

Key Events and Issues in Dorney Parish During 1988

The *Dorney Parish News* from 1988 provides a glimpse into the life of this charming village during a year marked by community celebrations, new initiatives, and the first whispers of concerns that would later develop into major controversies.

Community Life and Events

- **Fundraising and Social Events:** Dorney's vibrant community spirit was evident in the numerous fundraising and social events organised throughout the year. These included:
 - **Jumble Sales:** The St. James Church held jumble sales to raise funds for various church initiatives.
 - **New Year's Eve Dance:** A New Year's Eve dance raised money for Great Ormond Street Hospital Appeal Fund.
 - **Whist Club:** The Dorney Whist Club held regular meetings throughout the year, providing a social outlet for residents and welcoming newcomers.
 - **Dorney Players:** The Dorney Players, a local amateur theatre group, planned performances, adding to the cultural richness of the village.
- **Dorney & District Horticultural Society (DDHS):** The DDHS was a very active organisation, hosting numerous events throughout 1988:
 - **Steak and Kidney Pie Evening with Quiz**
 - **Cheese and Wine Evening with Talk About Herbs**
 - **Spring Gardens Competition**
 - **Bring and Buy Sale**
 - **Summer Evening Visit to Waterers Nurseries**
 - **Bar-B-Que & Dance**
 - **Summer Gardens Competition**
 - **Annual Show**
 - **Harvest Supper**
 - **Cheese and Wine Evening**
 - **A.G.M.**
 - **Winter Dance**
- **Dorney Women's Institute (DWI):** The DWI held monthly meetings, providing women with opportunities for social connection, learning new skills, and engaging in community initiatives.
- **Church Activities:** The St. James Church played a central role in village life, with regular services, Sunday School, and various community events like barbecues and fundraising efforts.
- **Summer Fete:** The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the **Summer Fete held at Dorney Court** in June. This highly anticipated event drew large crowds and featured a wide range of attractions, including traditional games, food stalls, pony rides, a grand auction, and live music.

Emerging Concerns and Controversies

While 1988 was largely a year of community events and positive developments, some issues arose that hinted at potential future conflicts.

- **Filming on Dorney Common:** The use of Dorney Common for filming purposes sparked debate, raising concerns about the impact on the environment and the commoners' rights. One resident expressed frustration with a film company's attempt to portray Dorney Common as a "flat piece of the Low Countries." Another resident raised concerns about potential damage to the Common and the need for filming activities to be conducted responsibly and with proper permissions.
- **Traffic Concerns:** Speeding traffic through the village was a growing worry for residents, with calls for action to improve road safety. One resident highlighted the need for traffic calming measures, expressing concerns about the potential for a serious accident.
- **Gravel Extraction:** A resident expressed concerns about the potential impact of gravel extraction on Dorney Common, highlighting the importance of protecting the common land from exploitation and ensuring that any changes adhere to strict regulations.

Local Government and Infrastructure

- **Parish Council Activities:** The *Parish News* regularly featured updates on Parish Council meetings and activities, covering topics such as road maintenance, playground repairs, street lighting, and local planning issues. This coverage demonstrated the Council's commitment to keeping residents informed and addressing matters of local concern.
- **Village Hall Management:** The Village Hall Management Committee played a vital role in maintaining the community's central gathering place, ensuring its smooth operation and responding to residents' needs.

Looking Ahead: 1988 in Retrospect

1988 was a year characterised by community engagement, a thriving social scene, and the diligent efforts of the Parish Council and various organisations to enhance village life. However, the early concerns about filming on the Common, traffic safety, and potential gravel extraction foreshadowed the more significant controversies that would arise in subsequent years, particularly those related to Eton College's proposed rowing trench. The *Dorney Parish News* from 1988 provides valuable context for understanding how these issues would unfold and the community's response to the challenges of balancing development with the preservation of Dorney's unique character.