

DE BEAVER



HELLO AGAIN,
DE BEAUVOIR!

De Beaver is back wearing a new hat and with his notebook and pencil ready. This time we hope he is here to stay.

Town Hall acts over factory noise

Legal experts at the Town Hall are considering taking out summonses against furniture manufacturers in south-west De Beauvoir. Three notices were issued by the environmental health department claiming excessive noise, smell and sawdust pollution and the time for improvements to be made has now run out. The council will hear a full report in May. Alan Rayner who himself lives not a whiff of varnish away reports....

Glen Furniture occupy the factory at 1A Southgate Grove and surrounding householders claim they are a nuisance. They have an extractor fan for their sawdust and, neighbours say, it is noisy - excessively noisy. They also complain that sometimes it showers the neighbourhood with free (but unwanted) sawdust while their polishing gives the whole area a distinct smell when the wind is in the wrong direction.

One local resident Mrs. Pam Oliver of Ufton Road described the problem. "The noise is like that of about 20 industrial hoovers all going at once. It starts at 8 o'clock in the morning and ends at 6 in the evening.

"It's a distressing noise and in addition the whole area's covered in sawdust - all the gardens and cars. We don't want to close a factory which is earning people a living, we just want the noise and dust controlled.

Council officers have been studying what best can be done about this area and the hotch-potch of houses and businesses on Southgate Road. One idea was to give Glen access to their factory from Southgate Road instead of the Grove. The gap between 66 and 68 Southgate Road was the obvious place for a new driveway. In exchange for permission to have this new entrance, the idea was Glen would put the fan, sawdust and smells inside new buildings and be good neighbours in the future(!)

They contacted the General Improvement Area's residents' committee who were surprised that matters had progressed so far. Following the September meeting of the committee, the council officers made a commitment to suspend the plan until it had been fully discussed and alternatives worked out.

Unfortunately the owner of 68 was not prepared to sell the sideland, so council officers suggested knocking down No.66, owned by the council. Semi-detached with 66 is 64 where John and Jean Burns live. The first they heard of the plan to demolish the neighbouring property was when a surveyor asked permission to inspect their home

The first major consultation meeting was held on January 8th when residents from about half the houses backing on to the factory went to hear Mr. Geoffrey Roots, managing director of Glen Furniture, explain his plans. He said he would take action to reduce the noise and even went to residents' houses to hear it for himself. However he maintained that only a full "rationalisation" of the factory site with new access would provide the solution. He added he was experimenting with ways to alleviate the problems.

Met. to let?

Shortage of money has again blighted the future of the former Metropolitan Hospital which stands on the Kingsland Road border of De Beauvoir Town. And, despite a great deal of debate and discussion, it looks as though the red-brick Victorian building will continue to be empty and grow increasingly delapidated for some considerable time yet.

The Met closed as a hospital - in the face of considerable local opposition - in 1976 as part of Health Service cuts. The building which together with the old Nurses' Home occupies a triangular site backing on to De Beauvoir Square, has just been purchased from the Area Health Authority by Hackney Council for around £250,000.

But now the Met has fallen foul of more Government stringencies. The council's plan was to demolish the hospital and replace it with family residential accommodation while retaining the Nurses' Home and converting it into bed-sitters for single people.

That proposal has had to be shelved indefinitely since the projected £40,000,000 housing investment programme has been cut by half - leaving only enough money for works already more advanced. Ironically however, while standing empty, it still costs money, and residents at a recent

meeting of DBA were outraged at reports that security is costing over £600 per week.

So what happens to the Met? Discussions are being held with local residents to find a suitable use. Anyone with ideas should attend a General Improvement Area residents' committee meeting on April 2 at the Rose Lipman Library.

The Council is considering leasing off the site on either a short or long term basis. An idea to turn the Nurses' Home into bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families was considered and rejected at a recent Labour Group meeting.

The Met site is one of several owned by public bodies in that section of De Beauvoir. Others include the area temporarily occupied by dustcarts at the junction of Downham and Hertford Road, and the Edith Cavell school which is scheduled for closure.

For some months both the De Beauvoir Association and GIA Residents' Committee have been urging the council to consider the sites as a whole and not develop them piecemeal. There is also a school of thought which believes the Met's Kingsland Road frontage to be unsuitable for family houses as it is too near the busy main road.

"I'm not at all happy about demolishing the building and putting up family housing. I would rather see it remain, or possibly demolished and an office block built on the main road. But that's in the long term," said De Beauvoir councillor Jim Cannon.

On a happier note - one development which began before the financial axe fell is at the corner of De Beauvoir Square, diagonally opposite the Nurses' Home. Work is in progress there building sheltered accommodation for old people on a site derelict since the last war.



Three bundles of energy spotted at the Britannia Leisure Centre Baby Bounce (Mondays and Saturdays 10-12): 5 year-old Junior Aaul with sisters Zoe Sophie Millar, 3, and Natasha Lucy Miller, 4. Story page 3.

AFTER THE LAST PICTURE SHOW

Tentative proposals to build a complex of flats, shops and offices on the site currently occupied by the defunct Dalston Odeon are being explored by planning officials.

The new plan - still very much at the embryonic stage - follows a change of mind by developers who had negotiated for over a year to build a Do-It-Yourself centre on the site at the junction of Kingsland and Stamford Roads.

Planning permission was granted for a B and Q DIY Supercentre, but restrictions imposed on opening hours were such that the company decided to pull out.

DBA OBJECTION

They wanted to follow the practice of their other centres around the country of staying open until 8pm six days a week and all day on Bank Holidays. Limitations on these hours were made after objections from members of the De Beauvoir Association and the General Improvement Area committee who were



concerned about the increase in traffic and street parking such a scheme would bring.

"Nothing less than our normal hours would do so we were not prepared to go ahead," a spokesman for B and Q told De Beaver.

In the meantime, the cinema continues to present a sad spectacle. Built in 1937 and now yet another victim of television and the public's changing tastes, it stands barricaded and deserted, covered in tattered posters.

Two years have passed since this free community newspaper last dropped through your letter boxes. We hope you have missed us and the information we provide about what is happening in this lively and historic corner of London.

The paper is non-profit making and sponsored by the De Beauvoir Association. It is produced and distributed by people giving their services voluntarily. Founded 10 years ago, it has a tradition of being a community platform, reporting on everything that concerns, involves, angers and amuses local residents.

The new editorial team intends to maintain this tradition.

New plans for old vicarage

If proposals put forward by the Area Health Authority, in partnership with the Circle 33 housing association, are accepted, the old vicarage off De Beauvoir Square, will gain a new lease of life.

Usurped of its original role by a more modern successor on De Beauvoir Road, the old vicarage has in recent years accommodated St. Peter's staff and a Hackney Council "Welcare" office.

Now Circle 33 is negotiating to buy it from the parish charity which owns it. The plan is to run the building as a sheltered hostel for about ten young, mentally-handicapped people. Circle 33 will be the landlord and will manage the building on behalf of the AHA. This is the first ever project of its kind in the area.

The philosophy behind such schemes requires that there should be the minimum of supervision. There will be a nurse in attendance all the time but otherwise the residents (none of whom will be mentally ill) will be encouraged to lead normal lives.

There is some unease about the proposal in the surrounding area. (But the church, as seller and prospective neighbour, is very much in favour and the AHA in particular is enthusiastic about the experiment.)

And there is a lot to be done in terms of negotiation, the obtaining of the necessary planning consents and the modernisation of the building, but if all goes well Circle 33 would hope to finish the development by the Spring of next year.

For those concerned about where the local Brownie troupe will operate from - it was organised from the Welcare office in the old vicarage basement - have no fear. Welcare is now occupying part of the St. Peter's crypt.

by Tom Lloyd

Imps & fairies!

Amazing sightings in the gardens and streets of De Beauvoir. Reports P3. P4.

Slow ahead on the canal

News from the canal seems to be a story of two steps forward and one back. In 1979 the towpath from Islington through Hackney to Victoria Park was opened up as part of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Shortly afterwards the Central Electricity Generating Board closed it down again to lay electricity cables underneath the towpath, and only recently has it opened again. In the meantime, further cable work has become necessary in the Islington section and now that part of the towpath is closed.

Despite the problems (and the fact that on my last visit, only the De Beauvoir Road canal gate was open on the whole Hackney stretch) plenty of people now enjoy a stroll there.

A well-known saga to De Beauvoir residents is the various attempts to

provide some canoe and boat access in this stretch of the canal. The most recent chance of this is the use temporarily of land at Laburnum Street—about 100 yards east of the De Beauvoir section of the canal. A joint project of the Ufton community centre youth club and other interested groups would be set up if proposals ever materialise. In the Ufton youth club plans are also being hatched to hire the Angel narrowboat available to local groups for weekends.

In 1979 Mabel Hall organised a successful narrowboat trip for local residents generally and perhaps there is enough interest for a repeat trip. Anyone interested in helping to get canal activities off the ground and into the water - please contact Jim Armstrong at the Youth club or myself.

Andrew Hinchley

Ufton youth centre ready at last for action

At last, after 8 years the Ufton Community Centre and Youth Club is open! Set in the Ufton park which has been open for a year or so and which contains games and play areas, the Centre is ready for action now.

Meredith Yates, the project co-ordinator, has been busy finding out the interests of many people in De Beauvoir. He has discovered activities they would like are as diverse as keep-fit and pottery, pensioners' clubs and photography.

But what can the centre offer?

At the moment parts of the centre are ready, including a kitchen, an area for a bar (which will open in a few months time), and space both large and small available for all kinds of activities. See the inset panel for events now in progress.

AND FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

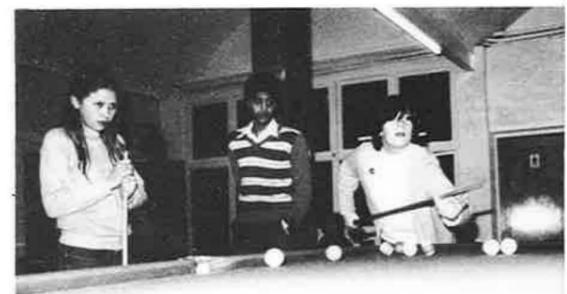
The youth club which has been open since the beginning of March is for all children and young people in the district. It meets in bright, spacious premises with its own canteen, coffee bar, billiards, table tennis, quiet and games areas. Jim Armstrong is the full-time senior youth worker known to many from his former job as youth worker at the Islington Boat Club. He is very excited by the possibilities of the youth club and particularly by the variety of activities in which he can involve the young people, using the outdoor area for sports and games, indoor area for the usual youth club pastimes. There is also a newly-

discovered basement which lends itself to arts and crafts, a photography workshop etc. See the inset panel for times of youth club.

The Community Centre is managed by the Ufton Factory Organisation Ltd., a company limited by guarantee, set up jointly by the De Beauvoir Association and the De Beauvoir Community Association. The day-to-day running is delegated to the User Group which meets monthly on the last Wednesday in each month as is open to anyone in De Beauvoir town.

SO WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

The Centre now belongs to everyone who wishes to use it. Membership details are available from the Centre. Contact Meredith Yates at the Centre (phone 254 9072) to suggest activities you would be interested in. It's up to us all - the Centre belongs to you.



Taking the game seriously: 13 year-olds Nicky Batten (left) of Culford Road and Karen Kempston of Ufton Road. Paul Quannie, 16, of Balmes Road looks on.

● Finally, we are now looking for a supervisor to work with 10 young people completing the building works at the Centre. The short-term project is being sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission and candidates ideally should have some building experience, be able to teach others and supervise staff. They should be currently unemployed and preferably have been out of work for the last six months. Pay will be around £120 a week. Anyone interested should apply to GUY GERVIS 126 De Beauvoir Road, N1 or telephone 254 8500. Mary Cannon

UFTON CENTRE
WEDNESDAYS 7.30pm-9.30pm Keep fit and movement classes. More plans coming soon. Interested in holiday activities for children? Please contact the Centre.
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7.30pm-10pm for 14 to 21 yr-olds.
WEDNESDAYS 5pm-7pm for 6 to 10 yr-olds
7pm-9pm: Chess Club
THURSDAYS 7.30pm-10pm for 14 to 21 yr olds. Annual Membership 40p to £1 according to age.

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WHAT'S NEW? BOUNCING BABIES SOZZLED SLUGS BUSTLING BOOKS

Leisure Centre

A report by Philippa Toomey

It looks just like one of those factory units they put up in new towns - but it's the Britannia Leisure Centre. "You can't miss it" says the telephone cheerfully, and indeed you can't. Just over the Whitmore Bridge, down the road and there it is, one of the first developments in what will eventually be a wholly renovated and transformed open space - 25 acres of Shoreditch Park, derelict for many years, but now on the way up.

Leisure Centre they call it - but the energetic statue in the front hurling a javelin in the direction of Islington is more indicative of what you will find inside - the emphasis is on active indoor sport and participation. The Centre is built on the site of the old Britannia Theatre - in the last century a popular and successful music hall specialising in melodrama (with effects) declining into a cinema as the 20th century progressed and finally demolished during the war. The new Centre was opened by the Duke of Edinburgh in November 1980, and so is bright and new. The day I arrived in the early morning some very small children were also coming to play in the Games room - some of them had mastered the theory of walking but not quite the practice - and older



boys and girls were already playing badminton - the courts are overlooked by a very pleasant snack bar, where coffee, tea, snacks and modest hot meals are served at the bright red tables and chairs. Further on there is a bar, which seemed well patronised when I went round in the evening. Activities offered include Squash, Badminton, Weight training, table tennis, keep fit sessions, Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer 5 a side, Hockey, Netball, and the equipment for these can be hired. The charges are per hour (except for squash, £1.10 per half hour) and range from a modest 50p for weight training and table tennis to £1.50 for badminton.

If you want something less active, there is a Solarium, which charges 90p a session.

The whole place is open from 9 in the morning until 10 at night, except for the squash courts which open at 7.30am seven days a week. In March there is planned a "Baby Bounce" from 0-5 years, so every age is suited, one way or another.

The Centre's telephone number is 729 4485 for enquiries and in any case, it is well worth a visit on its own merits.

Gardening club

A report on the Gardeners' Club
Jude Moraes

The Gardeners' Club was born out of the Flower Show which was conceived on a mulled wine evening of carol singing by myself and Jenny Stevens.

The first De Beauvoir Flower and Produce Show in September 1979 was held in the church crypt and was a wondrous success. Jen Stevens was the supreme organiser, I was the supreme optimist and Tom Chiverton the supreme champion who carried off the silver rose bowl donated by Mrs. William Benyon.

Dorothy Kettlewell suggested a Gardeners' Club and made a list of those interested in joining. The list was lost but the idea sprouted and by March 1980 the first meeting was held.

Meetings have been held ever since on the first Tuesday of every month in St. Peters crypt at 8pm. There is always a guest speaker, followed by tea and edibles, then business. The speakers have been very varied with topics ranging from Italian Gardens (esoteric - a few of us got lost in the Renaissance) to Pest Control without Poisons (trap slugs in watered-down beer).

A popular event was Meet the Experts when members could fire questions at a panel of three garden specialists. The only problem the experts could not solve was the fairy ring in Mr. Sam Eatly's lawn in Downham Road. However, the fairies must have brought him some magic because he was the champion at the 1980 Flower and Produce Show.



At most meetings there is a Bring and Buy plant stall so De Beauvoir - raised garden produce can be passed on to other members in the form of cuttings, seed, pot plants, bedding plants etc..

FUTURE PLANS

MEETINGS - April: Meet The Experts. May: Speaker from the RHS.

TRIPS - Spring: Visit to Henry Doubleday Research Association trial ground at Baintree, Essex Summer: The Chelsea Physick Garden, one of the oldest botanic gardens in Europe viewed by appointment only.

Come and join us on the first Tuesday of every month in the crypt of St. Peters church. Membership is only 50p a year.

Rose Lipman Library

A Report by Chief Librarian

Heather Wilmer

Lots of new things have been happening at the Rose Lipman Library.

Firstly, there is a toy library every Monday from 10.30am to 1pm. Mums and childminders with children under five, meet for coffee and a chat, while the

children are free to play. There is a large range of toys, which are all available for loan. Each child may borrow one toy for two weeks or longer, and some nursery equipment is available too. Even if you prefer not to borrow toys, you may still wish to choose books for the under-fives from our large selection of picture books.

Gillian Borry is our new 'toy library lady' and she will be pleased to make you feel welcome.

Another venture is our sale of unwanted books. This is a method of raising revenue and is proving very popular. Prices range from 20p to £1, according to condition and quality.

Finally, there will as usual be lots of activities for children during the Easter school holiday break. We expect to be showing at least two films, plus various craft activities; Tie Dye, Collage, Egg Painting, Board Game Making - and more!

Hackney Libraries have purchased a Book Bus, which went into service on the 28th September 1980. The bus is bright yellow and you may have seen it travelling around our streets. The purpose of the book bus is to publicise all aspects of the library services, by visiting organizations, schools, sites, festivals etc. It is also to supply books and services to groups unable to use conventional library services.

Promotional visits have been made to local schools in the vicinity of libraries, to nurseries and even street markets. You may have seen it parked at Hoxton Market, Ridley Road Market or the Britannia Centre. So far, 1500 people have visited the Book Bus, and demands for its use are growing steadily.

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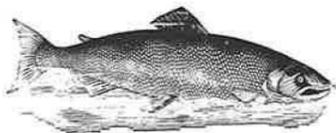
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IMPS IN OUR MIDST

Many De Beauvoir residents are aware they have imps in their midst only because they see their transportation parked at the junction of Culford and Tottenham Roads. Not gossamer fairies' carriages these, but two 30 foot long American mobile homes, a 32 foot lorry and two caravans.

What kind of mythically tiny creatures can they be that require such huge vehicles and round-the-clock parking? In fact, the De Beauvoir Imps are ordinary human boys, very much from the real world, although it could be claimed that there is something magical about their activities.

They are a motorcycle display team whose spectacular fetes and skills have left audiences gasping from Stoke Newington to Nagasaki, New York to Norwich. Aged from as young as five, when a tricycle is usually considered more appropriate than a mini-motorcycle, to the "retirement" age of 16, the 32 imps all come from Hackney Borough and have their office, workshop and garage in the corner building behind their conspicuous vehicles.

Their leader (or impresario?) is Mr. Roy Pratt, a former military policeman, now an ILEA education welfare officer, who is sorry about crowding the streets but fears the Borough will not provide him with alternative parking. Nor has the council been able to offer an area where the team could practise locally once a week during the winter months.

Mr. Pratt explained, "We have to travel hundreds and hundreds of miles to train. We have no cooperation from the Borough at all. We are not asking them to give anything but what we do ask is for them to make a little space available - about the size of a football pitch - where we could practise once a week."

The Imps were founded in 1974 when a number of youngsters travelling out of London courtesy of the Hackney



Adventure Holiday Project became interested in motorcycling. The Project, which is sponsored by the Borough and various other charitable bodies, provides holidays for Hackney children and at the height of the season some 300 a week are accommodated. The Imps are still linked with this main charity but their finances are entirely separate.

Their equipment, for instance - some so new it is not yet on the market - is all on loan from the Honda company, their main sponsors. Four matrons and several mechanics and engineers travel with the boys giving their services free.

HIGH STANDARDS OF SAFETY

Many boys apply to become a mighty Imp but, rather in the same way as only the toughest soldiers gain access to the SAS, a large number drop out when faced with the gruelling training schedules. Lengthy and intense training is, of course, necessary to maintain high standards of safety. To date the Imps have had only one accident which landed a team member in hospital for any length of time. Fourteen-year old Raymond Clouter of Fairmain Court, Hertford Road, had a broken rib, broken collar bone and punctured lung after coming a

cropper during a tricky formation sequence. But within a matter of weeks he was back on his bike and riding with the team.

"There is an element of risk but then so there is with any sport. I don't think we have any more bumps and sprains than, say, a football team," said Mr. Pratt.

His day-time employment takes him around juvenile courts and he views the many voluntary hours he spends with the Imps as a form of preventative social work.

From being a member of a highly disciplined team, the boys gain a sense of security and purpose. They also learn how to look after their machines, the theory of mechanics and devote many hours to physical fitness training. Mr. Pratt is understandably proud of the fact that over 70 per cent of "retired" Imps are now working in the motorcycling industry.

DARING JUMPS

And this summer the Imps will again be performing their thrilling displays, daring jumps through flames, pyramid formations and comedy routines, helping to boost attendances at charity fetes and functions around Britain. One particularly eye-catching feature of their shows is their bright red military uniforms. And here again only the best will do. The uniforms are made to measure by a tailor from Aldershot far more accustomed to covering the long limbs of Army officers than those of kids from Hackney.

Mr. Pratt enjoys the measuring sessions:- "The tailor gets out his tape measure and speaks as if he's dealing with officers. He'll say, 'Would Sir mind holding up his arm a little higher' to one of our nine-year-olds and they look at him as if he's mad." L.M.

VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY WANTED BY THE UFTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
AN ORGANISER to promote and manage WEEKEND LETTINGS and also if possible to research and organise COMMERCIAL BINGO and LONG-TERM TENANCIES. Contact Meredith at the Centre, 12 Ufton Road, or on 254-9072.
AN EXPERIENCED BOOKKEEPER to assist with the Centre accounts. Contact John on 249-0146.
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Next issue

Two members of the De Beauvoir editorial team ride with the Imps. Their experience so far has been on mobylettes round Grecian olive groves. Will they stand the test? WATCH THIS SPACE

Thanks!

We wish to thank all the people who have helped on this issue.

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