

Key Events and Issues in Dorney Parish During 1983

The *Dorney Parish News* from 1983 provides a fascinating window into the life of a vibrant village community navigating a blend of cherished traditions, local concerns, and the stirrings of broader issues that would shape their future.

Community Life and Activities

- **Dorney & District Horticultural Society (DDHS):** The DDHS played a pivotal role in village life, hosting a diverse array of events, including a cheese and wine evening with a talk, a Spring Gardens Competition, a Bring & Buy Sale, a Coach Trip, the Summer Gardens Competition, a Barbecue/Dance, the Horticultural Show, a Harvest Supper, a film night with cheese and wine, and an A.G.M. This busy schedule suggests a thriving community with a deep appreciation for gardening and social gatherings.
- **Dorney Women's Institute (DWI):** The DWI offered women a platform for social engagement, education, and community involvement. Their meetings included speakers on topics like "Does What We Eat Really Matter?" and "Jerusalem." They also organised a Coffee Morning to raise funds for Langley Hospice and participated in the Child Welfare Clinic. The DWI's activities reflect a commitment to both personal enrichment and community service.
- **Dorney Women's Social Club (DWSC):** The DWSC hosted monthly gatherings, featuring talks on intriguing subjects like "Are We Superstitious?". They also organised a "Walkabout" and an A.G.M. with a Cheese & Wine Garden Party. The DWSC provided a space for women to socialise, learn, and enjoy each other's company.
- **Dorney Players:** The local theatre group, the Dorney Players, presented a well-received production of "A Tomb with a View," demonstrating the village's vibrant arts scene. They later staged "Lord Arthur Saville's Crime" which, based on rehearsal observations, promised to be "hysterical".
- **Social Events:** The village calendar was filled with social events that fostered community spirit and provided fundraising opportunities. These included dances organised by various groups, jumble sales, a Valentine Dance, a Steak Pie Supper and Talk, and a "Vicarage Happening."

Local Governance and Key Issues

- **Parish Council:** The Parish Council diligently addressed a wide range of local concerns, showcasing its commitment to improving residents' lives. Meeting minutes reveal discussions on:
 - **Road Safety:** The Parish Council advocated for road safety improvements, particularly at the A4 junction with Marsh Lane, where they requested a pedestrian crossing. They also raised concerns about speeding traffic.
 - **Bus Service:** The Parish Council grappled with the challenge of maintaining a reliable bus service for residents. They explored options for improving the existing service and discussed the possibility of establishing an alternative private service.
 - **Planning Applications:** The Parish Council carefully reviewed planning applications, ensuring that new developments aligned with the village's character and addressed any potential impacts on residents.

- **Village Amenities:** The Parish Council actively worked to maintain village amenities, including the playground, the War Memorial garden, and street lighting. They also advocated for the continuation of the large rubbish container service.
- **Eton Dorney Project:** The *Parish News* mentions an "Eton Dorney Project" involving fundraising events to support initiatives related to both the village and Eton College. The project's nature remains somewhat unclear, but it highlights a connection between the village and the neighbouring institution.
- **Financial Matters:** The Parish Council demonstrated responsible financial management, publishing detailed accounts and discussing the Parish Precept. They also sought donations from local organisations to help cover rising printing costs for the *Parish News*.

Controversies and Emerging Concerns

- **Proposed Fifth Terminal at Heathrow Airport:** The looming possibility of a fifth terminal at Heathrow Airport cast a shadow of anxiety over the village. Concerns centred on increased aircraft noise, traffic congestion, and the potential for road and rail expansion through Dorney. This issue highlights the village's vulnerability to external forces and the potential for development to disrupt their peaceful existence.
- **Importation of UHT Milk:** The *Parish News* reported on objections to the importation of UHT milk from France and other EEC countries, reflecting a broader national debate about food safety and the impact of European integration on local industries.
- **Employment of School Children:** New bylaws governing the employment of school children sparked discussion. The regulations prohibited door-to-door sales and the collection of money by children, reflecting a changing societal perspective on child labour.

The Dorney Parish News as a Community Forum

The *Dorney Parish News* in 1983 served as a vital platform for communication, information sharing, and the expression of diverse perspectives within the village. The publication's content reflects a strong sense of community pride, a dedication to local governance, and an awareness of the challenges and changes that lay ahead for Dorney. The seeds of future conflicts over development and the preservation of the village's character are evident, hinting at the complex issues that would confront the community in the years to come.