

Dorney in 1962: A Year of Renewal, Community Engagement, and Local Developments

The *Dorney Parish News* from 1962 paints a vivid picture of a village deeply rooted in faith and tradition, actively engaged in community life, and grappling with the changing landscape of post-war Britain. The issues reveal the central role of the Parish Church of St. James, the vibrancy of local organisations, and the emerging concerns that would shape Dorney's future.

A Revitalised Church:

The year 1962 marked a period of significant renewal for St. James Church, with several key events and initiatives documented in the *Parish News*:

- **The Christian Giving Campaign:** Launched in 1961, the campaign aimed to revitalise the church's finances and encourage greater participation in church life. The *Parish News* actively promotes the campaign, highlighting the generous pledges from parishioners and reporting on the campaign's progress each quarter. The success of the campaign is evident in the church's ability to undertake vital projects.
- **Rehanging of the Church Bells:** A major achievement facilitated by the Christian Giving Campaign was the rehanging of the church bells and the addition of two new trebles, creating a "delightful little ring of six bells." The *Parish News* celebrates the restoration of the bells, which had not been rung in the traditional English manner for over a century.
- **Installation and Dedication of a New Organ:** The *Parish News* reports on the installation of a new organ, another significant accomplishment made possible by the Christian Giving Campaign. The dedication of the bells and organ by the Bishop of Buckingham is hailed as a historic event for Dorney.
- **Detailed Service Schedules:** Each issue of the *Parish News* provides a comprehensive list of upcoming services, emphasising the regular rhythm of Holy Communion, Morning Prayer, Evensong, and Sunday School.
- **Special Services and Events:** The *Parish News* highlights special services and events, including services for the Season of Epiphany, Lent, and Easter.

An Active Community Life:

Beyond the church, Dorney's social fabric is woven together by various organisations:

- **Dorney Women's Institute (DWI):** The *Parish News* diligently reports on the DWI's monthly meetings, which feature diverse speakers on topics ranging from costume history to handicrafts. The DWI also plays a key role in organising social events, including outings to Blenheim Palace and a visit from elderly residents of Upton Towers, Slough.
- **Dorney Players:** The *Parish News* chronicles the activities of the Dorney Players, an amateur drama group that provides entertainment for the parish. Productions mentioned include "The White Sheep of the Family" and a dramatic interlude at the Parish Summer Fete. The group also holds rehearsals and social gatherings.
- **Dorney and District Horticultural Society:** The *Parish News* encourages support for the Horticultural Society, reporting on their meetings, which feature speakers on gardening topics. The society also organises the Annual Show, a highlight of the village's social calendar.

Emerging Local Concerns:

The *Parish News* also sheds light on the challenges and changes facing Dorney in 1962:

- **Impact of the M4 Motorway:** The construction of the M4 motorway, a major infrastructure project transforming Britain's transport network, is a recurring topic in the *Parish News*. The publication reports on the motorway's progress, its impact on Dorney's landscape, and the potential consequences for the village.
- **Local Governance and Parish Council Activities:** The *Parish News* provides a platform for discussing local governance, reporting on Parish Council meetings and highlighting issues like the renaming of roads, the provision of a bus shelter in Dorney Reach, the maintenance of the War Memorial Garden, and the planning of a new playing field.
- **Road Safety:** Letters to the Editor and Parish Council reports express concerns about road safety, particularly along the newly constructed sections of the M4 and in areas with increased traffic flow.
- **The "New Look" of the *Dorney Parish News*:** The publication itself undergoes a transformation in 1962, adopting a new format and expanding its distribution to reach every household in the parish. The editors emphasise the magazine's role in fostering community spirit and providing a platform for sharing information and opinions.

Dorney in 1962 emerges as a village experiencing a period of renewal and adaptation. The *Parish News* serves as a valuable chronicle of this pivotal year, capturing the spirit of community engagement, the revitalisation of the church, and the emergence of issues that would shape the village's future.