

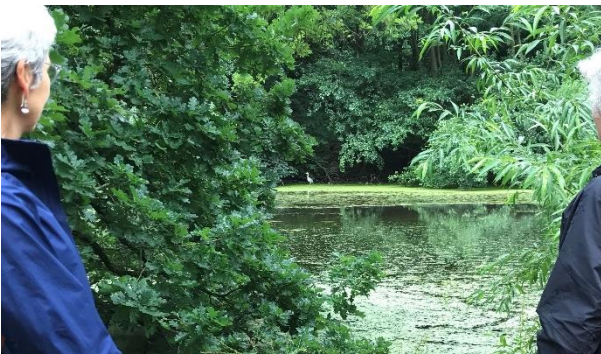


Exploring CS Lewis' Oxford by Kate Castleden, July 2023

Summer is the perfect time for exploring your local area, so this month we decided to offer our amazing [TeaBooks Volunteers](#) the opportunity to take a closer look at some of the places which inspired one of the intellectual giants of the 20th Century, Clive Staples Lewis.

He moved to "The Kilns" (the site of a former brickworks) in 1930. This 8-acre property in the foothills of Shotover, came complete with gardens, lawn, tennis court, flooded claypit lake and extensive wooded hillside. It was the wild lake and woodland that were the inspiration for the Chronicles of Narnia, which have sold over 100 million copies.

On strolling round this enchanting place, with resident heron in sight, it's no wonder Lewis' imagination was stirred. Today it continues to be a place of imagining, as we spotted a fairy door installed on the trunk of one of the trees!



We then made our way to Lewis' place of worship, Holy Trinity Church in Headington Quarry. Lewis had a favourite pew where he would always sit, right next to a pillar that shielded him from the view of most of the congregation! In 1991 a commemorative Narnia Window was installed next to this pew, depicting characters from the books.

It is here that CS Lewis was buried in 1963. He died the same day that JF Kennedy was assassinated, so news of his passing was delayed in being made public. This meant many of his friends and colleagues were unaware of his death until after the funeral.



Volunteer feedback

Thank you very much for organising such an enjoyable morning today. It was most interesting and very informative and so nice to have the opportunity to chat.

I just wanted to thank you for organising the visit around CS Lewis sites last Tuesday. It was a lovely morning and interesting to hear more about him.

We are so fortunate to be able to walk in the footsteps of literary greats, and to explore the places which inspired them. Stories are part of the fabric of our lives, from those we hear and read as children, to those we discover later in life. Our [TeaBooks groups](#) are a great way for local older people to access books and reading in a supported environment. We have groups all around Oxfordshire, and our Volunteers work hard liaising with Oxfordshire Libraries to carefully source the titles, in a range of accessible formats. Each month the meetings are full of discussions as well as laughter and smiles.

It's important that our Volunteers are well supported. We enjoy hosting social gatherings to give them the opportunity to meet up, to exchange ideas and discuss challenges, as well as to get to know each other. One of the challenges we discussed on this occasion was supporting group members who have difficulties with their hearing. I now have further research to do and will report back anon.

We are very grateful to our Volunteers and would like to extend a huge thanks for everything they do to support TeaBooks. We know the TeaBooks participants thoroughly enjoy the meetings, and that groups like this help to combat loneliness and isolation and encourage friendships. We hope our Volunteers feel inspired by the recent visit and continue their great work which really does make a difference.

Kate is the Age Friendly Creative Facilitator at Age of Creativity, where she manages the TeaBooks project and leads on communication.

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