

# ROADS: CRUCIAL VOTE ON WEDNESDAY

# De Beaver

No 20 APRIL 1975

THIS ISSUE - No. 20 - ends De Beaver's second great decade. We first appeared four years ago in May 1971 and believe we are the longest surviving community newspaper in London - possibly the country.



## SPARKS FLY

New Town tenants are up in arms over the withdrawal of a service that enabled them to pay off-peak central heating charges with the monthly rent.

What infuriates them most, apart from the total lack of consultation, is the arrival of two letters, one from LEB and the other - two weeks later - from Hackney Council, each blaming the other for withdrawing the service on March 31.

The estate's two tenants associations have written to the council complaining that the withdrawal of the budget charging method is a change in the tenancy agreement, and pressing for a meeting with LEB and the council.

DURING THE FIRST nine months of the experimental road closures the accident toll on the roads affected fell by 37 per cent. This represents a saving to the community of an estimated £32,500 at today's prices, which is likely to rise to £40,000 when figures for the full year (up to April) are known.

In Downham Road accidents fell from 10 in the equivalent nine months before, to three after the closures.

And on De Beauvoir Road the drop was from five to four. In Northchurch Road, previously with a bad accident record, there have been none. Next Wednesday, April 23, the whole of the De Beauvoir general improvement scheme will be debated by the full council, who in 1972 approved the plan with only one vote against the principle of road closures. Today the situation is different, and it seems likely that some votes may be cast against the permanent road closures.

Surprisingly, it is not the cost of the scheme which is in question - most of the money has already been allocated, in principle, from government funds.

Objectors to the scheme say all its benefits are for the Old Town residents only, mainly at the expense of the New Town.

## Tenants back scheme

But the main purpose of the road closures - which members may overlook since it is not highlighted in the officers' reports - is to create open space and play areas in a part of Hackney severely deprived of them, from which all residents of De Beauvoir - including council tenants in the New Town and Lockner Road and their children - will benefit.

Most New Town residents realise this very well, since their two associations - the New Town Tenants' Association and the 1972 Tenants' Association - have recently passed

resolutions backing the road closure.

Few councillors outside the area will be aware of these crucial resolutions. They will certainly have heard of the 800 strong petition last September opposing the closures, but may not know that many of the signatories were led to believe they were petitioning for something quite different - the additional closure of De Beauvoir and Downham roads, which the council has always refused to consider.

The closure of these two roads was pressed by many people who filled in questionnaires at the council exhibition on the improvement scheme held in the Crypt in January, for it is these two roads which have always divided the New Town and separated the New Town from the Old Town,

## 75% vote Yes

Now their nature is more obvious, yet a council survey has shown that noise levels have not increased perceptibly. Unfortunately, although the council did do 'before and after' noise surveys, they only did an 'after' traffic flow survey, with only 1970 figures available for comparison.

Even so, as visitors to the exhibition saw, traffic flows in Downham and De Beauvoir do not appear to have increased dramatically (and this is borne out by the noise survey), and Downham Road is still way below what Englefield Road was putting up with in 1970.

More than three-quarters of the people replying to the questionnaire gave an unqualified 'yes' to the road closures, which includes the narrowing of Downham and De Beauvoir roads to discourage through traffic, and the provision of safe crossings. Over 85 per cent approved of the Southern Area proposals.

The fact is that most people - and not just a handful of owner-occupiers - want the scheme to go through, and have said so when given an opportunity.

## Public debate at the Crypt

Other schemes nearby show the value placed on road closures - Islington's Marquess Road estate and their plans for the Scott estate, and Hackney's Albion Square. The accident figures speak for themselves. The re-routed commuters may think twice about driving to work.

## The cost of a No

If the roads are reopened, a heavy crop of accidents - especially in St. Peter's Way (beside Lockner Rd flats), Northchurch Terrace and Road - is one likely result, as elderly people and children are suddenly subjected to through traffic again.

Perhaps most important of all, yet most likely to get overlooked, is that without the planned road closures, there is just no way of creating the open space De Beauvoir needs so badly. The council is in fact committed to providing 3.3 acres, but even with the space created by the closures this will not be reached.

This important social amenity, and the money and resources put into the scheme by council officers and residents by providing public debate at all stages, must not be thrown away at the eleventh hour.

JEREMY HAMAND

## Action against Period Mirrors

Hackney Council have voted to take legal proceedings against Period Mirrors at 115 De Beauvoir Road for carrying on unauthorised business activities and having an unauthorised extension, in a house scheduled for residential use.

As pointed out in De Beaver last June,



or 115 De Beauvoir Rd is a smart end-of-terrace house which could easily provide houses for even three couples families. At present it is used as a house and workshop. The council allowed them to install blown industries, which cases not only the housing space but also the house and workshop.

Period Mirrors have been occupying premises that could house at least two families and using them as a furniture workshop and warehouse. The business itself is not a particularly offensive one, but housing stock is being wasted, and as we said last June, 'give 'em an inch...! Well done, Hackney Council - we're sorry we doubted you.

## Opening with...

THE CONVENTIONAL frosty and silent image generally associated with libraries is in for a bashing when the new Rose Lipman Library and community hall in Downham Road is opened at the end of May.

A two-week programme of events leading up to the official opening on June 12 includes a judo/karate display (June 3), a trad jazz session (June 5) and a music hall evening (June 6).

The fortnight's festivities will get off to a bang with a balloon race (May 27) with book tokens for prizes, and there will be a children's painting exhibition and pottery making displays (May 29). For the kids and grown-ups there will be film shows (May 29) and Captain "Alligator" Edwards and his animals (May 30). The Sidewalk Theatre will do separate shows for younger and older children (June 3), and Free Form will be performing "Mundo McFee", a play for the kids (June 7). All these details are provisional, so readers should look out for publicity about the opening events nearer the date. With the opening of the new library itself the prefab branch in Englefield Road will be closed and its stock and staff transferred to the modern building.

FRANK FLETCHER

## ... a bang

The new library opening events presents a challenge to the newly formed De Beauvoir Community Association, which will have the job of running local community projects. At its inaugural meeting the committee, which consists of residents from the New Town and co-opted members from the De Beauvoir Association, plus representatives from the library and ILEA, elected Mr. W. Richmond chairman, Mrs. Newill vice-chairman, Mr. R. Minton treasurer and Mrs. Chris Crowfoot secretary. The new committee has already fixed a sports day for June 21 and a date for the New Town summer fair (September 20). There are to be two summer outings for the kids (one in July to Wickstead, and one in August to Walton-on-the-Naze.) One outing to Eastbourne for the grown-ups has also been fixed for July 10. Anyone willing to help, or who has suggestions for future activities should contact Chris Crowfoot at 4 St. Lawrence Court, Downham Road (254-6996).

## Dept of the Obvious:

ELDERLY PREFER TV TO BEING MUGGED, SAYS WEITZMAN

HACKNEY GAZETTE

## CONDEMNED

Hackney Council have declared 307-313 Kingsland Road as a clearance area. But these four houses squeezed in front of Quebec Wharf on Kingsland Basin have been listed as of architectural importance. GLC and government permission are awaited before demolition of these allegedly unfit properties.

## TRUST IN CIRCLE 33

DE BEAUVOIR TRUST, the local housing association run since 1969 entirely by local volunteers, has merged with the much larger Circle 33 Housing Trust, which has more than 1,000 tenants and employs a staff of 40. The decision was taken after two meetings open to all De Beauvoir Trust tenants.

De Beauvoir Trust opened its first modernized house - 108 De Beauvoir Road - in October 1970, and since then had provided 50 fully modernized homes in the area. Most were used for rehousing residents of De Beauvoir from sub-standard conditions.





WHEN THOMAS FARMER takes his family for a Sunday drive, they don't bundle into a car and whizz out of town. They climb aboard an elegant carriage and clip clop leisurely round the streets of De Beauvoir, using Susie the piebald for horsepower.

On Easter Monday, 12 of them drove to Regents Park to enter the horse parade with their three-year-old pony - and won a 1st class award. Mr. Farmer bought Susie for £50 at Southall market as a pet for his 11-year-old son Tom and daughter Kerry, 9. She lives in a stable behind their Downham Rd home, surrounded by the lorries that long ago replaced the horses of his transport business.

The children ride her, but Mr. Farmer is too heavy, so he bought a dilapidated trolley from a greengrocer and transformed it into a shiny yellow showpiece.

**MOBILE FORGE**

When Susie needs shoeing, it is no problem. Blacksmiths may be a dying breed, but Ernie Layton has a forge behind the Sussex in Culford Road where he shoes horses used by greengrocers, coal merchants and dealers for £4. a set.

There aren't many horses left in Hackney, so at 65 Mr. Layton has had to become a travelling blacksmith with a mobile forge. He gets up at 4.30 am and drives to

**(((SPEEDBUSTED)))**

Hackney's 'speedbus' project has been dropped. Evelyn Denington, the GLC's transport committee chairman, said that though the plan for a speedbus route from Hackney and De Beauvoir to the West End could provide substantial benefits to passengers, it involved rerouting other traffic and threw up "unacceptable environmental disadvantages".

Once again, Hackney transport loses out. No tube, reduced Dalston rail service and, now, no speedbus.

**Thomas Farmer & loving Susie**

Knightsbridge, Welwyn Garden City and Epping to hammer out shoes for all the horses in the riding stables that have restored life to his trade.

Mr. Layton has been shoeing horses for 50 years, using traditional methods handed down from his grandfather.

His younger brother was a blacksmith too until he won the pools. He nearly didn't get his share of the syndicate's £23,000 win because the person who posted the syndicate's coupon in her name ran off with the money. By the time the rest of the group tracked her down she had bought herself a bungalow in Devon.

**BID TO IMPROVE REPAIR SYSTEM**

TWO LOCAL councillors, Eileen Cox and Stuart Weir, asked for a report on the system for carrying out repairs to council homes in the De Beauvoir area at the first meeting of Hackney's South West District Tenants' Liaison Committee.

The two councillors described how Cherbury Court, the district housing office, processed complaints from tenants and said there was no automatic follow-up. If tenants failed to complain again when repairs went undone, then they would be neglected. Mr. Philip Turner, Hackney's housing manager, agreed to prepare a report for the next meeting of the tenants' liaison committee.

**Concerned**

Tenants' representatives from the New Town Estate's TA and 1972 Committee attended the meeting, which is the first to be called. But Mr. Reg Crowfoot, secretary of the 1972 Committee, is concerned that tenants of council-owned properties in the "old town" are not represented on the committee. Nor are the two "old town" estates, Kingsgate and Lockner Road, as neither estate has a community association.

Stuart Weir has written to Cllr. Lily Karpin, Hackney's housing chairman, to ask if a way can be found for tenants in single houses bought by the council to be represented on the liaison committee. Mr. Crowfoot and the three councillors will also be leafleting the Kingsgate and Lockner Road estates to try and set up representative associations on them.

**Whitmore Bridge**

Hackney's planning committee has put back the plan to strengthen and widen Whitmore Bridge from this year's estimate "to a future year" - but it is likely to be put into the programme for 1976-77.

This is part of the council's general cutback on spending to keep this year's rate increase down. Meanwhile, the planning committee has accepted an offer from the British Waterways Board of £2,600 for maintaining the canal bridge, which links De Beauvoir with Shoreditch.

The campaign to persuade the authorities not to widen the bridge goes on, despite the Dept. of Environment's decision not to give it listed building protection.

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# PEOPLE

BRIAN GHIRAWOO was a happy hotel administrator until he sat down to think about the kind of people he was providing a service for. "They were rich and overstuffed and they didn't need me." He threw in the job and became a Community Service Volunteer.

Through the Easter holidays Brian has been working as a playleader on the Ufton Rd adventure playground with CLIVE PLEDGER and TERESA ROGOYSKA. He'll stay there until July, when he starts a course on aftercare work at Southampton University.

Clive, a 22-year-old sapper of the Royal Engineers, is on release from the army. His troop officer picked him out when Community Service Volunteers asked for temporary help on playgrounds all over the country. He's ordered a lorry load of army stores to equip the playground with tools and nails and paint and he's planning to take the kids to watch banger racing in Hertford, where he helped to start a club.

Clive joined the army to become a pilot, but at 6ft 2½ he was half an inch too tall for the job and they made him a heavy goods driver instead. He's been in the army for three of the nine years he signed up for and he's off to Germany with them in August.

Teresa, 26, left the playground at the end of the holidays to start her first teaching job - at Woodberry Down School. She plans to teach history in termtime and work on adventure playgrounds in the holidays.



MICK SHEA, of 14 Portelet Court, has been trying to organise a youth club on the New Town estate since he arrived from Tower Hamlets a year ago. It's been a long hard slog.

With Ron Richmond, of 1 Rozel Court, he made a football pitch out of a sacred grass patch on the estate and some spirited matches were played by the De Beauvoir '74 Club until Hackney Council came along and chopped down the goal posts. The No Ball Games rule had been defied.

Mick felt like giving up but he remembered that when he was making the pitch one of the lads had come up to him and said 'It won't all fall through, will it? We've been waiting six years for someone like you to come along and organise things.'

The lad was 17-year-old Steve Newill, now a committee member of the new community association. Mick and Ron slogged on, collecting five tons of waste paper to buy £100 worth of football equipment. Now they are planning a sponsored rubbish collection on the estate to raise more money for karate, table tennis, squash and other activities

Their hopes as high as Lanresse Court, these are the three under-18 representatives on the committee. Left to right: Steve Newill (17) of 35 Fermain Court, Paul Slaughter (17) of 59 Fermain Court, and Douglas McGlinn (16), of 10 Corbiere House.

planned for the community centres. Says Mick: "Vandalism has got worse round here since the council stopped us playing organised football, but when the centre opens I hope things will change."

Mick is a self-confessed ex-Villain and he reckons his murky past helps him to get through to tough kids on the estate.

"When I tell them what it's like to be held in a detention centre for three months they know I'm talking from firsthand experience."

And one of the first visitors to the centre is expected to be Sgt. Bill Payne, the Home Beat Officer from City Road Police Station. "I've asked him to come along with his broken-nosed heavies (ex-criminals turned straight) to see if they can turn our lads off villainy."

Hackney Chess Club are looking for volunteers to provide transport for disabled people who want to learn chess.

Committee member Charles Payne is hoping to teach members of Hackney Social Club for the Blind when they get their braille boards, and he says other handicapped people in the area would love to play if they could depend on a regular lift to and from the library in Dalston Lane at 7.30 and 10.30 one evening a week.

If anyone can help, contact Mr. Payne (985-6229) or Mr. J. Maynard at 57 Lanresse Court (254-4127).

**Beaver** 136 SOUTHGATE ROAD N1 is a FREE community newspaper for the people of De Beauvoir - old and new towns. We are sponsored by the De Beauvoir Association, but we're here for everyone, not just association members - so please send us your news, pictures, ideas, criticisms by June 2 for the next issue. Thanks to everyone who has helped get out this issue and deliver it round the area.

## smallads

SMALL ADS are free to local people and 5p a word for commercial advertisers. Display ads are £1.25 a column inch. Please send all ads to Jo Parsey at 45 Buckingham Rd by June 2 for the next issue.

WORKING mother with 5-year-old daughter needs furnished flat or bed-sitter in De Beauvoir area. Phone Diana Blatchford on 359-3495 (11.15am - 3.15)

BRING AND BUY SALE; Kingsgate Playgroup, Buckingham Road, Saturday, May 3, 2 pm. Admission 2p

THE GOOD NEIGHBOURS CLUB are sorry to announce the death of Mrs. Elsie Pullen, of 70 Englefield Road, who will be sadly missed.

### YOUR SON!!!

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JACK AND ELIZA Stafford, of 10 St. Lawrence Court, wish to thank friends, neighbours and '72 Senior Citizens Club members for congratulations on their Diamond Wedding Anniversary.

SECONDHAND record player wanted for playgroup. Contact Jo Parsey, 45 Buckingham Road (249 1380).

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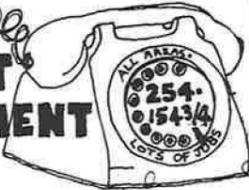
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