

Police

Ann McAra represents the people of De Beauvoir at regular meetings with the police. Here are her notes from the latest meeting in September:

It was the AGM & John Howard was elected unopposed to the position of Chair. There were only 6 other people from the community present. It would be good to get some younger people involved. Police figures for domestic burglary and theft from motor vehicles rose in August, a reflection of school children hanging about during the holidays. Apparently common each year, so we all need to be particularly vigilant at school holiday times to close windows and not leave items visible in the car. These two areas are priorities for the police, along with the Kingsgate Estate/St Aubin's court. **DBA**

The Old Vicarage

The fate of the former vicarage of St Peters in Mortimer Road, one of De Beauvoir's most important buildings, has become a cause for concern. This huge building of

something like 15 rooms was left empty by the owners, housing association Circle 33, when it rehoused the tenants last year. It was then used for drug-taking and

prostitution and the grounds adjoining the church became an unsightly mess. Squatters who include members of arts group Passing Clouds have since moved in and made repairs and have tidied up the grounds. They say their main concern is to look after the building. Circle 33 got an eviction order against them in August but has since agreed to reconsider and will be conducting a proper survey of the property. As if it were a sign of good fortune, one of the residents had a baby just around the time the good news about their tenure arrived. **DBA**



Produced by
The De Beauvoir Association

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De Beauvoir

ASSOCIATION

Newsletter / October 08

DBA Party in the Park

THE DBA Party in the Park on July 12 was very successful; the gardens looked beautiful thanks to Hackney Parks department, the sun shone (amazingly!), and we received many very appreciative comments. Families and children find it



hard to believe that in 2008 they can go to a community event and receive free face painting, massage, bouncy castle, craft activities, story telling and a book and toy. Benyon Estate generously sponsored this year's event, Murphy Group provided accessible conveniences which enabled our many disabled residents to fully partake in the whole event – so important, and St John Ambulance the first aid which sadly we needed this year with an elderly lady taking a fall.

We had a number of disabled visitors (who loved the free massage, Majestic Brass band, and assistance dogs demonstration) and without Murphy Group's generosity they would not have been able to enjoy the event.

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De Beauvoir Association AGM

The De Beauvoir Association Annual General Meeting

When? Tuesday October 14 at 7.30 pm

Where? the Scolt Head, 107A Culford Road London N1 4HT

Admission free.

Agenda to include the election of the committee and any matters people want to raise.

After the official business, there will be entertainment from the Rosemary Branch. Cec Darker will talk about the pub/theatre's history and activities and Chris Maya will present an extract from Hackney Streets. This is the Rosie's forthcoming production using poetry and prose to conjure Michael Rosen's memories of the streets of Hackney past and present. **DBA**

Around the town

The Rosemary Branch

2 Shepperton Road, N1 3DT
www.rosemarybranch.co.uk
24-hour box office Tel: 020 7704 6665

JUBILATE! 16 and 17 October

PETYA'S STORY 21-26 October

BRANCHING OUT 28 October –
15 November

PIRATES OF PENZANCE 19, 21
and 23 November

THE NIGHTINGALE MYSTERY
25 November – 10 December

ALADDIN 17 December – 11 January

De Beauvoir Gardeners

www.debeauvoirdenardeners.org.uk

7 October AN INTRODUCTION TO URBAN
BEE-KEEPING Talk by Robert Carpenter-
Turner, Bee-keepers Association.

4 November THE ISBINDI PROJECT:
CREATING GARDENS, WORKING WITH
CHILDREN AND CARERS IN THE EASTERN
CAPE OF SOUTH AFRICA
A talk by Matt Warburton

2 December FABULOUS FOLIAGE Talk by
Anthony Noel, Garden Designer

Annual Membership: waged £10; couple
£12; unwaged £7; couple £9

Kingsland Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Visit KCAAC's website for information on
planning applications in the De Beauvoir
conservation area and along Kingsland
Road (www.kcaac.org.uk)

The Scolt Head

107a Culford Road
www.thescolthead.com
Tel: 020 7254 3965

Pub Quiz every Monday night –
starts promptly at 8.00pm. Teams
of 6 (maximum) can join in at £2
a head. Kitchen open 6.30pm-10.00pm
every evening.

Lockner & Kingsgate Estates

Lynda Sparks will be at 23 Blandford Court
between 1.30 and 3.00pm on the first and
third Monday of the month if tenants have
any queries and would like to call in.

The Warriors Cricket Team

Contact richardlynam@compuserve.com
for details.

Teenage Hoops

Basketball games for boys and girls aged
12-18. Call 020 7729 6970
e-mail daniel@skyway.uk.com

Ice Cream

We have some of the lovely ice cream
that was sold at the party in vanilla and
chocolate flavours. Please get in touch
if you would like to buy some.

Safer Neighbourhoods

De Beauvoir is covered by an innovative
Safer Neighbourhoods office in Orsman
Road providing a co-ordinated multi-
agency approach to tackling crime, fear
of crime, anti-social behaviour and
environmental crime. Operated as a
partnership between London Borough of
Hackney, the Metropolitan Police and
Shoreditch Trust, the Orsman Road office
was the first of its kind in the country.

For the Met, it is staffed by:
Sgt Shaju Bhaskaran
PC Adam Rowe
PC Steve Cahill
There are also two CSO's.

12 Orsman Road, London N1 5QJ.
Tel: 020 7161 9236

St Peter's takes steps on access



Work on the access ramps into St Peter's
Church and down to the crypt will begin
on Monday 29th September and last about
12 weeks. We have managed to raise the
significant amount of money required for
this work through the generosity of
church members, Friends of St Peter's and
from the local community. The St Peter's
Gift Day appeal raised nearly £8,000 and
the Poetry Marathon in which some 55
people throughout De Beauvoir
participated, raised the astonishing sum
of £2,100. A big "thank-you" goes to
everyone who contributed both recently
and in the past. Other money has been
contributed by the London Diocese which
recognises the steps the church is making
to create a space which is fully accessible
to the elderly, the disabled and people
pushing prams and buggies.

The planning of disabled access has taken
many years and during that time, at least
two schemes were abandoned after
consultation with people inside and
outside the church. It is enormously
encouraging that, through the efforts of
many people both within the church
community and outside, and after wide

consultation on design, materials
etc, the scheme is at last coming
to fruition. We recognise that not
everyone in the area approves of
it but it is intended that once the
works are complete, every effort
will be made to landscape the
ramps and ensure that the front
of the church is as attractive as
it is now – although different.
Suggestions will be welcome
once people see what is there.

Access to the church and the
crypt will be retained throughout
the period of building work and
both will remain open as usual.

The Building Development Group is now
intending to turn its attention to the
inside of the crypt with a view to making
it a much better-appointed community
space than it is now. An Access Audit was
conducted some months ago and that has
indicated all sorts of necessary
improvements which will have to be
addressed as money allows. An appeal for
further funds will be launched in the New
Year once the Group is in a position to
know how the existing space should be
used and has received architectural and
design advice. This appeal will be made
largely to grant-giving trusts, rather than
to the local community and if anyone
locally knows of a company or trust which
would be worth approaching, we should
be delighted to hear from you.

St Peter's looks forward to being better
able within the foreseeable future to
meet the needs of local people by
providing a modern and well equipped
community space. **DBA**

Michael Davies

De Beauvoir in the balance

Graham Parsey continues his study of the modern history of De Beauvoir (part one was in our issue of last October)

1968 was to prove a pivotal year in the affairs of De Beauvoir through a strange conjunction of events and opportunities.

1967 The Leasehold Reform Act

offered a measure of protection to leaseholders in areas such as De Beauvoir to purchase their Freeholds. About 20 local families, with the assistance of the DBA, benefited from this opportunity.

1968 De Beauvoir Study (compiled in 1968, submitted in January 1969) outlined the Council's plans for the ongoing redevelopment of the entire area up to Balls Pond Road by wholesale demolition of everything except parts of Northchurch Road, the Square and upper Hertford Road on the grounds of its low density arising from wide streets, generous gardens etc.

It foresaw progressive redevelopment by replacement with new housing, zone-by-zone culminating in the creation of De Beauvoir Town Park within Buckingham, Culford, Stamford and Englefield Roads in 1978-79. It was approved by the Council's Planning Committee in 1969 but did not proceed to full Council to become official policy because the council was defeated in the 1968 election.

1968 Local election After decades of Labour control, Hackney Council came under Tory control for one term from 1968 to 1971.

1968 Lockner Road demolition The Rhodes Regency terrace along the east side of De Beauvoir Square was demolished and the Lockner Estate was constructed (1969-70). It represented a

The Lockner Estate today; the cranes at the new Dalston development are seen in the background



template of the Council's intentions for the whole of De Beauvoir Town.

1968 De Beauvoir Association (DBA)

was formed at public meetings in the Crypt in 1968 to represent to Council the concerns of local residents, to challenge the scenarios set out in the De Beauvoir Study and to seek options which did not require wholesale demolition. It recognised the intrinsic potential of the existing housing and businesses. The Benyon Estate had already proposed to the Council that it should 'keep and renovate' its holdings in 'Englefield, Southgate, Hertford and Northchurch Roads while [conceding] the rest of the Estate's holdings in De Beauvoir would be sold to the Council'. The DBA, on the other hand, was a widely supported community response of residents of all ages, persuasions and politics concerned at the threats of clearance. Consequently, the DBA refused to align itself with any other interest but independently lobbied the incoming Tory Council to consider alternative strategies including adopting the new GIA (General Improvement Area) initiative. The new Council was receptive because it ran counter to the outgoing Labour administration and also was perceived as defending householders.

1969 Housing Act was being debated and acknowledged that future housing policy and targets could not solely rely on new-build but had to incorporate initiatives for the nation's large stock of older housing - introducing the concept of General Improvement Areas [GIAs].

1970 The first Central GIA had been declared, comprising Northchurch Road and Terrace, De Beauvoir Sq and the area up to the south side of Englefield Rd plus the short north end of Hertford Rd. This was to be serviced by Council Officers to

manage the renewal and refurbishment of the housing and environmental conditions in collaboration with a Steering Committee of local residents. Its brief was to encourage owners to carry out improvements through Housing Grants, safeguarding leaseholders' and tenants' rights, mobilising investment in Hackney and Estate owned property.

A parallel initiative was to improve the environment by reducing through traffic by road closures to create pedestrian amenity spaces for play, ball games and seating, introducing roadside tree planting and implementing a clean-up including the removal of the large lorry parking facility which exploited the wide highway round De Beauvoir Square.

The DBA did not rest on its laurels and continued to lobby for the future of the Southern Area – the houses from Downham Road up to the rear gardens of the Square and Northchurch Road – which remained unprotected. The DBA set up the Southern Area Action Group [SAAG] and with Shelter's help recruited four architecture students, Nick Hare, Peter Mishcon, Tom Clay and Jon Stephens, to undertake a year long study of the Southern Area as a graduate project. Through house-by-house condition surveys, questionnaires and interviews with residents and local businesses they explored their hopes and expectations for their homes and premises. These studies identified that the area, though more industrial and run-down and blighted by years of neglect, remained eminently capable of rehabilitation. On the eve of the 1971 Local Elections, the soon to be departing Tory administration rushed through the declaration of the Southern Area as a further GIA.

continued overleaf

De Beauvoir in the balance

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1971 A change of control By 1971, the future survival of De Beauvoir Town remained in the balance and demolition remained a real prospect. The future of a Central Area had been secured by its designation in 1970 as Hackney's first and sole General Improvement Area.

Northchurch Road Area Neighbourhood Watch Group

This group has existed for about two decades and covers Northchurch Road and its environs, including Northchurch Terrace, Ufton Road, Culford Road, Lawford Road, Ufton Grove and Southchurch Grove. Each road has a Co-ordinator who acts as a focal point for the residents of their road, in receiving information about activities and problems in their area and passing on any alerts from the local police.

The Neighbourhood Watch Group meets quarterly with the local police team that covers this area – now known as the De Beauvoir Safer Neighbourhood Team, lead by Sgt Shaju Bhaskaran. They can be contacted at debeauvoir.snt@met.police.uk and **020 7161 9236**. Their office is at 12-14 Orsman Road (just by the Waterhouse Restaurant). Many of you will have seen the members of the Safer Neighbourhood Team in the area on foot or on their bicycles. They are working hard, especially through 'stop and search', to show a presence that should help to deter crimes from occurring.

At the quarterly meetings, the police team produces details of the crime figures for the area during the last quarter. Based on

Labour was returned in May 1971 smarting at the declaration of the GIA, which thwarted their ambition to raze the area. In the next part of this series, I will recall the public inquiries we would fight to secure De Beauvoir Town. **DBA**

this information and any other issues, the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators produce a Newsletter that is circulated to all the homes in the Northchurch Road area. This information is retrospective and we did try to get enough email addresses together to set up a rather more timely alert process but there were very few positive responses.

As an example of the information shared with the Neighbourhood Watch Group, the crime figures for the May-July 2008 period showed a slight rise over the previous quarter. The main problems are theft from motor vehicles, burglaries (which usually take place during the day) and the theft of bicycles. As ever, not leaving things on show in the car, locking doors and windows when out of the house and having bicycles securely locked and put away are the best advice.

If you want more information, or are interested in becoming a co-ordinator for a local road, please email Roger Till at roger.till@debeauvoir.co.uk **DBA**

Roger Till

DBA Party in the Park

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Similarly offering free activities means that everyone who lives in de Beauvoir Town can relax and participate; at a time of economic difficulties this enables the whole community to come together and share the magic of the De Beauvoir Association's Party in The Park.

We have to thank Kathryn Moore, who was the lead organiser, as well as lots of other people who helped make the day a success. It is worth remembering that this is entirely a local initiative that is able to provide free fun and gifts for children with no admission charge for anyone. The sponsorship and the donations and takings from food and drink go towards the fees we paid for the entertainment, like the fabulous Majestic Brass band from the Royal College of Music, Lucia and Rachel, the face painters, Chris Nicholson, the magician and other things like

licensing, insurance and buying the gazebos. It costs about £2,500 to stage the event.

Lots of organisations helped make it a fun day, like Quicksilver Theatre, St Peter's Church, De Beauvoir Gardeners and Beavers Playgroup. Kingsland Fire Station sent an engine so that children could learn about the work of firefighters. Local businesses gave generous raffle prizes. The Council's Speaker, the civic mayor, Councillor Ian Rathbone, attended and made a short speech praising the organisers.

Other thanks go to the core volunteers: David, Gi, Jane, Carol, Hilary, Peter, Kirsty, Paul, Jenny and Marc, Maggie.

We have loads of photos at www.debeauvoir.org.uk/DeBeauvoirAssociationPartyinthePark2008 **DBA**

Provisional Party in the Park 2008 accounts

Income		Expenditure	
Sponsorship	£2,500.00	Licences	£21.00
Float carried over from 2007 Party	£0.00	Insurance	£160.50
Raffle	£342.00	Publicity	£15.00
Book Sales	£241.00	Participating Organisations Costs/Donations	£1,485.00
Cakes and ice cream	£445.64	Gazebos, Tables, Mats, Misc	£216.04
Pimms, Juice, Tea	£449.54	Decorations	£71.97
Total income	£3,978.18	Refreshment Costs	£747.36
		Postage	£0.00
Party in The Park Kitty		Total expenditure	£2,716.87
2007 Profit	£782.92	Net Profit	£1,261.31