

A stylized graphic for a park event. The background is a light grey. In the center, there's a large, dark grey silhouette of a tree with many leaves. The words "PARTY IN THE PARK" are written in a large, white, sans-serif font, with "IN THE" in smaller letters between "PARTY" and "PARK". Below the tree, there's a dark grey banner with white text. At the bottom of the graphic, there's a row of stylized buildings with gabled roofs and small windows, some with crosses on their facades. There are also some balloons and a firework-like shape floating around the tree.

PARTY IN THE PARK

Saturday / 7 July 2018 / 2-5pm
De Beauvoir Square

Free entertainment for children and fun for adults too

Face painting, bouncy castle, children's books and toys, magic tricks, a fire engine and police horses (unless they're on call), storytelling, craft activities, tag rugby, brass band, Hackney Dave's limited edition De Beauvoir t-shirts, cakes, savouries, tea and coffee, local beers, Pimms, tombola and raffle.

Dear readers

Welcome to summer, and welcome to the 2018 Party in the Park!

Things are hotting up for the 2018 Party in the Park. Read all about it on page 1 and below. And again on page 4. And yet again on page 8. No one can accuse us of ever letting a good thing go unnoticed!

In other news, as they say, the DBA has recently launched a spanking new website (debeauvoir.org.uk). But we have a problem. We need a website administrator. This would be a great project for a budding young marketing whizz to have on their CV.

Faten Mahmood has built the website using Wix but no previous knowledge is required as it's easy to use. Whoever steps up to the plate will be supported by a team of website moderators and an advertising manager. If you're interested or know someone who might be, please contact info@debeauvoir.org.uk.

A new feature of the website is the opportunity to

Party time again!



buy advertising space, so if you're a local business or entrepreneur, do get in touch. We offer packages to suit all purses. Click the links on the website or email info@debeauvoir.org.uk.

Yet another regular DBA fixture is the weekly email, produced by the DB Newsteam. It goes to around 600 subscribers and offers information about local events, enquiries from De Beauvoirites looking for anything from a cleaner to a dog walker, plus links to local websites that give even more information.

Sadly for us, Sasha Kahn has recently left the DB Newsteam – thanks for all your work to date, Sasha – so we need a second person to help Peter Wake. It takes just an hour or two at the weekend. Without an extra pair of hands, we'll need to move to a bi-weekly or monthly newsletter. We know you all love getting your news in your inbox on Monday mornings (contact us if you're not on our database and would like to be), so that would be a real pity. Please, please help! Thanks!

Hilary Mandleberg

Not only do we have a great new DBA committee this year, but we also have a new team of organisers for the ever-popular Party in the Park. Cec Darker explains what they've been up to over the last few months. Expect more of the same but with a few surprises!

We're delighted to announce that the renowned Party in the Park will be up and running for its fourteenth year in De Beauvoir Square on Saturday 7 July, 2–5pm (see the poster on page 1). You're all welcome, especially children – who must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Entry is free and all the children's activities are free, too, so families can enjoy themselves without breaking the bank.

As last year, the much-loved Majestic Brass Band of the Royal College of Music will be with us, performing foot-tapping delights throughout the afternoon. For the children, we have the usual bouncy castle, and fantastic magician, Chris Nicholson, is back, too. Chris began learning magic from the age of 10 and won his

first award from The Magic Circle when he was just 15 years old. This year he will be performing a host of new tricks to entertain us. Perhaps he'll inspire some of the children to learn magic like he did.

Also back are Lucia Way's group of Mush Arts Face Painters. Lucia was brought up in Mortimer Road, so the Party in the Park has special meaning for her. Get ready to see your child transformed into a wild animal (which many parents think they are already!), a post-apocalyptic monster or a sweet-faced pooch.

New this year to the Party in the Park is Hackney Play Streets. Expect hopscotch and chalk artwork on the pavements of De Beauvoir Square. If crafts are your little one's thing, they will enjoy creating a flower crown and other easy-to-make items that they can take home with them. And if they need some chill time, send them to Kathryn Lowrie's storytelling corner, then they'll have the energy afterwards to play Tag Rugby – also new this year – and other sports. One of the Party's highlights is the free book and toy that we give to every child, subject to availability. We collect these from families in the area whose children have grown out of them and then we redistribute them on the day, creating a virtuous circle that we're really proud of.

For the grownups there's the very popular Pimms stall, tea and cakes provided by the De Beauvoir WI, plus other, new-this-year savoury food offerings. And if you find yourself simply gasping for a beer, the Rosemary Branch pub will have local beers on sale. Also attending the event for our safety (though we know that they also come along because they have a really good time!) are our great local bobbies – Chris Halfhide and Steve Bullock, along with Mo Gani of the De Beauvoir Safer Neighbourhood Team. If we're lucky, they'll bring a couple of police horses, too, which would be a lovely treat. Still on the safety front, we're hoping to have the Fire Brigade with their ever-popular fire engine, and St John Ambulance with 'resusci Annie' for anyone who might like to have a go at first aid.

And, as always, there will be great raffle prizes just waiting to be snapped up, along with hundreds of items to be won in our very affordable tombola. As in previous years, we wish to thank the Benyon Estate for their generosity in sponsoring the event. Without their support, we'd struggle to put on so many amazing activities for the children who live in De Beauvoir and the surrounding area. We look forward to seeing you there and having a great fun community afternoon!

None of the Party in the Park happens by chance. Our team has been working on the planning for months but we still need your help.

We want second-hand children's books and toys for the children's giveaway. Books must be in good condition and toys, games and puzzles must be complete, clean and in working order (no soft toys please). Anything you can give us will be much appreciated. Please telephone 07989 849596 so we can arrange collection, or drop off at 100 Downham Road (donation box in back of driveway if nobody in).

The second-hand book stall is on the lookout for adult books and DVDs, so this is your chance to have the declutter that you've been promising yourself. Drop off at 114 De Beauvoir Road or telephone Richard Turnbull on 07526 921468 for help if collection is needed.

Oh... and lest I forget... tombola prizes are more than welcome, too. For example, bars of soap, bits of jewellery, mugs, homemade jam, vases and any unwanted Christmas or birthday presents. The more the merrier! Again, these can be dropped off at 100 Downham Road.

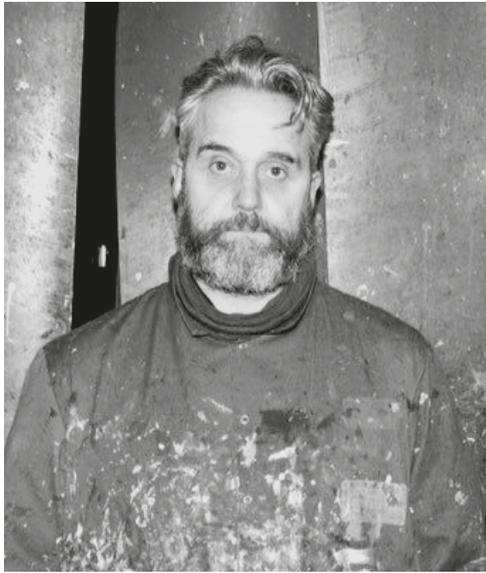
And last but not least, we're looking for volunteers to help on the day. Ideally we'd like a team of people who are strong enough to set up and take down the gazebos, and move tables and chairs.

Plus volunteers to organise a queuing/ticket system for the bouncy castle and the face painting, helpers for the Pimms stall and for the book/toy giveaway.

There are plenty of other jobs, too.

If you're interested, please drop an email to: PartyintheParkDBA@gmail.com and let us know if there's anything in particular you'd like to help us with.

Limited edition man



George Dennison loves connecting with local characters. This time around, he interviews local artist, David Buonavuidi – Guido to his friends. If everything goes to plan, you might be able to bag one of David's limited edition T-shirts at the Party in the Park.

George: Why do you like maps?

David: I love maps because they're hugely emotive. They're where we are from and where we are at, and that creates a very powerful connection. They're also very beautiful, tactile objects that are sadly obsolete now that Google maps has arrived. The colours and original artwork of maps are so complex and detailed, and originally would have been done by hand. I love that. I've been obsessed with maps for a long time now, and I love the idea of upcycling them, taking them out of boxes under the stairs and getting them up in frames on the walls.

George: Why do you like De Beauvoir?

David: I love De Beauvoir because I've lived here for so long. I used to go to the cinema at the end of Stamford

Road many years ago. De Beauvoir was a bit run-down and scrappy when I first moved here, but it has that fantastic mix of industrial space, modern blocks and handsome town houses, and it nestles snugly between such amazing diverse areas. And now that the whole area has flourished, De Beauvoir has come into its own.

George: If you had to do life again what would you do differently?

David: I would do it exactly the same. Hindsight is bullshit.

George: Why screen printing not digital?

David: Screen printing has a beautiful life to it. We're living in a very digital world, which can be a bit clean and clinical and soulless. For me, screen printing is analogue and 'dirty'. I did the one-day printing course up at Print Club London, just off Arcola Street, and without sounding too dramatic, it changed my life. I work in marketing and advertising, a business that is very slow and where it costs a lot to do anything. Screen printing is very liberating because it's fast and things happen along the way that you have little control over. I love that looseness of process.

George: What fills you with joy?

David: Obviously, my children fill me with joy! But riding my nasty motorbike down Kingsland Road on a hot and balmy Thursday night is just incredible, like riding through a live experiential event.

George: What makes you want to puke?

David: I hate selfishness and I hate angry people.

Calling all bakers

The WI always lays on a splendid spread of cakes (Violet Bakery eat your heart out!) and savouries at the DBA's annual Party in the Park. And we turn in a good profit, too, which is great for the charities supported by the event. If you fancy having a bake (and don't worry, you don't need 100 Amalfi lemons), please email debeauvoirbakes@gmail.com.

De Beauvoir crimewatch

Kate McFarlane has been chatting to our wonderful Safer Neighbourhood officers, Steve Bullock and Mo Gani. Meet them at the Party in the Park on Saturday 7 July. But meanwhile, be sure to follow their security advice this summer.

According to Steve and Mo, while mobile phone thefts are down from last year, burglaries have increased. We should be vigilant, particularly over the summer months, when we're all inclined to leave windows and patio doors open. Even windows left open at first-floor level are inviting, and high garden walls are no deterrent to these agile young crooks. And to show just how crafty these chaps are, Steve and Mo demonstrated something rather disturbing. They locked Kate's front door from the outside (good-quality Yale lock) but, using only a thin piece of plastic, Steve was able to open the door in no more than 25 seconds. It's a trick that's used extensively... cutting a piece of plastic from a drinks bottle, sliding it between the door and the architrave and, thanks to the plastic's flexibility, working it backwards around the architrave to push back the latch of the lock almost soundlessly. And goodness me! You can even buy special pieces of plastic to do the job on Amazon!

So how to avoid this happening to you? Barry's Locks on Southgate Road recommend fitting a British Standard

Deadlocking Nightlatch (they suggest ERA 193 or Yale PBS1), which ensures that when the door is closed, the main bolt is automatically deadlocked and prevented from being retracted. You should also have a second, bottom lock, which should be a 5-lever British Standard deadlock with a Kite mark on the face plate (e.g. Union J2100S or Union 3G114E). When it comes to windows, fit sash stops, which allow windows to be opened slightly but prevent opportunists from opening them completely. If you have casement windows, Barry's Locks recommend using Jac locks. Like sash stops, these allow ventilation on hot days but prevent the window from opening fully.

Finally, Steve and Mo recommend keeping your front door closed at all times, even if you're at home or in the garden. And always use both front door locks when you go out. Help keep De Beauvoir safe!



Summer holiday Hackney Playbus sessions

Thanks to the DBA's Young People's Community Fund, and to the church for providing the space, the Hackney Playbus is stopping by at St Peter's Crypt.

Who for? Children aged 0 to 8 years and their carers are invited to free 'Stay & Play' sessions.

When? Thursdays in August (2, 9, 16 and 23 August) from 1pm to 3pm.

Where? St Peter's Crypt, Northchurch Terrace, N1 4DA.

So if you're a carer for children in this age group and are wondering how you'll ever get through the summer holidays, be sure to put these dates in your diary.

Hats off to Justin Smith



‘When you invite a hat into your life, it can transform your mood, change an outfit, become part of you, and adapt to you. You grow together.’ These are the words of Justin Smith, aka J Smith Esquire, whose exciting new shop is starting to take shape on Southgate Road. Becky Colls was intrigued, so she ventured out to discover more.

What Justin Smith is bringing to Southgate Road will be something completely unique to De Beauvoir – a hat shop, bespoke millinery workshop, showroom and hair salon all rolled into one.

All the hats for sale will have been made on the premises by Justin Smith, one of the top milliners in the country. Justin is known for blending hats with sculpture; perhaps one of his most recognisable headpieces was worn by Angelina Jolie in *Maleficent*. (Google it; copyright prevents us from showing it!)

So why in De Beauvoir? Well, this area has a rich history of hat-making, so when the premises came up, Justin,

who lives locally, jumped at the chance to move his business there. ‘I’m very keen to bring hat-making back to one of its original strongholds,’ he declared. Each hat is made by hand from start to finish. Whether sewn, knitted, embroidered, painted or sculpted, inspired by origami or animals, or by burlesque or English gent, whether made from silver wire or even – as once happened – by tattooed pigskin, it will be lovingly made to order in Justin’s Southgate Road workshop.

It’s perhaps fitting that Justin started out as an avant garde hairdresser for Toni and Guy; initially he only studied millinery so he could become a better hairdresser. But he fell in love with hats and hasn’t looked back since ‘Hats fell out of favour because of the rise of the “hairstyle”’, Justin explained. ‘As wearing your hair in a particular style became fashionable, so hat-wearing became less fashionable.’

However all that is beginning to change and, according to Justin, ‘the more stylish a person is, the more likely they are to wear a hat.’ Now there’s a challenge!

But I don’t suit hats!

Justin believes that there’s no such thing as people who



Loren Golden Headdress

don’t suit hats; they just haven’t found the right hat yet. As he says, ‘the right hat completes an outfit and frames the wearer’s face.’

One of the aspects of his job that he loves most is getting a nervous hat wearer excited and joyful when they try on a hat that looks good on them. Justin makes each hat to fit his customer’s physical features perfectly, so the proportions of brim to chin are just so. He also takes time to find out when the hat will be worn. ‘I start with the individual, their style, tastes and so on. Then there’s the context. For example, is it for an occasion? And, if the client already has an outfit, I’m informed by that . . . however, most of my clientele like to start with the hat, and then find an outfit to match!’

One client that did it the other way round was Amal Clooney, who wore one of Justin’s creations at her civil wedding ceremony at Palazzo Cavalli in Venice (Google time!)

According to Justin, clients are becoming braver when it comes to wearing hats. ‘People are now wearing hats more often. Men are growing more experimental and women are often very happy to wear men’s hats. In the same way that style-conscious women have been ordering hats for years, I’m seeing an upsurge in men ordering unique, bespoke pieces that simply won’t go out of style – and they’re ordering for themselves.’

Craft and artistry combine

But it’s not just that hat wearers are getting bolder about making a statement; Justin’s clients are drawn to the craftsmanship and artistry that goes into every single hat he makes. ‘I passionately believe in upholding the traditions of millinery, and as a milliner, I have to draw on a multitude of approaches. Each headpiece requires a different approach or set of techniques, from flat-pattern caps, to hats requiring the fundamental millinery skill of blocking, to creating sculptures or jewellery designed for the head.’

So, watch out for J Smith Esq, making and showcasing some of the most exciting and high-quality hats it’s possible to buy, right here on Southgate Road. The premises will be fully open in the next couple of months, signage is going up in the next few weeks, then anyone with an interest in commissioning a hat can make an appointment and see the great hat-maker himself.

Perhaps it isn’t the first thing you might have planned to do on a Saturday afternoon in De Beauvoir, but on the other hand, why the hell not? As Justin points out, a hat has the power to elevate a person’s look to ‘iconic status’. After all, he says, ‘everyone suits a hat. They just need to be united with the right one.’



Astaire Panama top hat

Your WI: Mind, body and soul —

We all know that having friends and making social connections is good for our health. So now it's time to realise that your local WI isn't just about making jam and cakes – though keen members do a fair bit of that. Here are five reasons why joining the WI will be good for your health.

1. Fun, friendship and a sense of belonging: WI members from all walks of life and all ages come together in a spirit of female friendship, bringing with them their varied life experiences. Our De Beauvoir WI is a place where inter-generational friendships are formed and where you can always find support if you need it.

2. Crafting for wellbeing: We run a knit and crochet group, sewing projects and (of course!) jam-making workshops. So come along to learn how, or to hone your existing skills. We've also had meetings about pottery, cake icing, découpage, felting, mono printing and creating posies. You'll no doubt be aware of media stories about the meditative effects of crafting and of how engaging in a craft project helps us to be more mindful, so join us and see for yourself. We've even dedicated one of our meetings to mindfulness!

3. Engaging the brain, continuing to learn: You're sure to find something to keep the grey matter in tip-top condition. Recent meetings have covered the history of Hackney and De Beauvoir, gin and vice in Georgian London, the art of millinery (see pages 6–7), the work of the Fawcett Society, the Women's Equality Party, the East London Artists' Group, jewellery through the ages, historical dress, the circular economy, aromatherapy, rolfing, and the art of perfumery. Meetings on the horizon include fruit farming, the changing face of Hackney, and our challenging annual quiz. We also run a monthly book group, visit exhibitions and the theatre, go on local history walks, and organise trips to places such as Bletchley Park.

4. Campaigning for change, making a difference: As well as supporting the UK-wide WI campaigns – which have included resolutions on organ donation, plastic soup, alleviating loneliness, dementia care, and food waste and food poverty – we raise money for local charities, most recently for De Beauvoir Welcomes Refugees. Through our relationship with Solace Women's Aid, we collect donations of vital items for women and children fleeing domestic violence, and we also help once a month at St Peter's Community Cafe, which offers low-cost, home-cooked lunches every Friday

during term time. And you'll probably have seen us running the tea and cake stall at the DBA's annual Party in the Park, much of whose profits have recently been donated to local projects for young people.

5. Keeping physically active: We run a walking group once a month in the summer, discovering or revisiting areas around London, plus last summer a group of us walked from Birling Gap to Beachy Head – a total of around 23,000 steps each. Our monthly meetings have also given us the opportunity to try our hand (or should that be feet?) at belly dancing, Bollywood, lindy hop, hula hooping, burlesque and dancing the Charleston. Or, if that's a bit too energetic for you, less demanding activities have included a darts night, 10-pin bowling and vicious Snap!



We have a free-to-attend summer social on the first Thursday of every August, so come along to check us out on Thursday 2 August in the back room of the Scolt Head. Or say hello at the Party in The Park on Saturday 7 July. We meet on the first Thursday of every month in the Crypt of St Peter's. Full details at www.debeauvoirwi.com

De Beauvoir gardens walkabout

If you aren't a member of the De Beauvoir Gardeners, then join up quick. As well as having fascinating talks and group outings throughout the year, every summer they also invite members on an early-evening tour around some of De Beauvoir's lovely private gardens.

This year's garden walkabout takes place on Friday 29 June, 5–9pm.

You'll get to meet the owners and ask them questions about their gardens, and, as a bonus, the evening will end with a glass of wine at the last garden of the walk.

This year, one of the highlights will be our second visit to the allotments on the De Beauvoir Estate. Twenty raised beds with a variety of gorgeous fresh veg proved such a success when they were constructed and planted last year that the plot has now been extended. We're really looking forward to seeing it again.

We've also been promised a look at two redesigned and newly planted gardens, plus a couple of lovingly tended well-established outdoor spaces. Hopefully all of these gorgeous and unique local gardens will give you ideas for your own humble plot.

Contact De Beauvoir Gardeners dbgardeners@gmail.com for further details.

The De Beauvoir community café needs you

The volunteer team running the De Beauvoir Community Café works tirelessly to provide home-cooked lunches every Friday in St Peter's Crypt, 12–2:30 during school term times.

Have you eaten there already? If not, be sure to get along and enjoy one of their meals.

There's always a vegetarian choice and sometimes a vegan one.

Everyone is welcome and prices are extremely reasonable. Or you can make a small donation, or not pay anything at all if money is tight. The Community Café does a great job of bringing people of all ages together, not just for delicious food, but for the social interaction. But, as with all these lovely community groups, the Café always needs more volunteers to help with cooking and serving. You don't have to make a huge commitment but please just think whether you could occasionally cook one course, bake a cake, make a pud, or help to serve lunch every few months. It's not a huge amount of work and it's so worthwhile.

Please do get in touch if you'd like to be involved, either as a cook or a server, by emailing (debeauvoir.community.cafe@gmail.com). It's a great way to meet neighbours and other local people – and you get a good meal at the end as an extra reward!



Left to right: Jacqui James, Jacquie Campbell and Lynn Brooks serving lunch

Celebrating the organ at St Peter's



Blowing one of the lead pipes

The church of St Peter de Beauvoir is a landmark, familiar even if you never venture inside. The organ that accompanies Sunday services is a rather historic instrument. And to celebrate its survival and refurbishment, St Peter's is inviting everybody to a celebration concert on Saturday 30 June. Peter Day tells the story of the organ . . . and why it matters.

As London rapidly expanded in the mid 1800s, developers built their new suburbs around a square, a church and a school. St Peter De Beauvoir was erected in 1841, a beacon for the De Beauvoir estate. The school was in the crypt below. Forty years later, the church was extended with a chancel at the east end, curiously in Romanesque style with round arches. The main body of the church is pointy-arched Gothic Revival, inspired by a style that actually replaced the Romanesque tradition. Back-to-front architectural history, you might say.

The organ arrives

Part of the 1884 addition was the new organ, positioned on the south side of the chancel so that most members of the congregation don't see it, they

just hear it. The mid-Victorian Church of England was still under the sweeping influence of the Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement. In that tradition, the organ's main role was to accompany the choir at the front of the church, not stand out in its own right.

The organ was built by the London firm of JW Walker. The firm is still in existence, now based in Suffolk and Wiltshire. The business was 'one of the better Victorian builders', according to St Peter's hired consultant, William McVicker. After examination of the instrument, McVicker determined that it is largely unaltered from the original, although four stops were added in 1974. This later work, he said, was done in sympathy with the original instrument.

McVicker's verdict on the St Peter's organ was heartening: 'The whole instrument is delightful,' he wrote. 'The instrument seems relatively old-fashioned for its date. It represents one of the last gasps of English conservatism in organ building, representative of the kind of organ built by builders most of whose businesses did not ultimately survive and who failed to modernise successfully in the final quarter of the nineteenth century.' And he summed up: 'The survival of the St Peter's organ is therefore to be cherished.'

Casual visitors agree with this assessment. One of them – quite recently – was Brian Gill. He is a Scottish

law lord who was visiting a friend in De Beauvoir. He is also a keen organist, who happens to be chairman of the Royal School of Church Music – the influential body which promotes church musicianship and training. Brian Gill sat down at the organ, and when he played it, he liked what he heard. 'All it needs is a little tender loving care,' he said. But who would provide that? St Peter's already had an embryo project to restore the organ, inspired by money donated by the late Michael Haines, a prominent De Beauvoir resident and former treasurer at the church. But every expert called in to advise on the restoration had different ideas . . . and each idea had a different price tag.

Lord Gill's advice provided the significant nudge that was needed. Don't do a large-scale rebuild of such an unchanged instrument: clean it up, rectify the worn-out mechanical parts, make it fit for another 50 years, but don't radically alter this significant survival.

A legacy makes it all possible

But even a modest restoration needs skilled expertise and costs thousands of pounds. It is only a few years since St Peter's raised a big chunk of money to refashion the crypt into a community meeting place. Money-raising like this takes much oomph from volunteers, so another big fund-raising campaign so soon after the one for the crypt was difficult to contemplate.

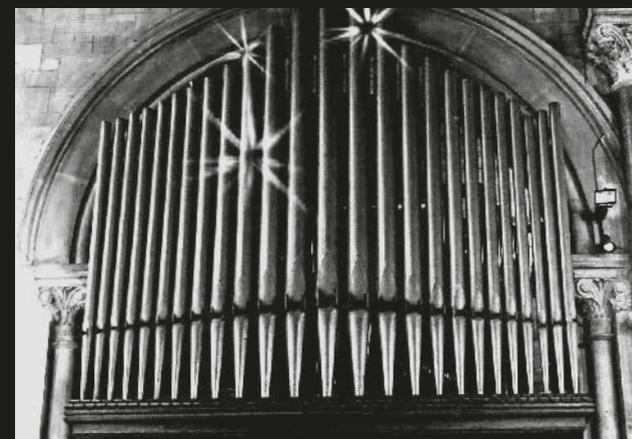
But then, quite by chance, Albert Hustwayte, a long-standing member of the congregation, left St Peter's a significant amount of money in his will. This made it possible for the TLC to be administered, by the Hampshire-based firm Organ Design.

The work takes time and craftspersonship. Each sound has a separate pipe or reed and the St Peter's organ has 1,090 of them. Each one had to be removed and cleaned, and some needed specialist attention where the fairly soft metal had worn away.

The pipes are connected to the keyboards and the pedalboards to the trackers, each of which needed fiddly attention. The keyboards were sent off to another specialist for refurbishment, including replacement of the ivory keys by plastic ones. Using elephant ivory is now illegal, so this work was essential. 'But it's like a set of new dentures,' mourned regular St Peter's organist, Romee Day, rather regretfully.

It took months to complete the work but the refurbished organ is now set up for decades more service. And to mark the re-emergence of something that can be regarded as a De Beauvoir landmark, St Peter's is holding a celebration concert – a community event to which everyone is invited (see below for details).

St Peter's De Beauvoir Town, Saturday 30 June, 6pm – Come and celebrate!



Whether you're a churchgoer or not, hear St Peter's 'new' organ in action with an hour of ear-catching music played by Stuart Whatton, organist, Peter Wright, trumpeter, and St Peter's Choir.

Reception afterwards in the Crypt.

This is not a fund-raiser, but a chance to say thank you for the community effort.

Join our celebration but to help us with the planning, let us know you're coming:
office@stpeterdebeauvoir.org.uk

10 cooking hacks

We're lucky to have Emma Middleton, who trained at Leith's Cooking School and has worked all over the place, including a stint as Head Chef at Ottolenghi. Never backwards in coming forwards, I asked her for some cooking hacks to inspire us this summer. Here's the result. Thanks Emma!

1. White sauce

To make large quantities of white sauce without standing at the stove stirring for hours, you cook the flour and butter in a small pan until it no longer tastes floury, while at the same time heating the milk in another pan to just below boiling. Then stir or whisk the butter mix into the milk. The mixture will thicken quickly, without any lumps. You can then add whatever flavourings you want as normal.

2. Cooking onions

In almost every dish, if you take time to properly prep and cook the onions, you'll totally elevate the whole thing. Slice or chop the onions as small/thinly as you can. Heat the pan with the oil/butter so that the onions sizzle slightly when you put them in. Stir to coat them in the fat and then reduce the temperature to low – meaning really low. Cook the onions for as long as you've got.

3. Perfect eggs

Everyone has their own way of cooking eggs but this is a great way of cooking them to medium runny in large quantities. Put the eggs in cold water and bring to the boil. Once the water is boiling, time them for 4 minutes. Immediately remove them from the pan and either crack them straight away for dippy eggs or run them under cold water for a few minutes.

4. Leftover avocado

I have literally no idea what the science behind this is. If you leave the stone in a cut avocado, it stops it going brown. So, when making a guacamole or avocado salad, keep a stone in the bowl until you are ready to serve.

5. Cutting cabbage

For finely sliced cabbage, roll the leaves (you can roll a few together), then slice thinly with a serrated knife.

Recipe bonus: A great way of cooking cabbage for a salad is to throw the cabbage ribbons into a really hot frying pan (no oil) so they get slightly burned at the

edges. Then squeeze in a lemon, some salt and dried mint. So simple but tastes amazing!

6. Cooking rice

My Brazilian kitchen porter at Ottolenghi taught me this method and I've been using his technique ever since. Start by frying the uncooked rice with olive oil and chopped garlic for a couple of minutes. Add 1.5 parts boiling water for every 1 part rice. Cook on low heat for 10–15 minutes and remember, don't lift the lid until the time's up! You can check quickly after 10 minutes but if there's still water in the pan, quickly put the lid back on.

7. Pepper

I don't only add pepper to a dish at the end of the cooking but earlier, too, using it as a spice as well as a garnish.

8. Ceramic knives

I'm fairly inept at sharpening knives – although I still have a steel to sharpen the knives at table side so I can show off when I'm carving. Ceramic knives have changed my life. If you manage not to drop them (they'll shatter if you do), they'll stay sharp forever.

9. Roast your veg

This is an Ottolenghi thing and has changed the way I cook. I roast pretty much all my vegetables – mushrooms, sweet corn, artichokes, and so on – in a tray, and coat with olive oil. Put them in a really hot oven and if they are a fast-cooking veg like sweet corn, heat the tray with the oil first, then add the veg. You can cook them for about the same time that you would boil them. Resist opening the oven too often as the temperature will drop and you won't get the delicious crispy bits you're looking for.

Recipe bonus: For a rather superior cauliflower cheese, pre-roast your cauliflower as described above – as well as your leeks, garlic and hard herbs (rosemary, thyme, bay), if they're your thing. That way you avoid soggy veg and get beautifully browned and crispy ones.

10. Fresh herbs

This is another Ottolenghi trick. Finish your dishes (especially salads) with chopped, fresh herbs – and use about double what you're used to. Not only do they make the dish look pretty, they improve the taste. And you don't need to chop them fine or pick the leaves first – just slice up the whole bunch and throw it in.