

Dear readers,

Welcome to the first DBA newsletter of 2017. I'd like to start by thanking our man-in-the-wings, Paul Bolding, who's done an amazing job of putting the newsletter together since April 2005. That makes a staggering 38 issues. Paul is now standing down so he can enjoy his well-earned retirement. I'm sure you'd like to join me in wishing him well.

It was in 2005 that we restarted the newsletter after reviving the DBA. The very first issue of the newsletter had appeared in May 1971. In those days, it was called the De Beaver, which was how many of the locals pronounced De Beauvoir. Some time in 1981, the newsletter acquired a whimsical, behatted, cigarette-smoking beaver as its logo, complete with journalist's notebook and pencil, and a Press pass tucked into his hatband. Those were the days!

You can go to <http://www.debeauvoir.org.uk> and follow the links to see an archive of all the previous issues.

Paul and the past editors of the newsletter will be a hard act to follow, which is why I

need your help. If there's anything that you'd like us to feature in the summer and autumn issues, please let us know by emailing info@debeauvoir.org.uk. Better still, if you fancy trying your hand as a contributor – and I know there are many writers out there – do get in touch.

If you can't run to writing an entire article, why not send us a letter aka email? You might like to comment on the last newsletter, on any of the wonderful DBA events that you've attended (helpers always needed!) or on any aspect of life in De Beauvoir. We really would welcome your feedback and you might even see your letter in print.

Finally, I'd like to introduce you to your 2017 DBA committee members. Samantha Selmes is our Chair and Fiona Darbyshire our Vice-Chair and Treasurer. Other members are John Bird, Kathy Boyce, Cec Darker, John Gordon, Jonathan Hoskins, Liz Kohler, Kathryn Lowrie and me, Hilary Mandleberg.

We look forward to bringing you a terrific year of events and newsletters.

Hilary Mandleberg

Reaching out to refugees

Jane King and Tom Carter give us an update on progress towards supporting a Syrian refugee family in De Beauvoir under the Home Office's Full Community Sponsorship Scheme.

A group of De Beauvoir residents and the Benyon Estate have been working for several months with St Peter's church to try and support a Syrian refugee family. Under the terms of the Home Office's Community Sponsorship Scheme, the community has to provide housing for a couple of years, plus all the support that a new refugee family will require in the first year. The Benyon
Continued on p4

Swifts: our feathered neighbours



Swifts often nest under the eaves but may use any suitable gap they find where wall and roof meet

If you're in De Beauvoir between May and August you'll undoubtedly have seen a swift but you may not know the story behind this distinctive bird. Michael Priaulx of the Hackney Swifts Group brings the history of swifts and their whereabouts in De Beauvoir out from under the eaves.

Recognisable by its swallow-like flight and crescent shaped wings, the swift soars high in the sky and hurtles low over the rooftops. It is a bird of extremes; the fastest in the world in level flight and with one of the longest migrations of any creature, travelling each winter to southern Africa, even sleeping on the wing.

But swifts are rapidly declining in the UK, partly because of increasing dangers on their migration but mainly due to a lack of nesting sites – which is where De Beauvoir and the Hackney Swifts Group come into the story.

Swifts in De Beauvoir

Millennia ago, swifts would have nested in ancient tree holes but since Roman times, they have used the nesting sites provided by buildings. Once, our homes would have had plenty of small gaps in the building fabric, plus open eaves for ventilation, all of which provided ample nesting opportunities.

At one stage, De Beauvoir would mostly have been open fields and no doubt swifts would have skimmed over the area's ditches and streams to hunt insects down, before returning to their nest sites in the more urbanised areas. When the first buildings appeared in De Beauvoir in the early nineteenth century, swifts are likely to have taken up residence within a matter of years.

The reason De Beauvoir appeals to swifts is for similar reasons that it appeals to us. As well as the long corridors of greenery, which provide perfect opportunities for hunting insects, De Beauvoir's tall buildings, with their parapets, gable ends and pitched roofs, are both

characterful and provide numerous nesting opportunities – or at least they used to.

The decline of swifts

Swifts are still found throughout De Beauvoir but they are perhaps greatest in number in the northern part. Flocks circling between Englefield Road and Tottenham Road can be prodigious in number but other locations seem much quieter. Was this always the case? Do you happen to remember colonies of swifts in De Beauvoir that have now gone? If so, let the Hackney Swifts Group know so they can build up a picture of what is going on.

Sadly, swifts are no longer found in many areas of London; even previous swift strongholds are now devoid of them. Buildings are demolished or renovated and are replaced by tightly sealed structures that offer zero opportunity for any creature (apart from humans and maybe the occasional spider) to make them home.

And this is replicated across the country. Nationwide, the number of swifts has decreased by half in just a few decades.

Swifts are extremely loyal to their previous nesting sites and remarkably can find their way back to exactly the location where they were born or nested the previous year. However, many now return from their epic migration to find that their nest site has gone or is inaccessible. Sadly, once swifts leave an area, they tend not to return.

What you can do

You can start by watching to see if swifts come to nest in your property. The birds protect themselves from natural predators by not making any noise in the nest and by not leaving any droppings, which can make it difficult to know if you've got nesting swifts. Check by watching the swifts swooping low in the morning and evening, and making their distinctive, very high-pitched 'screaming' sound. If you see swifts flying at rooftop level, there is likely to be a nesting site nearby and, if you watch very carefully, the swift may suddenly disappear then shoot back out again. Chances are it has found the tiniest hole in the structure of a building.

If you think you may have a nest, check with the Hackney Swifts Group or with Swift Conservation UK for advice on how to protect it, especially if you're having work done to your property. All active birds' nests are legally protected. Key points are to make sure that your eaves aren't

blocked between May and August and, if you have a likely nesting hole in the eaves or soffit, leave well alone. We offer advice on ensuring that your home remains insulated and watertight: swifts typically nest outside the thermal envelope of the property, so there is rarely a conflict.

Nesting boxes

Though the best opportunities for swifts lie in saving their existing strongholds, luckily they can be persuaded to take up new artificial nest sites, so installing nesting boxes has become a key part of ensuring the future of these birds. The boxes are inexpensive and discreet.

As part of its ongoing programme, the Hackney Swifts Group has been contacting the owners of public houses, churches and theatres, among others, to see if they will host a nesting box or two. So far they have had many positive replies and are looking to install the boxes, ready to be occupied in May, when the swifts return from their migration.

Some new-build developments even use integrated 'swift bricks' – a type of nesting box that is now so widely accepted that Barratt Homes has created a design being used in many large developments around the country.

It would be a sad summer without the sight and sound of swifts, so let's hope that we can quickly provide and maintain sufficient nesting sites to keep them here.

About Hackney Swifts Group

Hackney Swifts Group is a voluntary organisation that aims to protect swifts throughout the borough, mainly by raising awareness and co-ordinating the provision of nesting boxes. Follow them on Twitter and email if you have any sightings of likely or confirmed nest sites, or if you can offer a possible site for a nesting box.

Twitter: @hackney_swifts

Email: debeauvoirsswifts@gmail.com

General advice & info available from Swift Conservation UK: www.swift-conservation.org

Foster care crisis

There are many reasons why a child may be unable to stay with their birth parents and when that happens, the local authority has a duty to find them an alternative place. Foster care is one of the options. Emma Harry of the Hackney Fostering Recruitment Unit explains how it works and how you might help.

There are currently over 300 looked-after children in Hackney but only around 120 Hackney foster carers to support their needs. As a result, a large majority of our children and young people are placed out of the borough, which means that they are farther away from family, friends, school and the support services that are in place for them. This is why, like many London boroughs, Hackney needs more foster carers.

Could you be one of them?

What's involved

No one doubts that children and young people deserve positive childhood experiences, and that applies to those in foster care, too.

Hackney's community of foster carers strives to achieve the best possible outcome for each child, working with the Council to provide a safe, stable, nurturing and

supportive environment for a child or young person to live in until they are able to return to their family or live independently. There are two main types of fostering placements: short-term placements, which may last from two weeks to two years, and long-term placements, which will see a child placed until they are 18. By fostering for Hackney, you'll be joining a team of dedicated professionals who work together to make a real difference to local children. You will also be given comprehensive support and training as well as financial support that recognises experience and professional development.

Could you make a difference?

There is no such thing as a 'typical' foster carer; you just need to have space in your heart and home, and the dedication to help us care for our vulnerable children and young people.

Hackney needs foster carers from all backgrounds to reflect our diverse community and enable us to offer as much placement choice as possible to children and young people in care. Do please consider fostering. We and our children would be delighted if you would.

For more information about fostering with Hackney, please call the Freephone service line on 0800 0730 418 or email fostering.recruitment@hackney.gov.uk

Reaching out to refugees

Continued from p1 Estate has generously offered accommodation. The group is now beginning to raise funds and gathering support from people with relevant skills. The application, which has the support of Hackney Council, has been submitted to the Home Office and, if it is approved, we could expect a family to arrive in De Beauvoir this spring. Watch for more news in due course.

Party in the Park heads-up

One key element of the Party in the Park is doubtless the free toys and books that we give to all the children. It's wonderful to see their smiles. This year we need an organiser for this very rewarding stall. Could you help or know anyone who can? It would suit someone with small children or friends who'd be happy to work together. We'd be sure to brief you so you know what's involved. If you think you could help, please email info@debeauvoir.org.uk. Thanks.

Making music and cash

If you don't have any money and want to run a fund-raising Prom, what do you do? Ask Cec Darker, of course. Recently retired as one of the artistic directors of the Rosemary Branch, we knew she had a full-to-bursting contacts book. Thanks to her, the DBA raised an amazing £800 for Maggie's Cancer Care at Bart's Hospital. Here's how she did it, in her own words.

Michael's day job is leader of the orchestra at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. He's married to Jane, a superb flautist, while their 15-year-old daughter Beatrice is a talented violinist. But it doesn't stop there. Michael's twin, Trish, is a whizz on the accordion, as we heard when the two of them serenaded our Prom-goers at St Peter's as they enjoyed their interval drinks.

Stella Werth and three school friends, Lucy Lambert, Ellie Haston and Sylvie Field (collectively, the Harley Singers), opened the show with an impressive, subtly nuanced a cappella performance of Fabian Andre's Dream A Little Dream and Michael Bojensen's Nirvana that had the audience spellbound. Next up was a mellow cello piece, Autumn Song by Frank Bridge, played by John Hatt and sensitively accompanied by Romee Day on piano.

Mellow was followed by spirited – the Seguidilla and Habanera from Bizet's opera Carmen, sung by mezzo Katie Grossett, who returned in the second half with a couple of terrific crowdpleasers. Katie will be singing a world premiere with Scottish Opera this April and was accompanied at our Prom by Berrick Dyer, Musical Director of Pop-Up Opera. Berrick stayed on stage to play with Bryony Bridge, who's studying flute at the Welsh College of Music. She gave a confident and complex performance of the Prelude and Scherzo by Henri Busser – and she'd only met Berrick two hours beforehand.

Not forgetting the amateurs

Awesome as these professionals were, there was plenty of great amateur action, too, including quirky first-time duo, Ido Eisenberg on bass guitar and Stephanie Nightingale (voice and ukulele). The 15-strong Great Choir of London moved us all to tears, singing an ancient and beautiful Icelandic hymn, plus a Beach Boys number that had us singing along. Roger Ward played his heart out on the piano with, among other tunes, the ever-popular Girl from Ipanema, which formed part of the 2016 Rio Olympics opening ceremony, so was a very topical choice. (And, in case you didn't know, Roger's front doormat reads: 'I can't hear you. I'm busy playing piano', so it's obvious he's serious.) And last but not least of the amateurs, came St Peter's very own new lay minister, Jenny Walpole, on acoustic guitar. Not surprisingly, she won a huge round of applause.

The Keelans triumph

As we had hoped, the Keelans raised the concert to another level. Beatrice's violin playing of Mozart's Sonata No. 3 and Ernest Bloch's Nigun from his Baal Shem Suite: Three Pictures from Hassidic Life was breathtaking. Michael taught Beatrice from a young age (blimey, she was only 15 when she played in our Prom) and she now attends the Guildhall School of Music on Saturdays.

Jane, Beatrice's mother, blew us away (!) with her flute playing of Benjamin Godard's Suite De Trois Morceaux. She was accompanied by Michael who was then joined by Geoffrey Keen on the violin, Naomi Bowles, viola and Laura Rose, cello, to form the De Beauvoir Quartet. These fabulous professional musicians played us out with pieces by Haydn and Dvorak. They looked as if they were enjoying it as much as we did.

We may not be able to better the staying power of the BBC Henry Wood Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, but we'll certainly give it a try. Michael Keelan and the De Beauvoir Quartet have already said they'll be back at St Peter's to play for us in October 2017. See you there!

Is De Beauvoir hipster central?



We asked this important question of long-time (and we mean long-time) De Beauvoir resident, Jeremy Hornsby. He leapt to the challenge with enthusiasm, alacrity and tongue firmly in cheek. Read the results of his in-depth review of the question here.

Ardent researcher that I am, I was pleased to discover that I had a great deal to go on.

Starting with wool. Well, a house of wool to be precise. A short while ago, a De Beauvoir dwelling was completely encased in wool – woollen wall coverings, woollen floors and presumably woollen saucepans sounding woollenly welcoming as they bubbled on the woollen stove. Hmmm. I assume it was an advertisement for – er, wool. The house was, no doubt, an impressively hipster concept – a simultanagnosia, in fact, that focussed on the material rather than on the house as a whole.

Then there are the three girls who rent the house next

door, whose deliveries of designer lingerie we regularly take in while they are out hipstering.

Nutribullets and other stories

This Christmas, I bought my wife, Jay, a Nutribullet. This was a concept with which I had been unfamiliar until I chatted to three other girls on the Overground (an extremely hipster form of transport, providing, as it does, the opportunity to do one's morning jog from one end of the carriage to the other while sipping one's herbal yoghurt). These young ladies introduced me to the notion of a spiraliser, which in turn led to the Nutribullet, as you might imagine. On receipt of her Nutribullet Christmas present, Jay said 'Hmmm.' So, when one of the girls from next door came to collect the latest consignment of underthings, Jay seized the opportunity.

'Do any of you girls have a Nutribullet?' she asked. 'Yes,' came the reply, 'we have one each, but mine has broken'. She didn't have to say any more. Jay's brand new Nutribullet was hers. The point of this diversion is obvious: three girls, each with her own Nutribullet! How hipster can you get?

Books, pavements and art

Then there is our very own new hipster bookshop, Burley Fisher Books, on the other side of Kingsland Road. They have titles on their shelves like *Trans*, sell a variety of coffees, are very laidback, and put on talks about things. They even sold me the new *Ladybird* book, *The Hipster*.

This states that 'Hipsters like to collect old things that are unfashionable, because that makes them fashionable.' This is a difficult one. De Beauvoir pavements are often littered with discarded garden chairs, office furniture, dangerous-looking electric fires, mangled toys and gas-fired TV sets, all of which seems to indicate the opposite of what the *Ladybird* book says.

On the other hand, these tatterdemalion items tend to disappear quite quickly, leading to the inevitable conclusion that 50 per cent of De B is hipster and 50 per cent is not. The aforementioned book also declares that hipsters like Art. I am reliably informed that a gallery on Southgate Road recently displayed the tangled remains of a crashed car as an objet d'art, and that's clearly very hipster indeed. As is Field to Fork, the newish food emporium nearby that is staffed by Ukrainian ladies and sells kale.



Without doubt, De Beauvoir's Capoeira class would appeal to parents wishing their children to develop into hipsters and to learn how to kick the neighbour's annoying dog to death. As they get older, these children can develop their hipsterism at the Light Yoga Space, where they can enjoy 'chanting, kirtan, satsang pujas, and drop-in meditation.' Who wouldn't?

The OED defines hipster as 'a person who follows the latest trends and fashions'. One assumes that these people are already to be found wherever the latest 'centre of the universe' is located. Which is to say, firstly in Shoreditch, then, incredibly, in Hoxton (the former thieves' kitchen of London where none dared walk



alone), and now along the Kingsland Road to Dalston.

Hipsters move on and out

Given all the publicity that seems to attend Dalston, Jay went to find 'Dalston Cool'. I'm sorry to report that she failed in her mission. It appears that it's now located in Walthamstow and will soon be relocating to Leyton. However, we all know that Hackney in general is considered pretty hipster and De Beauvoir is definitely in Hackney, not in Islington, as the estate agents are now happy to have it. One estate agent was selling flats in the north-west corner of De Beauvoir with a huge noticeboard announcing that the flats would have 'An Armani-suited concierge'. Is that hipster? I'm not sure.

But should there be any doubt remaining about De Beauvoir being hipster, let us consider that among the other delights featured on the De Beauvoir Deli's website, the ingredients of their gin and tonics include Darjeeling tea, juniper, coriander, cassia bark, angelica root, grapefruit peel, artemisia, made from wormwood, mugwort, tarragon and fresh lime.

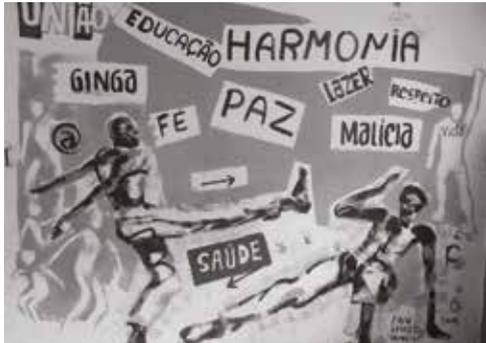
Now, if that ain't hipster I don't know what is.

And finally, there are the De Beauvoir Deli hampers. Last Christmas, *The Times* featured a double-page spread of gift hampers. Among them was the De Beauvoir Deli version. And the strapline above it? 'For the hipster wannabe'. Case made?

Jeremy failed to include a mention of Prick, the cactus shop on Kingsland Road. Perhaps he feared some aggressive comeback.

Brazil meets De Beauvoir

Born out of the struggle for freedom of African slaves in Brazil, Capoeira is now taught in almost every city of the world. And it has recently arrived in De Beauvoir. Simon Atkinson (aka Master Fantasma), who has been teaching and promoting Capoeira for over 25 years, explains all.



If you have children aged 8–12 with some energy to spare, you'll welcome the arrival of a Capoeira class in St Peter's Crypt on Tuesdays from 4.30 to 5.30pm, at a cost of £6 per class.

Capoeira is more than just a martial art or fight game; it's also an artform with a multitude of benefits for young people. Combining music, dance and acrobatics with a physical, non-contact discipline, children soon improve their co-ordination and flexibility as well as developing the skill of strategic thinking. Learning team work and respect for other people are also key, and by hearing the stories of Capoeira's Afro-Brazilian roots, children will learn about cultural understanding, which can, in turn, help them understand their own culture.

Thanks to Pau Gomez for the picture

Call 07779 031 273 or email Simon@fantasma.co.uk to book your place. All classes are taught by Master Fantasma and his assistant, who are both DBS checked. www.capoeira.co.uk

10 things ...

This is the time of year for tidying, planning, lifting and dividing, and some gentle planting. The De Beauvoir Gardeners bring us their ten tips.

1. Get rid of any snail nurseries; they settle in along the back of your flowerbeds, where the soil meets the fence.

2. Finish pruning your roses and tying them in.

3. Clear rotting leaves off the flowerbeds so your bulbs have room to emerge.

4. Cut back any unsightly herbaceous plants that you left in the autumn.

5. Lift and divide herbaceous perennials that have grown too big.

6. Feed the soil, adding mulch and compost; do this in time for the worms to get to work before you plant anything new.

7. Sow half-hardy annuals indoors for your summer display. If you haven't done so yet, hurry out to buy the seeds you need.

8. If you're planting new shrubs in containers, get them in now so they have time to become established before summer puts a strain on them.

9. For windowboxes or containers, plant bulbs in three layers for a long-lived display. Put autumn-flowering bulbs at the very bottom, followed by a layer of late-spring to early summer-flowering bulbs. Finally, cheat by adding a top layer of ready-grown spring bulbs.

10. Enjoy the sight and smell of whatever is coming up in your garden, such as viburnums, sarcococca and mahonia. And see which De Beauvoirite spots the first snowdrop!

www.debeauvoirdenardeners.org.uk
Follow us on Twitter: @DBGardeners

Your seasonal recipe



Spicy baked chicken and veg (serves 2)

250g (9½oz) sweet potato

300g (11oz) potatoes

150g (5½oz) carrots
(you can try other hard veg like butternut squash and parsnips, too; you want around 700g (1½lb) veg in total)

1½ tsp dried oregano

½ tsp ground fennel

1½ tsp ground coriander

2 garlic cloves crushed or ½tsp garlic powder

½tsp salt (optional)

chilli powder/cayenne pepper, to taste

500g (1lb 2oz) chicken drumsticks, skinned if preferred

1–2 tbsp sunflower oil

- Preheat your oven to 200°C.
- Peel and chop your vegetables into large, even-sized large wedges.
- In a large bowl, mix together the dried oregano, ground fennel and coriander, and the garlic. Add salt, if using, and as much chilli or cayenne pepper as you dare.
- Toss the drumsticks and veg in the bowl with the spices, with a dash of oil to help the spices stick. Make sure everything is well coated but not too oily.
- Put just the drumsticks on a baking tray and pop them in the preheated oven. After 20 minutes, add your veg to the tray, spreading them out in one layer and spacing them well or they may not brown. Return the tray to the oven for around 30 minutes more, turning the chicken and veg after 10–15 minutes.
- To test if the chicken is cooked, take a skewer and plunge it into the thickest part of the meat. If the juices run clear then the chicken is cooked. If not, cook for 5–10 minutes more.
- When the drumsticks and veg are golden, remove from the oven and serve.
- Vegetarian option: Replace the chicken drumsticks and veg with about 1.2kg (2½lb) mixed veg cut into even-sized chunks. Roast on a baking tray for around 30 minutes, turning once after 10–15 minutes. When golden and tender (poke with a fork or skewer to check), remove from the oven and serve.

Recipe courtesy of Bags of Taste



www.bagsoftaste.org

Bags of Taste delivers hands-on cooking classes that are also great fun. We teach people who are struggling with food costs to eat better, for less. Our delicious recipes are sourced from around the world and are all designed to cost less than £1.00 per head. At the end of every lesson, participants can buy bags of ingredients for £3.00 per bag, with enough food included for four meals, so you can try cooking it again (and again) at home.

Community activism



Almost 50 years since the De Beauvoir Association was originally founded to prevent the near-total demolition of the area, today's collective action reflects similar problems. Jonathan Hoskins investigates.

Collective action in 1970s De Beauvoir was much more than an episode in the conservation movement. The DBA also tackled broader social injustice, extending regular support to welfare claimants and leaseholders, while the De Beauvoir Trust housing association bought and renovated 50 or more houses. Other measures that may appear as cosmetic 'neighbourhood improvements' often belied a social agenda, such as the campaigns for road closures that could allow children to safely access the area's scant play spaces.

Today's housing market is unrecognisable from those times, with the private rented sector in Hackney doubling in size between 2001 and 2011 alone. The average cost of renting a one-bed flat in Hackney is now 72 per cent of the median take-home salary in the borough. With the almost total decline in new council housing in the UK since Margaret Thatcher's government, there are now over 12,000 households in Hackney waiting for social rent properties to become available – over a quarter of the total provision. Faced with such a shortfall and with no support from today's Conservative government, Hackney Council spends £35 million each year to house 2,700 homeless households in privately rented temporary accommodation – typically a single, bedsit-style room for an entire family,



Then (above) ... and now (above right)

who can now expect to remain there for three to four years before a better alternative becomes available in the borough. As the cost of living in Hackney has risen relentlessly in recent years, so too has this problem; in 2011, less than half the number of households were affected but the figure continues to increase sharply.

Activism in action

In this situation of desperate urgency, local people are forming groups to tackle the problems that local, metropolitan and central government are at best unable to resolve and, at worst, are exacerbating.

Digs (aka Hackney Renters, part of the Radical Housing Network) was established in 2012 to campaign for a better deal for people in rented accommodation. The sustained pressure of such groups has seen concrete victories, not least in November 2016, when letting agents' fees (often £500 or more for a little routine administration) were finally outlawed by the government.

In July 2016, the East End branch of the national group Sisters Uncut occupied a vacant council flat in Marian Court, off Homerton High Street, and converted it into a community centre, to highlight the problem of empty council properties amidst the critical shortfall of genuinely affordable homes and women's refuges.

Sisters Uncut are also working to support groups tackling some of the other problems that have conspired to make Hackney so unaffordable. Staff at the Hackney

What you can do

Find out more about how to support the groups mentioned in this article at:

<https://hackneyrenters.org>

<https://radicalhousingnetwork.org>

<http://www.sistersuncut.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/HackneyLivingWage>

Picturehouse cinema began a series of strikes in October 2016 demanding the London Living Wage, currently £9.40/hr, which is calculated according to the minimum cost of living in London – but even this would require a 42-hour working week just to pay the rent of the average one-bed flat in Hackney today.

Ask a busy person

They say that to get something done, you should ask a busy person. Well, we're sure you're busy but if you're also computer-literate, could you find 1–2 hours a week to help the DBA? We need someone to replace Paul Bolding who, though totally irreplaceable, is retiring from DBA activities. First off, we need someone to write the weekly emails. That involves using Mailchimp, which Paul says is very easy. We also need someone to manage and occasionally update the DBA website. Paul has set it up in HTML using a fairly simple PC-only program but it could easily be transferred to a blog site or set up in a fancy program like Dreamweaver. Among other functions, the website promotes forthcoming events, including allowing people to buy tickets for those events and tables for the Christmas Fair. Paul would be happy to hand over to anyone who is kind enough to take on one or both of these jobs. If you're interested, please email info@debeauvoir.org.uk

Road closures

Work on the latest road closures has now finished. These will be in place for an experimental 18 months but local residents can submit their initial thoughts on the scheme within six months of the work having started. According to Hackney's Transport web pages, work began on 17 October, which means that we have until 17 March. If you would like to have your say, please send your comments in an email headed 'CS1 De Beauvoir Area Closures' to info@hackney.gov.uk. The Council plans to monitor the impact of the closures during the initial 6-month period, then 6–12 months after the closures have been in place, they will carry out a formal review, consulting further with residents, and will decide whether to make the closures permanent, remove them or extend the experimental period.

Jonathan Hoskins' book *Own De Beauvoir!* looks at collective action in De Beauvoir between 1968 and the mid-1980s. It's available in specialist bookshops across the UK, including Burley Fisher books, 400 Kingsland Road.

10 things ...

Samantha Selmes offers her ten road-tested tips for free and almost free things to do locally with small children.

1. Visit a playground: De Beauvoir Square; Rosemary Gardens, Southgate Road; Stonebridge Gardens ('Snake Park'), Haggerston Road, E8 4EP.

2. Ride bikes in these parks: Evergreen Square, E8 3XD; BMX track, Haggerston Park, Audrey Street, E2 8QH.

3. See the animals: Hackney City Farm (hackneycityfarm.co.uk); Freightliners Farm (freightlinersfarm.org.uk).

4. See the fish: Charterhouse Aquatics (charterhouse-aquatics.com) welcome children to come and 'find Nemo'.

5. Listen to a story: Dalston CLR James Library, Dalston Lane, E8 3BQ, Thursdays, 11am–12 noon; South Library, 115–117 Essex Road, N1 2SL, Mondays, 11am; Mildmay Library, 21–23 Mildmay Park, N1 4PG, Mondays, 11am.

6. Visit a toy library: Dalston CLR James Library, Dalston Lane E8 3BQ, Fridays, 10.30am–12.00 noon. Also at Mildmay Library after the Baby Bounce session.

7. Go to Baby Bounce: Mildmay Library, 21–23 Mildmay Park, N1 4PG, Thursdays, 11am–12noon; South Library, 115–117 Essex Road, N1 2SL, Fridays, 11am.

8. Try Stay and Play: Mapledene and Queensbridge Children's Centre (<http://www.mapledenechildrenscentre.co.uk>); Comet Nursery and Children's Centre (http://www.cometnurseryandcc.co.uk/website/childrens_centre/79160); Packington Children's Centre (Parents/carers must be registered with the Centre before using the services. Call 020 7527 5688 or email packingtoncc@islington.gov.uk for more details); Queensbridge Sports and Community Centre.

9. Go swimming: Britannia Leisure Centre, 40 Hyde Road, N1 5JU; Highbury Swimming Pool, Highbury Crescent, N5 1RR; Cally Pool, 229 Caledonian Road, N1 0NH.

10. Make music: Mrs H and the Singalong Band, 24 Exmouth Market Centre, Wednesdays 10–11am and 11am–12.00noon, and Thursdays 10–11am (www.singalongsongs.co.uk).

De Beauvoir has changed a lot over the years, but we've tried to keep the same ethos that has allowed us to continue opening the doors every morning. We're a friendly, locally-owned scooter shop and we try hard to do the very best we can for our customers.

We like scooters, we like people, and we like getting people to ride scooters.

For the people in De Beauvoir who we've converted from public transport, we'd like to say thanks. For those of you who have looked in our windows on your way to catch a bus or train to work and thought, "I could do that", you can!

Come in and see us. We can help you get there faster.

Proud to work and live in De Beauvoir since 1988.

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