

Dorney in 1964: A Year of Community Life, Church Stewardship, and Local Developments

The *Dorney Parish News* of 1964 presents a detailed record of a year filled with church activities, community events, and local developments that shaped the life of Dorney. The sources reveal a community deeply invested in their church, engaging in lively social events, and actively participating in local governance.

A Flourishing Church Life:

The Parish Church of St. James is at the heart of Dorney, with the *Parish News* offering a comprehensive view of its activities:

- **Regular Services and Events:** Each month, the *Parish News* meticulously lists the schedule of services, including Holy Communion, Morning Prayer, Evensong, and Sunday School. Special services for occasions like Mothering Sunday are also highlighted.
- **The Christian Giving Campaign:** A major focus of 1964 is the ongoing three-year Christian Giving Campaign. The *Parish News* consistently advocates for the campaign, emphasising its success in supporting church finances and maintenance. Detailed reports are provided on the funds raised and how they are utilised for church repairs, expenses, and charitable contributions. The campaign culminates in a decision to continue the system of Christian Giving beyond the initial three years.
- **Community Engagement:** The church actively engages with the community through events like the Dorney Memorial Society's annual meeting, which discusses the upkeep of the War Memorial Garden.

A Tapestry of Social Activities:

Dorney boasts a vibrant social scene with various organisations catering to a range of interests:

- **The Dorney Women's Institute (DWI):** The *Parish News* reports on the DWI's monthly meetings, featuring diverse topics such as a "Holiday in Russia." The group also organises events like the Spring Hat School and outings to destinations like Berkeley Castle. Fundraising is an important aspect of the DWI's activities, with events like secondhand clothes sales contributing to the New Village Hall fund.
- **The Dorney Players:** This amateur drama group provides theatrical entertainment for the community, staging productions like "The Stolen Prince" and "The Monkey's Paw." The Players also organise social events like treasure hunts and wine-tasting evenings.
- **The Dorney Locospotters' & Aircraft Spotters' Club:** This club caters to enthusiasts of trains and aircraft, organising visits to engine sheds and stations. However, the club faces challenges in 1964 due to the Chairman's commitments and the limited season for outdoor activities.
- **The South Bucks Conservative Association - Dorney Branch:** This political organisation holds meetings and social events, including a New Year's Party featuring dancing, bingo, and roulette. The branch also actively participates in local and national elections, mobilising support for their candidates.

Active Participation in Local Governance:

The *Parish News* offers insights into the workings of the Parish Council and the concerns of residents:

- **Parish Council Meetings:** Each issue reports on the Parish Council's monthly meetings, covering various local issues.

- **Road Safety:** Road safety emerges as a significant concern. The Parish Council addresses issues like the safety of a proposed football pitch and car park, the need for road widening, and the placement of road signs. Residents also raise concerns about road safety in letters to the editor, particularly regarding the behaviour of motorists and the safety of children playing near roads.
- **Public Inquiries:** The *Parish News* extensively covers the public inquiry regarding the proposed road improvements north of Dent's Corner. The inquiry highlights the complexities of local development projects and the involvement of residents in shaping their community.
- **The Blue Bus Service:** The discontinuation of the Blue Bus service prompts expressions of gratitude for its service and concerns about the impact on residents, particularly school children.

Education and Community Dialogue:

The *Parish News* facilitates community dialogue through its "Letters to the Editor" section, where residents engage in lively debates on topics such as:

- **The Eleven-Plus Examination:** This controversial topic sparks a debate about the merits and flaws of the exam, highlighting diverse viewpoints on education and social mobility.
- **The Behaviour of Youth:** Letters discuss concerns about the behaviour of young people, particularly noise complaints and vandalism, sparking discussion about the responsibility of different generations within the community.

Dorney in 1964 is portrayed as a community deeply involved in its church, engaged in a vibrant social life, and actively participating in shaping its local environment. The *Parish News* serves as a valuable platform for sharing information, fostering community dialogue, and reflecting the values and concerns of Dorney residents.