

Key Events and Happenings in Dorney Parish During the Year 2000

The *Dorney Parish News* for the year 2000 offers a fascinating glimpse into a community on the cusp of a new millennium, balancing a desire to preserve its historical character with the demands of modern life. The sources reveal a parish buzzing with activity, from millennium celebrations to horticultural shows and heated discussions about local issues.

Celebrating the Millennium in Dorney Parish

The dawn of the year 2000 brought a wave of excitement and community spirit to Dorney Parish, as residents embraced the opportunity to mark the new millennium:

- **Millennium Week:** The highlight of the year was undoubtedly **Dorney Millennium Week**, a ten-day extravaganza held from June 16th to 25th. The meticulously planned event featured a wide array of activities, designed to appeal to all ages and interests:
 - **Historical Exhibition:** A popular attraction was the "**Dorney Thru' The Years**" exhibition at the Village Hall, showcasing photographs, documents, and artifacts that brought the parish's history to life. The exhibition aimed to engage both longtime residents and newcomers, offering a glimpse into Dorney's past and its evolution over time.
 - **Social Gatherings:** Millennium Week provided ample opportunities for residents to socialise and celebrate together. Events included a pig roast sponsored by Eton Aggregates, a barbecue and dance organised by the Dorney & District Horticultural Society, and an "Evening at Dorney Court" with stalls and entertainment for families.
 - **Commemorative Projects:** The Parish Council also spearheaded several initiatives to create lasting reminders of the millennium, including:
 - The publication of a **Millennium Map**, featuring illustrations by local artists.
 - The creation of a **village history booklet**.
 - The presentation of **Millennium Mugs** to all young residents under 18.
- **Other Millennium Events:** Beyond the official Millennium Week, the spirit of celebration extended throughout the year:
 - The Eton Wick History Group held a "**Millennium Social Evening**" in January, featuring a quiz based on local history.
 - Bressinghams Nursery donated a **variegated yew tree** to the parish to mark the new millennium.

The Dorney & District Horticultural Society: A Flourishing Community Hub

The **Dorney & District Horticultural Society (DDHS)** played a vital role in the social life of the parish, organising a range of events that brought residents together around a shared passion for gardening:

- **Garden Competitions:** The DDHS hosted popular spring and summer garden competitions, encouraging residents to take pride in their gardens and to showcase their horticultural skills.
- **Annual Show:** The DDHS's annual show was a highlight of the year, offering a platform for residents to exhibit their flowers, vegetables, fruits, home-baked goods, crafts, and artistic talents.

- **Social Events:** The DDHS also organised a variety of social gatherings, including a cheese and wine evening, a summer barbecue, and a coach outing to Broughton Castle.
- **Looking Ahead:** However, the DDHS faced challenges in maintaining its membership and volunteer base. The chairman expressed concern about the future of the society, urging residents to step up and ensure its continuation.

Recurring Themes: Traffic, Noise, and the Impact of Development

While the year 2000 was marked by a celebratory atmosphere, the *Dorney Parish News* also reveals ongoing concerns about local issues:

- **M4 Motorway Noise: Noise pollution from the M4 motorway** was a persistent problem, particularly for residents of Dorney Reach. The Parish Council engaged in ongoing efforts to address the issue, meeting with the MP Dominic Grieve and representatives from the Highways Agency to advocate for noise mitigation measures. A meeting in January discussed the possibility of installing noise barriers, drawing on the example of successful noise reduction efforts along the M40.
- **Traffic and Road Safety:** Concerns about **traffic and road safety** frequently surfaced in the *Dorney Parish News*. Issues included:
 - **Speeding vehicles** on Village Road and Marsh Lane.
 - **Damage to grass verges** caused by vehicles driving and parking on them.
 - **Traffic congestion** during events at Dorney Lake.
 - The **safety** of a "hump" bridge on Marsh Lane.
 - A proposal to **increase the speed limit** on Lake End Road. The Parish Council actively sought solutions to these problems, exploring options like traffic calming measures, speed limits, and verge protection.
- **Development Pressures:** The *Dorney Parish News* hints at concerns about **development pressures** and the potential impact on the parish's rural character. A resident's letter expressed anxiety about the proliferation of signs advertising Christmas trees at Dorney Court, suggesting a broader concern about commercialisation. The ongoing construction of the **Eton College rowing trench**, while recognised as a valuable sporting facility, also raised concerns about noise pollution and traffic congestion.

Community Engagement and Advocacy

Despite these challenges, the *Dorney Parish News* reveals a community actively engaged in shaping its future:

- **Parish Council Responsiveness:** The Parish Council demonstrated a commitment to addressing residents' concerns and to improving the quality of life in the parish. They actively engaged with external agencies, explored solutions to local issues, and kept residents informed through the *Dorney Parish News*.
- **Resident Participation:** Residents played an active role in voicing their concerns and contributing to community discussions. They submitted letters to the editor of the *Dorney Parish News*, participated in Parish Council meetings, and volunteered their time to local organisations and initiatives.

Conclusion

The year 2000 was a pivotal year for Dorney Parish, marked by a spirit of celebration and a determination to navigate the challenges and opportunities of a new millennium. The

Dorney Parish News provides a valuable record of this period, capturing the vibrancy of community life, the ongoing efforts to preserve the parish's unique character, and the persistent concerns that shaped local discussions.