding on the pavement... I'll admit I've done it on occasion if I'm not confident on a certain stretch of road or when I'm looking for a shortcut. But I promise that next time, I'll set a good example and get off and walk! Not being a parent, I've never tried to teach a child to ride anywhere. But I recently found out you can still get a Cycling Proficiency Certificate. Bikeability offers courses for children and parents that include riding on the road. You can find a local one here: <https://bikeability.org.uk/>. There are cycling courses for adults, too – a friend took one of these to help her riding and next I knew, she'd completed a 47K charity bike ride! Once you learn, it's just like riding a bike, as they say. On the point of manners, I always try to say thank you and acknowledge pedestrians and drivers when they do me a good turn. I think that's just common courtesy. But I'm not afraid to utter the odd expletive when someone does something really stupid, so forgive me if you occasionally see the air turned blue around my bike.

These days everyone seems to be in such a rush, so focussed on their destination that the needs of their fellow travellers go unheeded. Ultimately we all have to share the streets, so let's be more aware of each other and hopefully we'll all get to our destination safely.

Yours in two-wheeled solidarity,

A cyclist

---

P.S. 'The bicycle is just as good company as most husbands and, when it gets old and shabby, a woman can dispose of it and get a new one without shocking the entire community.' (Ann Strong, Minneapolis Tribune, 1895)

# What's on

All events are free unless otherwise stated, subject to space

## March

- 03 7.30pm St Peter's Crypt, Gardeners Club AGM, Seed Swap & Party
- 05 7.30-9.30pm St Peter's Crypt, WI talk about the writer Mary Wollstonecraft, £5
- 24 6.45pm The Scolt Head, Swing Dance Class & Live Music
- 26 7pm De Beauvoir Block, Balloon Debate (see page 4)
- 26 8pm The Scolt Head, Jazz with Peter Werth & Vocalist Irene Serra
- 27 9-11pm Rosemary Branch, Blues with Honey B Mama & Friends
- 31 6.45pm The Scolt Head, Swing Dance Class & Live Music

## April

- 02 7.30-9.30pm St Peter's Crypt, WI talk by Jo's Trust on cervical health, £5
- 02 7.30pm The Scolt Head, Jive Night
- 07 7.30pm St Peter's Crypt, Gardeners Club with Annie Chipchase of Forest Gardens
- 18 (afternoon) St Peter's Crypt, Health & Wellbeing Show
- 24 9-11pm Rosemary Branch, Blues with Honey B Mama & Friends
- 30 8pm The Scolt Head, Jazz with Peter Werth & Vocalist Shane Hampshire

## May

- 03 7.30pm St Peter's Crypt, Gardeners Club with John Little on green roofs & shelters
- 07 7.30-9.30pm St Peter's Crypt, WI 6th Birthday & AGM, £5
- 10 6.00-8.30pm (tbc) St Peter's Church, Spring Music Festival (new DBA event)
- 28 8pm The Scolt Head, Jazz with Peter Werth
- 29 9-11pm Rosemary Branch, Blues with Honey B Mama & Friends

## June

- 02 (provisional) Gardeners Club visit to Aga Khan garden at Kings Cross
- 04 7.30-9.30pm St Peter's Crypt, WI, knitting with Rosina Goodwin, £5
- 25 8pm The Scolt Head, Jazz with Peter Werth
- 25 De Beauvoir Block, Balloon Debate with Vicky Price & Mercy Muroki
- 26 9-11pm Rosemary Branch, Blues with Honey B Mama & Friends

### For more information:

Gardeners Club: [debeauvoirgardeners.org.uk](http://debeauvoirgardeners.org.uk)  
 De Beauvoir WI (women over 18): [debeauvoirwi.com](http://debeauvoirwi.com)  
 Balloon Debate: [debeauvoirdebates.com](http://debeauvoirdebates.com)  
 The Scolt Head events: [thescolthead.co.uk](http://thescolthead.co.uk)  
 Duke of Wellington events: [frontierpubs.co.uk](http://frontierpubs.co.uk)  
 (Rugby, football, film nights and quizzes frequently at the Duke of Wellington and The Scolt Head)

For up-to-date listings of local events, register for our weekly emailed newsletter by clicking the link on our homepage: [debeauvoir.org.uk](http://debeauvoir.org.uk)

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Graduated, with a degree in Fine Art, my artistic practice spans a range of media, incorporating drawing and painting. If you are interested in commissioning a piece of artwork please get in touch via email- [KimberleyPickettART@outlook.com](mailto:KimberleyPickettART@outlook.com)  
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