

NEWSLETTER
JULY 2015

Can you help?
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Party
in the
Park
2015

Saturday 11 July, 2–5pm
De Beauvoir Square

Free entertainment for
children and fun for
adults too

Face painting, bouncy castle, books and
toys for children, magician, craft activities,
games, hula-hooping, cakes, tea and coffee,
veggie savouries, BBQ, Pimms and juice
Raffle and tombola
Music by Nostalgia steel band.

Around the town

THE ROSEMARY BRANCH

2 Shepperton Road, N1 3DT
19 June-3 July Love's Labours Lost
7-12 July Pieces
13 July Three Worlds
www.rosemarybranch.co.uk
Tel: 020 7704 6665 24 – hour box office.

DE BEAUVOIR WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

St Peter's Crypt, Northchurch Terrace
First Thursday of each month 7.30
2 July - WI centenary talk
6 August - informal gathering
3 September - Wine tasting
1 October - Beekeeping
www.debeauvoirwi.com

ST PETER'S CRYPT

There is a wealth of classes, courses and events including yoga, pilates, a choir and much more
<http://www.stpeterdebeauvoir.co.uk/>

DE BEAUVOIR GARDENERS

St. Peter's Crypt, Northchurch Terrace
First Tuesday of each month 8pm.
7 July - Garden walkabout
26 July Guided Walk- City of London Gardens
4 August - Annual Picnic
www.debeauvoirdenardeners.org.uk

THE PROUD ARCHIVIST

2-10 Hertford Road
www.theproudarchivist.co.uk/whats-on

ACOUSTIC SUNDAYS

Free music in the crypt of St Peter's.
Food
5 July 2pm onwards
www.soundadviceuk.com/

THE SCOLT HEAD

107A Culford Road
Pub Quiz: every Monday 8 pm
25 June Jazz with Peter Werth

Cafe Olive

At Café Olive at 192 Southgate Rd, Samieh and Homada have brought the dream of an Egyptian café from Dahab near Sharm el Sheikh to De Beauvoir. There's a romantic story there: British Iranian Sam went to Dahab on a yoga retreat, and now she, Homada, their daughter, and a spaniel called Sphinx are together in London.

The café, previously Eggs Milk Butter, is small, with an eclectic mix of décor and of books, many reflecting Sam's interest in health and alternative therapies: she runs meditation evenings at the café.

Homada's authentic food has drawn

Egyptians from across London to De Beauvoir.

Samieh and Homada are determined to key into the community, and a recent venture is "Love Kitchen". Ever thought of running a pop-up, or your own café? They will give you a chance to book the café to sell your own food, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

For those of you volunteering at the Party in the Park on 11 July, Café Olive will be supplying the snacks at the end of the day.

Kirsty Norman

RIP Owen Humphreys



Owen Humphreys in 2011 (Picture: Carol Lee)

The funeral of local resident Owen Humphreys took place on Friday 22 May, attended by family, friends and neighbours.

Owen was born in 1931 in Catterick, son of a lieutenant general in the Indian Army. Educated at Marlborough and Oxford, he joined the Department of the Environment where he worked in Planning until he took early retirement in his 40's. In 1988 he moved from Islington to Northchurch Terrace where he lived until his death. He had been married and then divorced, but had a wider family and loved the company of his great nieces and nephews.

Owen was embedded in the local community. Even those who did not know him will remember his walks around the neighbourhood, even after a stroke, relying on a stick or a mobility scooter.

People especially remember him for his forthright views. One neighbour has described him thus: "Owen didn't consider himself a Tory. He was a radical liberal of the old kind – a classical liberal, a

lover of freedom. He was enormously knowledgeable." Another has said: "He was good company. It took time, and one had to listen and wait, but he enjoyed causing outrage, and we Guardian-reading, slightly vegetarian neighbourhood lefties were easily outraged, to his pleasure."

Owen loved gardens and gardening and this was a link to other neighbours. One has recalled invitations to compare notes: "We had many glasses of wine in his garden on a glorious summer's evening, reviewing planting decisions, discussing problems, sharing experiences."

Another major interest was music where he indulged his young relatives and occasionally organised outings to the opera at the Hackney Empire.

Newer residents of De Beauvoir may not be aware that in the recent past the issue of leasehold enfranchisement has caused anxiety to some residents. Many had bought leasehold houses, but found difficulty in buying their freeholds, at least until the law changed in 1997. Owen brought his experience of planning to bear during the many discussions among neighbours about the right course of action.

A well known De Beauvoir character, Owen will be missed.

Mary Chadwick

Challenging the supermarkets



A recently opened shop in Southgate Road is connecting farmers and suppliers in the counties near London to local consumers.

Field to Fork sells a broad range of products from fresh vegetables to organic goods including meat, bought directly from farmers every week. There is a pretty tea shop at the back which serves food, and tables out on the pavement are popular on sunny days.

The shop is run by married couple Sarah Georgiou and Danny Hooker. Sarah says she was inspired by her parents. "My father has been a butcher since he was 14 years old and my mum is a greengrocer; we have always been working with local producers. I wanted to take a bit of my dad and a bit of my mum and have a local farm shop," she said. "It is a dream come true."

Field to Fork uses a range of suppliers

on farms in Kent and Suffolk, and from the Colchester area.

"In apple season we go to the farms, collect the apples and they are taken straight to the shelves. When it's asparagus season, they are cut in the morning and we bring them

here in the afternoon. There is no packaging, no intermediary."

The couple expects the spot to become a local supermarket for the residents in the area and believe that new household patterns can impact the business positively.

"We are changing the way we shop. Families are smaller now and young couples just buy what they need. Big bags of food mean waste," Sarah points out. "We have a lady who comes here to buy one mushroom and half a cabbage."

The manager says the customers have been responding well to the new enterprise. "People want to know where the products come from and how we found the farmers. We are used to going to the supermarket and buying products we don't know the origin of. It is nice to show where what we sell comes from."

Words and picture: Keila Guimaraes

Hardware meets heritage

I have known Manny at Chas.Tapp since I first had a studio in De Beauvoir 25 years ago. He has always been enthusiastic about sculpture and, as an Assyrian, has a strong sense of cultural heritage that goes back further than most.

His community traces its roots back 3,000 years to the founding of the first Assyrian buildings and palaces in what is now northern Iraq. That

area is known as the cradle of civilisation where the first known writing and the first representational Mesopotamian and early Christian sculptures were created. Massive winged bulls with human heads have guarded the city gates and palaces, protective spirits that survived until just a few months ago.

Manny weeps for the artefacts and places, Nimrud, Mosul, Hatra, Nineveh, smashed and blown up by Isis, as if he is mourning the death of a relative. He is a passionate man who decries the loss of this early Christian art as a loss for every single one of us.

There is a photograph of Emmanuel Benjamin Raphael as a baby in Kirkuk, with his grandfather, the great Assyrian military leader, Raphael Khan. In 1915,



during the Ottoman slaughter of Armenian and other Christian minorities, Raphael Khan was responsible for protecting the people on the plains of Ur-mia during their mass exodus. Manny's grandmother was poisoned and his grandfather later murdered.

Having lost everything, Manny's uprooted family ended up in Baghdad, and later England. He met Michael Sakaan while attending Norwood Technical College in the 60s. They bought

the business on Southgate Road almost 30 years ago, from the son of Charles Tapp, and have been supplying DIY fans and professionals in De Beauvoir and further afield with all their needs ever since. It was the late Mo Mowlem's favourite shop, and was recently filmed by the BBC for a series about small businesses.

This year is the 100th anniversary of the killings and displacement of Christian minorities, including Assyrians, from Asia Minor. It is a good moment to think about and celebrate many of the shopkeepers in De Beauvoir, who come from all over the world for a variety of personal reasons, often as tragic as the story of Emmanuel Raphael and his family.

Words and picture: Sophie Dickens

Seniors shine



Beatrice and Juliana, participants at Hackney Stream

A project for local older people that has its roots in a bizarre art installation four years ago in Piccadilly is now using the Rose Lipman Community Centre.

For two months in the summer of 2011, the Hauser and Wirth art gallery, located in a former HSBC bank on Piccadilly, was converted into a pop-up community centre. The centre offered an eclectic mix of activities including fencing, singing, knitting, Brazilian Zouk dancing, computing, astrology and embroidery classes, along with laughter yoga and Biodanza spiritual movement sessions. However all was not quite as it seemed: this pop-up was actually an immaculately detailed art installation by Swiss provocateur Christoph Büchel in response to voluntary sector and arts funding cuts. The computer suite was run by Rick Crust with the aid of Hackney residents and afterwards Rick began internet radio streaming with a weekly live broadcast in Hackney, and Hackney Stream was born.

In 2013, invited by Laurence Taylor of Open School East, Hackney Stream moved into the Tin Tin room at the Rose Lipman on Tuesday afternoons running a monthly social event with music streamed from the internet. Then Rick started Hackney Mobile Seniors, a free digital clinic for people who have problems with, or questions about, mobile computing – smart phones, tablets of all kinds, Kindles and anything else which is portable and works with wifi or mobile data. You can bring your own gadget or borrow a laptop or tablet. Rick says that citizens of

the pre-digital era often have to overcome conceptual hurdles, but then make rapid strides learning from one another. The day I visited there was a group of about twenty people all chatting away and later we celebrated John's 76th birthday; he comes from Beckton and helps people with Windows 8 operating system.

Earlier this year they ran a very successful photography course with Open School East, taking advantage of the fact that digital photography is much easier than using a conventional camera and offers a higher standard of images than with film. In June there will be an animation project about Hackney, again with OSE and Arts Council Funding.

Want to know more? Come along to the Rose Lipman on Tuesday afternoons between 3 and 5pm or visit the Hackney Stream blog at hackneystream.net.

Words and picture: Fiona Darbyshire

Cafe on the edge

Featured in The New York Times to illustrate how De Beauvoir is booming, and given five stars by Time Out magazine, you'd be forgiven for thinking Towpath Café was some big-name, big-budget glossy restaurant.

And you'd be partly right. Towpath does have big names behind it - the American Italian food writer, Lori De Mori, and her business partner, chef Laura Jackson, formerly of Rochelle Canteen. But that's where the comparison ends.

Towpath is anything but big-budget and glossy - and purposefully so. Opened in 2010, in three shallow units on the Hackney stretch of Regents Canal close to Whitmore Bridge, this area of De Beauvoir was a curious choice back then.

There were no restaurants, bars, creative spaces or even tourists. Instead, it was a quiet, graffiti covered part of the canal well used by commuting cyclists.

Yet Lori and Laura had a vision. They wanted to create a café there that opened between March and November for breakfast and lunch, and sold simple,



Laura (left) and Lori outside the cafe

good quality seasonal food.

It shouldn't have worked. Along with the dubious location, they refused to follow the crowd - offering only a small range of coffees (no decaf), no take-away service, no Wifi, and only taking cash.

"Even we didn't know what to expect," laughs Laura. "We had no idea whether it was going to work or not, and didn't even have a kitchen the first year. But we knew we wanted it to be somewhere people could come and sit and enjoy, and we didn't want to add to the trash

already around the canal with take-away."

Five years on, and it's led a regeneration of the entire area, which is now thronged with locals and tourists all week.

Towpath has also evolved. While sticking to their guns on Wifi and take away, they now have a wider coffee choice, a card machine and a tapas-style dinner menu Thursday to Sunday (thanks to their open-plan kitchen!).

And no one's complaining. As The New York Times observed, it's the perfect place to grab a bite, soak up the scenery and unwind on a sunny (or rainy) day.

Words and picture: Barbara Walshe

Hackney's first hospital



Hackney's first hospital was founded at the extreme north-east corner of what is now De Beauvoir, on the corner of Balls Pond Road and Kingsland Road. No ordinary hospital, this was dedicated to the segregation and treatment of lepers. It was known as the 'Lock Hospital', possibly from the Old French loques (the cloths that covered the patients' sores), or from the Saxon loq, (shut, close): lepers were permanently quarantined due to the infectious nature of their disease.

The Kingsland Lock Hospital was founded in about 1280 by the City of London, as one of ten on the main roads from the City, and functioned as such until 1559, the year which saw the last case of leprosy in London. From 1549, it was administered by St Bartholomew's Hospital, and treated other infections including venereal disease. By 1669, there were six wards for women only. A sun-dial on the premises was inscribed "post voluptatem misericordia" (After pleasure, compassion).

The hospital (pictured) was rebuilt in the mid 1720s as the wards, now well below the frequently repaired and raised road surface, suffered from damp. We

do not know what the old hospital looked like. The tiny medieval chapel however was never rebuilt: it measured only 27 by 18 feet and was just 20 feet high - three of which lay below the level of Kingsland Road on to which it fronted.

Rising costs forced St. Bartholomew's to close the hospital in 1760. Local people petitioned that the chapel be kept for worship, and it lasted in poor condition until 1846, when it was demolished.

The site is now partly occupied by Bentley House, at 2-26 Bentley Road and 19-29 Balls Pond Road (itself a replacement for bombed Victorian terraces). The building now on the corner of Balls Pond Road and Kingsland Road, once the Star and Garter public house, is supposed to have its north door in the same position as the north door of the chapel.

In terms of archaeological remains, as the hospital and chapel floors were already three feet below the level of the roads in the early 19th century, any remains are likely to be even further below the current (yet higher) ground level. This seems to be confirmed by an archaeological evaluation which was carried out nearby in 1999. Hackney Council has designated the area of the hospital an Archaeological Priority Area: development would therefore trigger the need for archaeological excavation.

Kirsty Norman

The pubs we had

This is a list of De Beauvoir's pubs past and present to the best of our knowledge. All of these except the Sussex, the Waggon and Horses and the Duke of Wellington appear on a 1928 Benyon Estate rent book. That book does not give a name to the establishment at 32a Hertford Road.

| Present name or original name. In bold if open now. | Address | Notes |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Talbot | 109 Mortimer Road | Unchanged |
| Scolt Head | 107A Culford Road | Was The Sussex until 2006 |
| Duke's Brew and Que | 33 Downham Road | The Duke of York until 2012 |
| De Beauvoir Arms | 113 Southgate Road | The Northgate 2001?-2012; previously The Dog and Dumplings and Jolly Farmers |
| Hunter S | 194 Southgate Road | Formerly The Perseverance |
| The Duke of Wellington | 119 Balls Pond Road | Unchanged; 2000-2010? The Wellington |
| Molly Bloom's | 525 Kingsland Road | The Brewery Tap until 2015 |
| Prince of Wales | 447 Kingsland Road | closed around 1994; empty |
| De Beauvoir Arms | 28 Stamford Road | Residential; was the Trolley Stop 2000?-2012 |
| Benyon Arms | 155 De Beauvoir Road | Residential |
| Southgate Arms | 1 Southgate Road | Residential; called Ones up to closure. |
| Lord Raglan | 139 Southgate Road | Once the Jolly Butcher's Beer Shop? The Artful Dodger existed on the same site. Demolished. |
| Trafalgar Tavern | 45 Southgate Road | Closed 2003; Demolished around 2004 |
| Ye Olde Ivy House (1935) | 32a Hertford Road | Vacant; closed around 2006 |
| Beckford Arms | 104 Hertford Road | Demolished late 1960s |
| Waggon and Horses | 81 Hertford Road | Demolished before 1913? |
| The Mitre Tavern | 71 Downham Road | Residential since about 2008 |
| Mortimer Arms | 22 Mortimer Road | Demolished late 1960s? |
| Britannia Arms | 91 Tottenham Road | Derelict by 1991; residential |

Party in the Park - Can you help?

The Party in the Park is on Saturday 11 July and as every year, we appeal for your help. It's run by a large team of about 70 volunteers.

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK AND TOY GIVE-AWAY

As in previous years we will be giving a free book to every child who attends.

We are looking for books for all ages and in good condition – from cloth or sturdy picture books for infants to thrillers & adventure books for young teenagers.

We also need TOYS for babies and children up to the ages of 12 – cuddly or activity toys, adventure or craft sets, etc.

Call Barbara on 07759 534636 or email info@debeauvoir.org.uk

We can collect from you or you can deliver to us. Thank you!

BOOKS AND DVDs

The second-hand book and DVD stall is always enormously popular and raises money for the next Party in the Park. If you have any books or DVDs which you no longer need, or are looking to make some more shelf space, why not donate them to a great cause?

We can collect or you can deliver them to us at any time before July 1st

Please contact: RICHARD TURNBULL, 114 De Beauvoir Road, 020 7241 1582 rturnbull@rimbaud.demon.co.uk

or STEPHEN KING, 72 Mortimer Road, 020 7254 4843 stephen.king1@btinternet.com

ATTENTION BAKERS

We will sell cakes and savouries at the Party, and this year the baking will be organised by the wonderful new De Beauvoir Women's Institute. If you can supply a cake, traybake or a loaf or two:

email debeauvoirwi@hotmail.com

THE TOMBOLA

Types of item we like: ornaments and vases, costume jewellery, little novelties and toys, kitchen implements, small indoor plants, bottles of whisky and wine, stationery, unused jigsaws and boxed games (still in cellophane), accessories, and those other unique things people couldn't quite find a place for!

Donations should be new, or in "as new" condition, and we would welcome all sorts, from the tiny and modest to the medium-sized and moderate: nothing too large or valuable.

Please email info@debeauvoir.org.uk if you can help

COME AND MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS BY VOLUNTEERING ON THE DAY

You could be part of the setting up team (9am-1pm), or help behind one of the many stalls (2-5pm), or heroically stay on to work on the taking down and clearing up (5-7pm). Those who last the course to the end are invited to have drinks and snacks in the Square and compare notes on another busy and, we hope, very successful Party.

Please contact info@debeauvoir.org.uk

Jottings

It's hard to keep up with new restaurant openings in the area, isn't it?

One that gathered a lot of attention a few weeks ago was Chick 'n' Sours at 390 Kingsland Road, which specialises in fried chicken.

The canal towpath is busier than ever and Bargehouse has moved into the space that was Ribeira at 46a De Beauvoir Crescent.

Just south of the canal, Russell Brand has opened the Trew Era café at 30 Whitmore Road as a community venture. At the time of writing, 428 Kingsland Road is set to be the home for a new upmarket bar called Pamela. That site has in recent months been the location of Bleach Bar, The Dead Dolls Club and Mussel men (now relocated to no 584).

Huong Viet restaurant, part of a Vietnamese community venture at 12-14 Englefield Road, closed late in 2014 ostensibly for refurbishment but never reopened. We await the fate of the site, a 1930's municipal baths thought to be owned by Hackney Council.

Concern has been voiced locally that the section of the north-south cycle super-highway through the area was ill conceived and over-engineered. We await TfL's response to its consultation.



Something on which there was no consultation was Hackney Council's decision to cancel most of the permits at the Kingsland Waste market and it's now a shadow of its former self with typically just two stalls: a carpet seller and a bric-brac stand.

Craig, the excellent Hackney Council gardener who has had responsibility for the gardens of De Beauvoir Square among others, for some years, has left

the council suddenly. Craig (picture) was captured on Google Streetview dated May 2012 cutting the grass on one corner of the square.

We sometimes wonder how to sum up De Beauvoir. This is what the website notfortourists.com says:

"De Beauvoir is the buffer zone where swanky Islington meets the self-regard of Dalston. As such it's an ideal place to get a reprieve from either side. To the west are quiet squares and gastropubs. Venture east and you'll be up-'til-dawn boozing, talking to individuals comic book writers couldn't dream up. When you're sick of both, sit in De Beauvoir Square (with its thousands of palm trees) and ponder life."

Well, nearly right.

Paul Bolding

Our recent events

On Thursday 26 March, Times columnist and award-winning interviewer Robert Crampton came to St. Peter's Crypt Café to talk about his life as a journalist living in Hackney. Crampton has openly admitted in the past that he wanted to overcome his fear of public speaking, but he found us a very supportive audience. Things loosened up when we moved to questions, and he was clearly cheered when at one point the discussion about press ethics became an argument within the audience itself!

We held a very well attended General Election hustings on Monday 20 April in the Rose Lipman Building, with 9 of the 11 local candidates: from the TUSC to UKIP; from a candidate with "no policies" (but some of the most interesting and coherent views) to the Green Party candidate and Labour's Meg Hillier who were both authoritative on theirs. There was something of an intake of breath in generally liberal (small "l") De Beauvoir

as it became apparent that the young Christian Party candidate was deeply anti abortion. Both informative and entertaining, the event was crisply managed by Rev. Julia Porter of St. Peter's.

The second De Beauvoir Neighbourhood Feast (run jointly by the DBA and St. Peter's) took place on Saturday 25 April in St. Peter's Crypt main hall and café. The Feast is a giant pot-luck supper to which all can come, and we were keen to have as wide a range of cuisines as possible. Stars of the evening were Café Olive who produced a beautifully decorated Egyptian table. We counted about 100 people through the doors; St. Peter's new church choir came and sang, and large amounts of good food were demolished. Next year we plan to have two waves of dishes, to accommodate both family and adult eating times, so come and join in.

Kirsty Norman, DBA Chair

Moleman: latest

It's a long-running De Beauvoir story: a man name William Lyttle owned 121 Mortimer Road until his death in 2010. He had been evicted in 2006 by Hackney Council after years of legal wrangling over extensive excavations that he conducted under the building. These had destabilised the surrounding area.

The house was sold at auction for £1.1m in 2012 to artists Sue Webster and Tim Noble. It had planning permission to demolish and rebuild but they decided to

keep the roofless structure as a kind of homage to Lyttle, known as Moleman.

Top architect David Adjaye was engaged and they got planning permission but work was slow to start. The building has been shored up with steel and concrete, however.

Now a reason for the delays has emerged; the owners have applied for further permission for a taller, sleeker roof. Watch this space.