

More local Oakridge History. Curious, unexpected, remarkable, altered or perhaps simply overlooked?, compiled by the Oakridge History Group, 2019. 31pp. £3.

This small A5 booklet contains information on 21 varying aspects of life in and around Oakridge and forms an addition to the original Oakridge. A History, published 14 years ago by the same group. Some sections are a couple of pages long, others less, but all throw light on different aspects of village life over the past two centuries.

It begins with a map showing the original Oakridge Common before the Enclosure Act of 1869 and the gates which led on to the common at that time. Seven women are named amongst the property owners who benefitted from the change of ownership. Reference is made to the village pond and to the allotments, the latter also mentioned elsewhere in the booklet. The 13 allotment holders at the end of the 19th century included six with the apt surname of Gardiner!

The second section in the booklet refers to names that have been preserved in the fields, paths and houses in the area. Many local names are still to be researched but currently included are 'Back of Ollis' named after Hollis Gardiner, 'Twissle Stone' after the Twissle family, the dreaded 'Pest House' and many others.

Snippets have been extracted from the school log books showing a difference between practices in the early days and now. Much is made of the variations in attendance levels for different local events; the effect of the re-opening of the silk mill, the appeal of sliding on the frozen canal, attendance at a nearby funeral. The schoolchildren were even photographed acting out the royal wedding between Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson in 1986.

The area around Oakridge has seen quarries and lime kilns in the past and many caves exist as a result of the excavations. Changes to the landscape from new housing and extensions to the old can be seen by comparing old photographs with existing scenes. Even the former Oakridge Chapel has been converted into living accommodation. And now the village has really moved into the Internet age with ultra-fast fibre optic technology available.

A picture is included of the rather unusual war memorial, designed by Arthur Hoare Powell of the Arts and Crafts movement. Originally a memorial to one woman, Mabel Dearmer, a WW1 nurse who died of enteric fever in Serbia in 1915, it included a water fountain providing clean water for the village, pumped up from the valley below. A plaque was later added to include all those who had fallen during the war and a second one added after the Second World War.

Elsewhere in the booklet are tales of otters and pigs, mention, with photos, of the old red telephone and post boxes, a bus shelter with its own village mosaic, a mysterious robbery and other fascinating and wide-ranging insights into life in a Cotswold village. It is well worth the price of £3 and can be purchased from John Loosley at Stonehatch, Oakridge Lynch, Stroud, GL6 7NR. Tel: 01285 760460, Cheques payable to Oakridge History Research Group.

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