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NEWSPAPER

Stop Press: Cowley News is dedicated to supporting everyone including local businesses and groups during the pandemic. Email us now to see how we can deliver free on-line advertising and promote your business or group in our next issue.



By David Henwood

Photo credits to: Laura Greene Photography

Local catering community group **Waste2Taste** is passionate about making the most delicious vegetarian and vegan meals – diverting it from waste and feeding people in OX4.

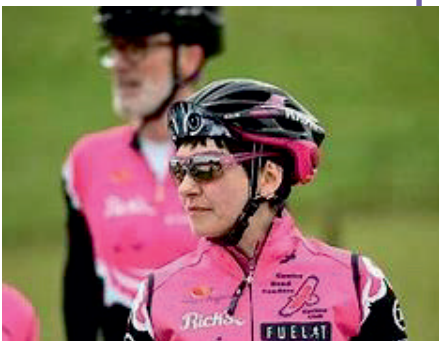
Formed by Marie Lehir and Sandra Ruge in 2017, the enterprise has been busy cooking over 2,500 free meals from their kitchen @Ark-T, for the homeless, isolated, vulnerable or low-income members of our OX4 Community. The resourceful pair also run regular health and wellbeing workshops at Ark-T Centre for homeless and vulnerably-housed adults. If you would like to support

Waste2taste please visit waste2taste.co.uk



Cowley Condors Update

After successfully reintroducing club rides on 4th July, with guidance put in place to facilitate rides in the safest manner possible, the club has recently been able to invite new members to join the club and bring back and operate a wider range of rides - these includes "Meet the Condors", an introductory ride for those looking to join the club, or have recently joined, and our TT events. Please stay tuned to our website, www.condors.cc, for all the latest club news or drop us a line at info@cowleyroadcondors.cc.



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'New' Cowley News Photo Competition

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CRU **P6**



Natty
introduces
the Venda
people **P4**



Cowley in
Bloom
P5 & P7

Cowley News: Issue 22

September 2020

Cowley News is an independent newspaper dedicated to providing news and information to the Cowley area community.

We operate on an equal opportunities policy, encouraging residents to team up to volunteer articles, photographs. Cowley News is working with The University of Oxford to develop a training program for students of the Oxford Academy and for anyone interested in journalism either as a hobby for future career. Interested? Please email the editor :

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Florence Park Gates

There are continued calls to close Florence Park at night again after complaints of noise, antisocial behaviour and drug use.

Oxford City Council cited 'a reduction in available staff during the lockdown.' as the impact preventing the gates closure in recent months.

A recent poll conducted by Cowley News asked residents 'Would you like to see the gates of Florence Park locked at night?' The responses were:

Yes, I would 79% (386 people)

No, I would not 5% (71 people)

I don't mind 6% (31 people)

Cowley News, along with local councillors will continue to lobby for closing the gates and intro-



An incredible 488 local residents have now voted in the Cowley News poll.

ducing RADAR Key compliant locks for the public toilets in Florence Park.

Mask Crusader: Sheila Tree Update

You'll remember that in the last issue of Cowley news we introduced Sheila Tree's valiant efforts to make hundreds of face masks to raise money for the NHS. Sheila has now made an incredible 2,200 face masks and raised £900 for the NHS.

We also need to acknowledge we made a mistake in our original article. Sheila is 88 years old and not 90 as we reported.



Cowley festival of Christmas trees 2020

By Lesley Williams

To all families, schools, churches community groups, shops businesses. Everyone! Please join us and be part of this Cowley community event to bring Christmas joy to Cowley! We deserve it!

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? You contribute and set up in the church a small Christmas tree- real* or artificial or created-decorated and lit or not, as you wish on the theme of

JOY TO THE WORLD

OR create a picture/model/sculpture/mobile on the same theme

OR create a angel/angels from any medium, of any size to add to the heavenly host that will fill the church over into the churchyard

ENTERING THE FESTIVAL is Free but we hope you will bring lots of visitors to view and donate to our charities

*we have an arrangement with the Oxford Sea Cadets to supply real trees at cost & a sponsor for them for schools and youth clubs



ENTRY TO VIEW THE FESTIVAL is also FREE but donations are encouraged with all proceeds to support our two local children's CHAITIES, ROSY and SeeSaw.

To get involved or to sponsor a tree or just ask for more information:

Lesley Williams ctf@cowleyteamministry.co.uk 07982 439 828





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FATIGUE



UTI

Naturescape for Florence Park

By David Henwood

Flo's-the Place in the Park and social enterprise group Naturescape have teamed up to redevelop the mini-golf course into a magical outdoor garden for play, wildlife and learning.

The plan is to create an exploratory and sensory mini landscape of wild flowers and edible foraging. Additional plans include rain-water harvesting, native hedging and a pond. Young explorers will be provided with a myriad of paths leading to small dens, canvas shelters, a mud play area along with a circle area for fires.

The scheme has already received booking commitments from the day care nursery at Flo's for 2 to 5-year olds, schools and youth groups, and a local Dad's group have committed to using Naturescape.

Naturescape will be fenced and gated, but still available for use by anybody in the community at times when it is not booked by community groups.

The group needs to raise £40,000 to deliver the project.

The proposal is led by a group of experienced local volunteers including:

- Annie Davy an early years education specialist
- Kate Jury, garden designer and horticulturalist, whose recent work includes the Barracks Lane Community Garden
- Laura Burt, a seasoned horticultural maintenance expert with specialism in designing outdoor spaces to promote wellbeing.

If you would like to support the scheme please visit Flos-the Place in the Park for more details: <https://www.flosoxford.org.uk/>

'Chalky' is Back!

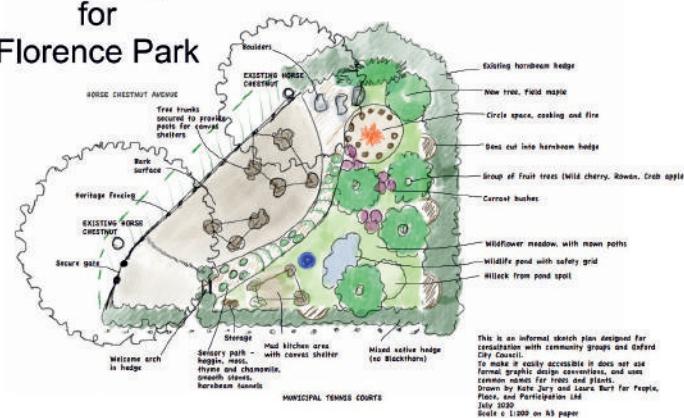
Chalky alias Jane Gallagher, has been busy with a new box of chalk. Visit Florence Park to view her latest work.

Thank you Jane, for all the smiles you've chalked up.

Photo: Kirsten Dennis



Naturescape for Florence Park



The miniature crazy golf course previously located next to the tennis courts has now been removed.

All repairs come with a 3 month warranty

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Meet the Venda—sacred people in a sacred place

by Natty Mark Samuels

Illustrations by Jo Draper & Jessie Jones



Sharing the mystical presence of Limpopo's enchanted Lake Fundudzi – home to the white crocodile.

Cultural tradition often has a deep-seated root in the relationship between our ancestors and their physical environment, helping to continue the human roles as custodians of nature.

Living near the South Africa-Zimbabwe border in Limpopo province, the Venda people revere their surroundings as sacred – especially Lake Fundudzi, located in the foothills of the Soutspansberg mountains, 2, 838 ft (865 m) above sea-level.

Expanding settlements, land erosion from hillside clearance for tree-planting, cattle grazing, and the presence of invasive species vegetation all pose concerns for Lake Fundudzi's long-term protection, and contribute to recent study results showing a deterioration in its water quality. It has been declared a National Heritage Site but some local campaigners fear this has been to promote tourism and job creation more than preserve the environment, and ignores the lake's spiritual value.

The lake spans over three miles (5 km) and is home to the White Python: god of fertility, zwidutwane – mystical water spirits, and the white crocodile.

Natty Mark Samuels, founder of the African School, and a local historian who tutors at Abingdon and Witney college was born in Ashanti – Ghana and feels a close bond with the lake and the Venda traditions honouring it:

"The Venda people revere their surroundings as sacred—especially lake Fundudzi"

"I was drawn to the Venda, by their love of lake Fundudzi, and the Phiphidi waterfall. A special greeting is required when approaching that body of water and young Venda women perform the annual domba dance at Mashovhela Pool – where it is said that a legendary drum can sometimes be heard – and the Phiphidi Falls, where the Ramunangi clan are the long-time custodians. These

bodies of water are sacred to the Venda, as they believe they are the abode of their ancestral spirits."

Venda legend tells how the lake was created when a passing leper was refused food and shelter. The angered man cursed the kraal (traditional African village of huts) and it disappeared below the waters of the newly formed lake. It is believed that early in the early morning you can still hear the sound of drums and the cries from drowned villagers and cattle.

The sacred white python dwells beneath the waters. In ancient times it lived on the lake's surface, visiting the village at night under cover of the dark. One night a woman saw the snake – her terror upset the python so much that it fled to hide in the lake's depths, causing a terrible drought. The drought ended when village women entered the lake to challenge the python. This is perhaps why Venda women are held in such high esteem, holding many important roles in the villages' society.

More recently, the movements of the snake are echoed in the Venda's ritual domba dance: characterised by the sinuous swaying and writhing of a conga line in which adolescent girls of the tribe take part. The temper of the ancestors, and likelihood of rainfall are reflected for the dancers in the lake's fullness and its colour.

When ancient Venda kings died, their remains were placed in the lake, so that the white crocodile would cough up a stone which the new king had to swallow. Returned to the lake, the spirits of Venda ancestors are believed to reside beneath its surface – guarded by the white crocodile.

New visitors to Lake Fundudzi should turn their back and then bend to look at it upside down through their spread legs, a salute known as the ukodola.

"When you think about it, we put up a building of brick and glass and call it holy ground" says Natty. "When looking at the magnificence of mountains, trees and lakes surely they can carry that hallowed labelling also. In learning about pre-colonial Africa, we learn more about its monotheism (belief in one god), amongst the Venda and the other peoples of the continent, long before the coming of Islam and Christianity: their name for God is Nwali. Their traditional belief is based around a deep appreciation and continuing respect for the natural world - and the blessings and bounties it offers."

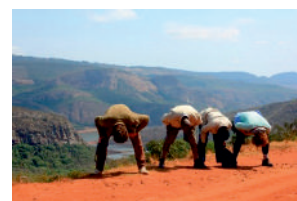
"I am a man who loves rivers and lakes – coming from the Ashanti people of Ghana, we also venerate certain bodies of water, such as Lake Bosomtwi. It was a special pleasure to write about the Venda: around a lake, a pool and a waterfall, that these people revere as sacred."

Cultural beliefs are embedded in all of us, our environment has a huge impact not only how we view our own culture but also how we view the culture of others.

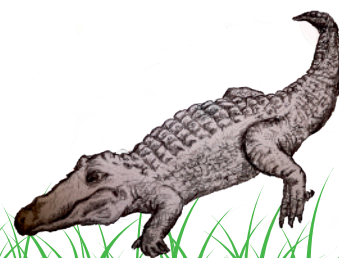
Despite tourism interest, swimming in Lake Fundudzi is still not recommended as it is full of white crocodiles!



Natty Mark Samuels, founder of the African School



Locals greeting Lake Fundudzi



Cowley News Gardening Competition

by David Henwood

Cowley News would like to say a huge thank you to everyone that have taken part in this year's competitions. It soon became apparent that that we needed to broaden our scope and introduce several competitions these being:

Blackbird Leys in Bloom

Cowley in Bloom

Cowley Marsh in Bloom

Littlemore in Bloom

Iffley in Bloom (starting from 2021)

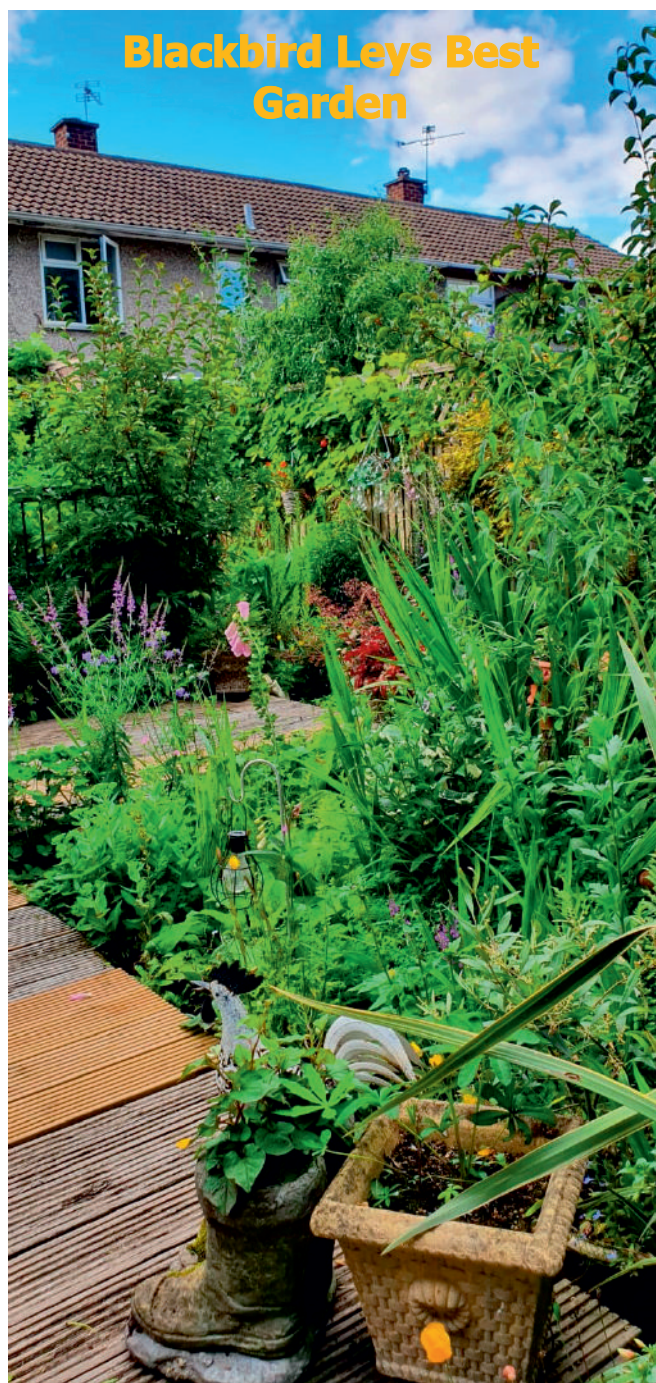
This year probably more than any other year green spaces have played an important role in our personal wellbeing especially during the lockdown, and perhaps we have learnt that our green spaces can liberate spaces for greater bio-diversity. Here are this year's winners...



Above, Joe Jennings of 23 Church Cowley Road. Joe wins **Cowley in Blooms 'Best Bio-Garden'**. Joe has meticulously planned this garden over a two-year period by directly using patterns and resilient features that can be found in natural ecosystems as whole system principles, or 'permaculture'. Joe's garden is a showcase of sustainable design including fruit trees and shrubs. The abundance of wildlife is overwhelming.



75 Bartholomew Road resident; David Thomas's front garden an array fruit trees, and containers "This is very much a working garden, where any pollinator is welcome" David's vegetable & Sunflower containers were outstanding and receive **Cowley in Bloom's 'Best Container'**



Above, Tracey Dean wins **Blackbird Leys in Bloom 'Best Garden'** Tracey moved into 34 Pegasus Road some 20 years ago, to a garden full of car parts. Several years later the garden is an oasis for wildlife, and a sanctuary from the current pandemic.



Made in Cowley 'MPRD & CRU'



Cowley Motors produced 3000 Tiger Moths. Pilots trained for 6 six moths (150 flying hours) before progressing to Spitfire training.



Cowley's Civilian Repair Unit was the largest in Britain, repairing over a 1000 planes back into active service.



Rudolf Hess's plane arrived from Scotland on a Queen Mary, publicly displayed in St Giles before arriving in Cowley.



Molten aluminum being poured into moulds then shipped to factories across Britain.



MPRD was a huge operation producing some 25,000 tons of aluminum



Repaired Spitfire and Tiger Moths on Cowley Airfield

Cowley and The Battle for Britain

By David Henwood & Jo Draper

Also known fondly as Orchard Rec given its long arable history beginning as church farmland, and later a manor house's orchard then allotments, this quiet recreation ground has a significant military history. During the second world war, the Cowley Motors factory turned to building military aircraft – notably the De Havilland Tiger Moth training 'plane – and open-air space was desperately needed for repairs and testing.

The Metal Produce and Recovery Depot (MPRD) based at the factory and staffed mostly by local residents, salvaged parts from damaged aircraft – many of which pieces were then able to be used by Oxford's Civilian Repair Unit (CRU) on the same site in rebuilding 'planes.

Generations of local families worked in the effort – Doreen Holly left a pharmacy apprenticeship in 1943 aged 19, to join the MPRD – employing her newly acquired chemical expertise. Her father already worked in the MPRD no. 50 maintenance unit – recovering fighter plane wreckage for salvaging. Beyond repairs and salvage, the MPRD had a vital intelligence role in preserving recovered metals from German aircraft to be analysed to identify their metal components and potentially find weaknesses that the Allied forces could exploit. Doreen's role was in conducting iron analyses of recovered enemy craft.

The CRU was the country's largest and was headed by Lord Nuffield – the owner of the factory and the designer of the Morris Motor car. Tasked with the necessity of repairing and returning Spitfires and other fighter 'planes to the front line as swiftly as possible, the unit repaired and dispatched almost 1,000 aircraft in 1940 to serve in the Battle of Britain.

Cowley branch line running between Uxbridge and West Drayton (still used by the car factory for freight) was used to transport parts for repair. What is now familiar as the BMW factory's Garsington Lane site became known as the 'Outpatients Department' and the busy trucks moving aircraft parts around the site were called 'Queen Marys/ Marys' by the workers.

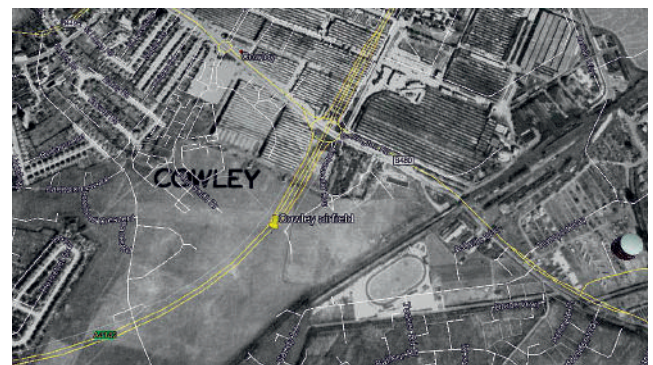
The former allotment land was chosen as the most suitable site for testing the aircraft, and trees removed to create suitable flat space were rehomed with residents of the recently built Herschel Crescent. Very soon, the land joined the car factory as a vital part of the bustling war effort.

Test pilots working on the former allotments, now used as a test airstrip, inspired awe amongst many of the local residents and factory workers. Pete Church worked for four years with Oxford's MPRD and recalls: "When I think back to those days, the test pilot Alex Henshaw used to thrill us every time he took to the skies." Flying legend Henshaw was a household name who had already secured the 1938 King's Cup victory and held the London-Cape Town speed record.

In his paper "Industry and Politics in Littlemore" Tom White wrote...

'...Mishaps were few although I remember on a Sunday afternoon a sharp shower on the parched ground which made it like an ice rink [and] caused two spitfires to pull up and somersault over the fence into Long Lane.'

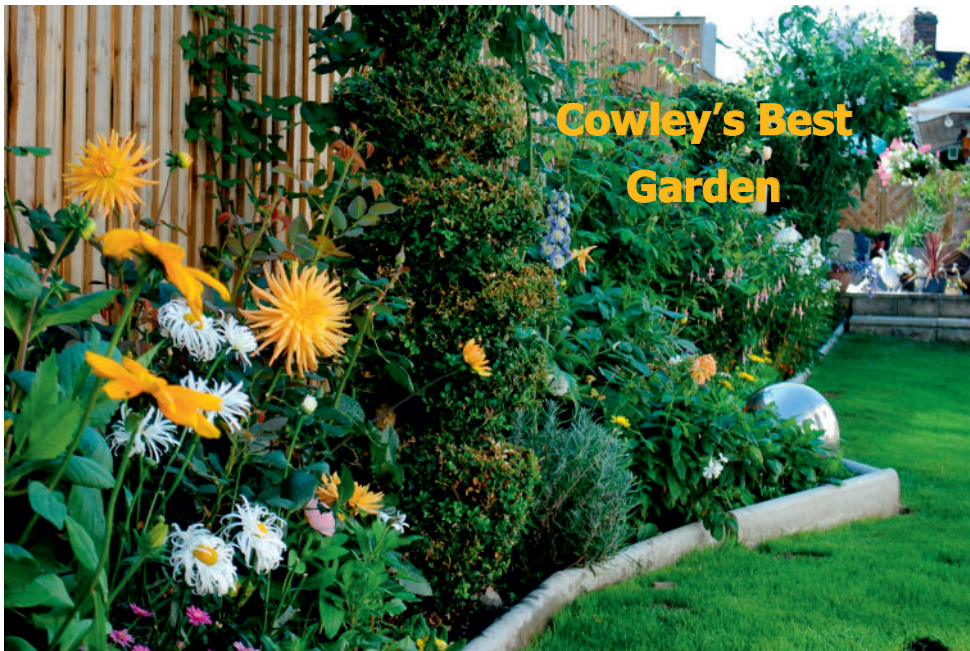
Although aircraft salvage and repair continued at the site past the war, the airfield was used less and less until the Parish Council received a formal proposal to plough over the 'Morris Motors flying field' to grow cereal crops. The Council requested a delay to consider while it examined a community request for six acres of public recreational land. Four days later, on 7 December 1947 the Council held an emergency meeting to confirm it would lease the six acres site for five years to provide the recreational land.



Larger street map available on www.cowley.news

Madeline (Cowley)

Madeline believes garden spaces form a stepping stone to a private space where colour, shape, and texture can be nurtured and explored. Her approach has always been to work on smaller 'manageable' zones that reflect and celebrate her family history.



Madeline said; "After two knee replacements, a lockdown and family losses the garden has had an important therapeutic role".

The experiences inspiring her garden design include the vibrant orange 'crocosmia' plant- ed in solidarity with thousands of other



Dutch citizens during WWII in occupied Holland, where her mother's house was taken over by seven 'polite' German soldiers.

Well done Madeline!

Crocosmia The Orange of Holland'

Carlos Pinto (Crescent Road)

When we visited Carlos to view his colourful garden in Cowley Marsh, we were overwhelmed by a his passion for natural form.

Carlos said; "Gardening to me is therapy and art. I am a painter myself and I always find inspiration in nature. Flowers bring life to my paintings".



Above: Carlos's passion natural is also evident in his beautiful paintings.



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On the Verge of Victory

Cowley News Cowley News has conducted a survey asking local residents 'Would you like to see Managed Rewilding of Grass Verges in Oxford'? The results were:

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Yes, I would | 284 people (94%) |
| No, I wouldn't | 16 people |
| I don't know | 1 person |

Working closely with Oxford City Council's Parks Group and portfolio holder Cllr Linda Smith, Florence Park's bio-diversity group are proposing to introduce a pilot scheme on the two verges in front of Florence Park gates on Cornwallis Road and a further pilot on The Grates. The verges were left uncut for several weeks during the pandemic, resulting in a burst of wild flowers that raised a number of questions about their current maintenance practice.

As part of the formal consultation Cowley News will be running a follow-up poll, and Cllr David Henwood will be conducting door-to-door surveys in the vicinity to elicit the views of local residents for the two proposed pilot schemes.

If successful Cowley News will fund educational boards at verges and designated wild-life hot spots, to help explain and encourage the benefits of bio-diversity in our local area.



Florence Park Bio-diversity group. If you would like to join the group please contact Cowley News and we will put you in touch.

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St Gregory's GCSE & A Level results; congratulations!!

St Gregory the Great School in Cowley said it built on last year's improvement as 65% of students achieved a Level 4 or above in English and 67% achieved a level 4 or above in Maths.

132 grades between 7-9 were awarded and 559 grades between 4-6 were awarded to our students.

A number of our students have achieved high results of 7-9.



Precious Blackstock has achieved Grade 8 in English Language and English Literature, Grade 7 in Geography, Grade 6 in Maths and Biology, Grade 5 in Chemistry, Grade 4 in Physics and RE and is awaiting her BTEC grades.

Students who made the highest progress adding between two and four grades due to exceptional hard work across all of their subjects include Hermela Ghaym, Precious Blackstock and James Lusanta. In all twenty students across the school made two whole grades across all subjects of additional progress.

This success will be added to shortly by a large number of Btec grades giving our students even more to celebrate. We look forward to welcoming many of our students back to sixth form where they will build on this success.

Heather Pallier

Acting Head of Secondary

St.Gregory the Great School

'All of our students who wanted to go to university have been offered places'.



Students and Staff have worked hard to deliver improved results both at A Level and GCSE level.

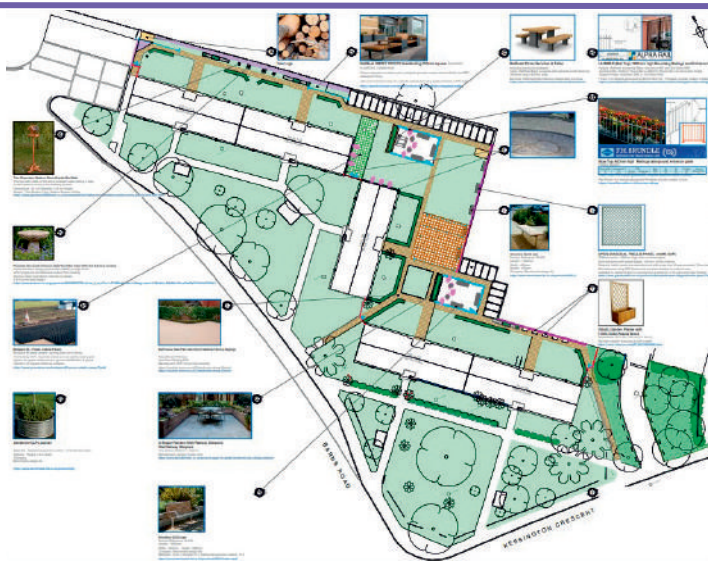
Work on Cowley Council Flats

Oxford City Council has started work on refurbishing the community places within several blocks of flats in Cowley to improve security and communal garden spaces. The scheme costs £0.7 million with work on Wolsley and Riley House already begun. A larger scheme at 54-112 Barns Road is due to commence soon under the same program.

Local Councillor David Henwood said: "These areas have been neglected for many years, so it is important introduce a sustainable maintenance program along with appropriate security fencing to protect our vulnerable residents".



Local Councillor meeting with local residents at the 54-112 Barns Road. flats



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David Henwood

Oxford City Councillor, Cowley Ward

Mobile 07824462002

cllrdhenwood@oxford.gov.uk

Cowley Photo Competition



Cowley News Photo Competition is a new photography competition for residents across the Cowley area.

The competition is free to enter and is open to everyone who lives, works or studies in the area.

Trophies and certificates are all up for grabs and will be judged and awarded in January.

All photos must have been taken during 2020. This year's theme is 'Cowley'.

This year's categories are:

- Best Photo 2020
- Junior Photographer of the Year*

Enter online: [Cowley. News](http://Cowley.News) or email Cowley News now!

Letters to Cowley News

I just wanted to send some feedback regarding the Cowley News that was put through my door.

I have had a very pleasant time sitting down with a cup of coffee whilst stroking the dog and reading the Cowley News. There are some lovely articles in it that make me proud of the efforts people have been putting in during these unprecedented times. These are the types of people I want to hear more about.

I have passed the paper to a keen cycling and gardening friend as there is information in it that could be really useful to him.

Thank you to everyone who work on producing the Cowley News. I look forward to the next issue.

Laura Hamilton

Lapinette (Happy Bunny)

Anne-Marie Dupré, a resident of Florence Park originally created a story about Lapinette for a her 3-year old niece who lives in Paris. During lockdown, Lapinette also appeared in Florence Parks 'window cheer'.

Lapinette has also raised £800 for refugees in Oxford with a target of £2500.

Cowley News is now compiling an interactive voice over story which you can download by visiting the Cowley News website or by using the interactive QR code to used as a bed time story.

You can also donate directly to support Lapinette and her quest to help Oxford refugees by clicking the following link

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/am-dupre



After-School Childcare & Homework Club

By David Henwood



Oxford Education Centre, located on Horspath Road delivers affordable after-school help in maths, English and science to local students. The classes aim to help students aged 6 to 16 improve their grades and feel more confident at school.

Each class is taught by a fully-qualified teacher, with years of teaching experience. The centre's founder, Alyson Smith has been running the centre since 2004 and believes that "every child deserves access to an elite learning environment, with passionate, exceptional teachers".

And parents agree. Amanda Espley (a parent of one of the centre's students) said,

"My daughter was tutored by Seema for her GCSEs for about 6 months now and she thoroughly enjoys her sessions. Seema is extremely patient, and explains things properly and repeatedly until she understands. My daughter received her GCSE mock results and achieved a level 7 when her predicted grade was Level 4!"

Parents who are eligible for the child care element of Working Tax Credits or Universal Credit maybe able to claim up to 85% of the cost.



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2nd Oxford Scout Group

located on Ridgefield Rd, the 2nd Oxford Scout Group established in 1908 is the oldest scout group in Oxford, but due to a rotten floor and ceiling have been forced to use another scout hut in the city.

Despite a loss of income and restrictions the current pandemic has coursed the group faced imminent closure in September 2015. The Group have worked hard to raise £20,000 needed to replace the floor and repair the roof of their beloved scout hut.

Dedicated scout mum Valerie Johnson said: 'We produced letters aimed at local businesses and our local Councillor asking for donations, we have set up a 'Just Giving' Page, and held several fundraising events, such as sponsored swimming and sponsored walk.



Above: Bronwyn Thompson and Robbie Crichton and a staggering number of achievement badges, plus new floor. Well done everyone!



Bethany and Zachary Crichton who were invested virtually via zoom.

Group leader Eleanor Crichton said: 'Many of our children stay with us right through Beavers, Cubs and Scouts learning both practical and social skills that prepare our young people to support others and take care of the world in which we live'.

There are over 50 young people attending our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts sessions. This is an increase of 7 young people compared with last year's numbers, with 15 children and young people on a waiting list. The group is dependent upon adult volunteers and provides training and mentoring to volunteers of all ages. We currently



Sarah Thompson Group Scout Leader and Cub Leader and Vicky Fryer Beaver Leader, work tirelessly creating engaging activities.

| | Age | Meet |
|---------|---------------|------------------|
| Beavers | 6-8 years | Wednesday 6-7pm |
| Cubs | 8-10.5 years | Monday 6:30-8pm |
| Scouts | 10.5-14 years | Tuesday 7:15-9pm |

Membership enquires: join2ndoxford@gmail.com

If you would like to donate, here is the groups JustGiving page.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/2ndoxfordwinterchallenge>



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PIZZAS BURGERS KEBABS

A message From Oxford Direct Services

If there's good to be found from lockdown, it's that many of us have had time to stop, pause and think about how we do things. Across the UK, we've wasted 1/3 less food than we usually would. We've saved leftovers, written detailed shopping lists containing only what we need, and we've baked a LOT of banana bread. And though life is beginning to go back to a form of normal, we want to encourage you to continue your good habits of making the most of your food and reducing the amount of food wasted.



Top tips:

- Get freezer friendly - freeze food when it's near the end of its life
- Write a shopping list and stick to it – don't buy what you don't need
- Use food in date order – use the oldest date first
- Portion your food – only cook what you are going to eat

Reminders on how to safely and responsibly manage your waste:

- Dispose of gloves, masks and sanitising wipes appropriately (rubbish bin only)
- If you're out and about and bins are full, take items home with you
- If you or anybody in your household has symptoms, double bag all waste and store safely for 72 hours before disposing of in the rubbish bin

If in doubt, find out:

Over the last month, we have had some of our recycling turned away from the recycling plant where items like black bags, nappies, food and textiles were present in Oxford's recycling. Not only does this cause big issues at the recycling plant, it wastes valuable resources. If you're unsure about what can and cannot go into your recycling bin, please check online:

<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/recycling>

VOLUNTEERS

Neighbourhood Watch has come to your area across Oxford

The schemes are run by the community and we need YOU

We need volunteers to be coordinators NOW

"YOU can make a difference" Are you a good neighbour?

Do you want to help make your neighbourhood safer?

Do you care about the elderly and vulnerable in your road?

Please join on <http://www.ourwatch.org.uk> or contact

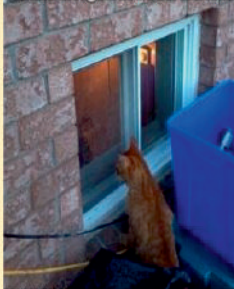
Maggie Lewis on maggie.lewis@yahoo.co.uk for a registration form



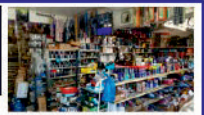
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