

## Dorney in 1977: A Year of Community Life and Local Concerns

The *Dorney Parish News* from 1977 offers a window into village life, marked by active community organisations, engagement with local issues, and a focus on preserving Dorney's character.

### Key Themes from 1977

- **Economic Hardships:** The editorial in the January issue reflects on the "grimness" of the previous year and the ongoing economic difficulties facing the nation, emphasising the need for hope and determination in the face of challenges.
- **Community Engagement:** The *Parish News* highlights the numerous organisations contributing to village life, including:
  - The Dorney Women's Institute (DWI) with its monthly meetings, guest speakers, and fundraising efforts.
  - The Dorney & District Horticultural Society (DDHS), fostering a love of gardening with competitions, social events, and their annual show.
  - The active participation of the Dorney Guides, Brownies, and Cub Scouts.
  - The vital work of the Eton College - Dorney Parish Project, bringing together Etonians and individuals from diverse backgrounds for shared experiences.
- **Parish Council Activism:** The Parish Council actively addresses local concerns, including:
  - Planning for the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations.
  - Opposition to a proposed water extraction development, citing concerns about noise, traffic, and environmental impact.
  - Debates over a new housing development at Harcourt Close.

### Notable Events and Developments

- **Departure of the Vicar:** The January issue announces the departure of Rev. John Methuen as Parish Priest and Warden of the Eton/Dorney Project in August, expressing gratitude for his contributions and acknowledging the sadness felt by the community. He emphasises the importance of the Eton/Dorney Project and its role in broadening perspectives.
- **Lent and Easter Observances:** The February issue details plans for Lent and Easter, including:
  - A Lent Project in support of the Church Missionary Society, with a guest speaker introducing the initiative.
  - A concert by the Thames Voyces in the church.
  - A series of film evenings at the Vicarage exploring world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam), reflecting a commitment to interfaith understanding.
  - The annual Riverside Children's Festival, bringing together young people from neighbouring parishes.
  - Confirmation services followed by a Parish party.
- **Fundraising Efforts:** Several fundraising initiatives are highlighted:
  - The DWI's efforts to support the Eton/Dorney Children's Holiday Fund through a coffee morning.

- The ongoing paper collection at the Vicarage to benefit the Children's Holiday Fund. The involvement of Eton College in this initiative is noteworthy, showcasing collaboration between the school and the village.
- **Concerns About Loose Dogs:** The February editorial voices concerns about the increasing number of loose dogs in Dorney Reach, highlighting the dangers they pose to traffic and pedestrians. The author suggests revisiting the possibility of a by-law to address this issue.

#### **A Village Newspaper: The Role of the *Dorney Parish News***

- **Platform for Dialogue:** The *Parish News* serves as a platform for community dialogue, publishing letters from residents on matters like the state of Boveney Chapel and concerns about sewage sludge application on Dorney Common.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** The Parish Council uses the *Parish News* to communicate financial information and meeting minutes to residents, demonstrating a commitment to transparency.
- **Challenges and Appeals:** The editors of the *Parish News* express concerns about rising printing costs and the need for increased financial support from the community to ensure the publication's sustainability.

#### **Dorney in 1977: A Community in Transition**

The *Dorney Parish News* from 1977 portrays a village facing economic uncertainties and navigating local challenges. The community demonstrates resilience through active engagement in organisations, fundraising efforts, and constructive dialogue facilitated by the *Parish News*. The year is also marked by a changing of the guard at the church, with the departure of Rev. Methuen leaving a void to be filled. The *Parish News* acts as a chronicle of these transitions, capturing the spirit of a community working together to shape its future.