

## **A Look Back Over the Years of the Oakwood and District Historical Society**

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In 1993 a small group, Sylvia Dewhurst, Barbara Worthington, Pamela Mack, Barbara Barr, Brenda Wilkinson and myself, met at my house. We were all interested in the history of our area of Oakwood and wanted to join with others to discover more. Local historian, John Gilleghan, was contacted and he suggested that we meet monthly to discover how much each of us could contribute to our pool of knowledge.

In 1995 the group began what I consider to be one of our most important contributions to Oakwood and its past residents. We spent many hours recording the graves in St John's churchyard, including the church and crypt. Several cold winters were endured, picnicking in this unusual venue, sometimes with very cold hands. Since then the lower graveyard has been fenced off and access is prohibited for safety reasons. It is now seriously overgrown. I am thankful we took our chance to record all the memorial inscriptions while we were still able to do so.

In the new millenium we started publishing our Oak Leaves book series and so far we have published a book a year or so on average, containing a wide variety of historical essays, selling at £3 a copy. It has been hard work and I want to thank each and everyone past and present for their part in the production of these books.

For over a decade the meetings were held in my house. However, things change and a little part of our history was written when we recently decided to move our meetings (now bimonthly) to the Parochial Hall where we feel the larger space may allow us to take a more ambitious direction if we should wish it in the future.

Through the years new members have joined us, some have left and a few have sadly passed away. We have been very fortunate to have many knowledgeable and able people to contribute their own interests and give their valuable services. I feel we have contributed to our community in our own particular way. As we set out to do, the events of past times have been recorded. Nothing stays the same for long and things can easily be forgotten.

As the years go by the average age of the group is steadily increasing. How long we can continue, only time will tell. Whatever happens in the future, I will remain proud of what we have achieved in the few years of the Society's existence.



**Barbara Worthington (left) and Barbara Barr recording monumental inscriptions in St John's Churchyard in 1999.**



**Members of the ODHS on a walk in Roundhay Park in 2010. From the left: Hilary Dyson, Peter Kelley, Murray Mitchell, Jeanne Wrigglesworth, Pauline Duncan Austwick, Neville Hurworth, and Billy (the photographer, Tony Silson's dog)**