

Key Events and Issues in Dorney Parish During 1985

The *Dorney Parish News* from 1985 offers a captivating glimpse into the life of a close-knit village grappling with a blend of local concerns and anxieties about broader developments that could impact their future.

Community Life and Activities

- **Dorney & District Horticultural Society (DDHS):** The DDHS played a central role in village life, hosting an array of events, including a cheese and wine evening, the Spring Gardens Competition, a Bring & Buy Sale, a Coach Trip, the Summer Gardens Competition, a Barbecue, the Summer Show, a Harvest Supper, another cheese and wine evening, an A.G.M., and a dance.
- **Dorney Women's Institute (DWI):** The DWI provided a platform for women to engage in social and educational activities. Their meetings featured speakers on diverse topics such as "Women in Africa," "Reminiscences of a Policewomen," "Bucks. Medieval Churches," and "Opera behind the Iron Curtain". They also participated in competitions, outings, and fundraising efforts.
- **Dorney Women's Social Club:** The Social Club hosted a successful demonstration of Microwave Cookery, indicating an interest in modern conveniences and technologies. They also held a film evening, showcasing a variety of genres, including a documentary on Hoechst Porcelain, a comedy film, a scientific film about time, and a travelogue about Coventry. Their activities suggest a desire for both entertainment and intellectual stimulation.
- **Social Events and Gatherings:** The *Parish News* mentions several social events, including a Spring Dance organised by the Dorney School PTA, a Jumble Sale, Anniversary Dances, and Christmas Dances. These events fostered community spirit and provided opportunities for fundraising.
- **Church Activities:** St. James Church remained the heart of the parish, holding regular services, Sunday School, and special events. The *Parish News* consistently provided a detailed "Duty Roster," outlining the roles of various parishioners in supporting the church's functions.

Local Governance and Key Issues

- **Parish Council:** The Parish Council actively addressed a wide range of local concerns, demonstrating a commitment to improving the lives of residents. Their meetings covered topics such as:
 - **Road Safety:** The Parish Council worked to improve road safety, particularly in areas like Oak Stubbs Lane and Dents Corner, where road surface issues posed hazards.
 - **Bus Service:** The Parish Council engaged in discussions about improving the local bus service, recognising its importance for those without cars. They also expressed concern about potential changes to the service due to a declining market in Maidenhead.
 - **Planning Applications:** The Parish Council reviewed and commented on planning applications, ensuring that new developments aligned with the village's character.

- **Maintenance and Services:** The Parish Council focused on maintaining village amenities, advocating for the continuation of the rubbish skip service and addressing issues like the condition of the War Memorial and street lighting.

Controversies and Emerging Concerns

- **Proposed Fifth Terminal at Heathrow Airport:** The potential construction of a fifth terminal at Heathrow Airport sparked significant anxiety in the village, primarily due to concerns about increased aircraft noise and the potential for road and rail expansion. The *Parish News* printed a letter from a Dorney Court resident to their MP, Tim Smith, expressing these concerns and urging action.
- **Relocation of Perry Oaks Sewage Works:** The possibility of the Perry Oaks sewage works being relocated near Dorney emerged as a major concern for residents. The *Parish News* highlighted the potential for a "giant London sewage works" to be situated close to the village, raising fears about unpleasant odours and environmental impacts. This issue became a focal point for community mobilisation and the Parish Council's advocacy efforts.
- **Berkshire County Takeover:** A proposal for Berkshire to absorb Dorney into its jurisdiction met with unanimous opposition from the village. This sentiment reflects a strong sense of local identity and a desire to remain within Buckinghamshire.

The Dorney Parish News as a Community Mirror

The *Dorney Parish News* from 1985 provides a rich tapestry of village life, capturing both the vibrancy of its community spirit and the anxieties residents felt about external forces that could reshape their future. The publication served as a vital channel for communication, keeping parishioners informed about local events, Council activities, and emerging issues that demanded their attention. The recurring themes of protecting the village's environment, preserving its character, and advocating for its interests within broader political contexts reveal a community deeply invested in its own well-being and determined to shape its own destiny.