

Dorney Parish News
June 1971

Article by Philip Dayrell Stewart Palmer

OUR VICAR AND THE DORNEY-ETON COLLEGE PROJECT.

My last note was in December and this is to try to bring you up to date. For some 700 years the Parish has had its own Vicar who has enjoyed security of tenure in his job and in his free house. In 1970 his pay or stipend was the Benefice income of £378 from ancient endowments with an augmentation of £1,100 from the Diocese of Oxford. And the Parish paid £344 of his parochial expenses.

When Rev. E. T. Sherlock retired on 31st December 1970 the Benefice was sequestered. Since then the Church Commissioners have sent the Sequestrators a monthly cheque from the Benefice income so that visiting clergy can be paid their fees and expenses.

The Diocese is unwilling to continue to pay £1,100 a year to support a Vicar for such a small Parish as ours and so we can no longer have a Vicar who only serves us.

The Bishop of Oxford has, however, agreed to licence a priest-in-charge who will live in our Vicarage and, look after us in addition to doing another job. To make this legally possible the Benefice will remain sequestered, which will result in the priest-in-charge having no security of tenure of job or house. Also at the request, of the P.C.C., after they had heard the Bishop of Buckingham, I have agreed to a 3 year suspension of my patronage, which my Family have enjoyed, in father to son succession, for some 350 years. The formal Notice making this historic break in continuity is given below in full.

Now, Eton College wish to take on an additional chaplain and it has been agreed between the College, the P.C.C. and myself that this man, when we have approved him, shall be the man whom the Bishop of Oxford will be asked to licence as our priest-in-charge.

For us this will mean, apart from the benefit of close association with Eton College, that resident in our Vicarage we will have an experienced and able priest in his early 30s, who will be responsible for taking our Sunday services, baptisms, marriages and funerals; for our pastoral care; and for visiting our sick and needy.

At Eton College he will teach 8 periods a week; will help to arrange and conduct some of the services in the College Chapels; and arrange the boys' confirmation conferences at our Vicarage.

Our Vicarage will house the Priest-in-charge (whom I prefer to call our Vicar - de facto, if not de jure) and a resident caretaker. The other rooms will be set up to take about 20 resident boys. The money for this work including equipment is being found by Eton College from various sources. In other words the Vicarage will become a sort of conference centre with the Vicar acting as Warden.

As such a centre it will be used for:-

- (a) to enable confirmation candidates, usually aged 15-17, from Eton College to spend weekends there in groups of about 20 so that they may discover what it means to be an adult Christian in modern society.
- (b) as a centre for social action where boys and masters might together work out what their social responsibilities in the community ought to be.
- (c) as a centre where young people from very different backgrounds could mix together and discover what it means to live together as a group and to interpret their experiences in terms of society as a whole.
- (d) For conferences of up to 20 young people arranged by the Diocese or Education Authorities.
- (e) to run in the summer holidays for young people who are deprived of the normal holiday opportunities.
- (f) to be a place where the residents of Dorney Parish and members of Eton College could learn from each other something about adult Christian citizenship in the World.

This imaginative and exciting project has the enthusiastic support of the Bishop of Oxford and is likely to come into being as soon as the remaining legal and financial matters have been tidied up. It will be managed by a Council on which Dorney will have two members.

The Project will have its own funds, into which the P.C.C. has agreed to pay £660 a year towards the Vicar's stipend. The balance and other expenses will be found by Eton College from various sources.

Clearly the Vicar will not have the time and cannot be expected to carry out work which has in fact always been the responsibility of the Churchwardens and P.C.C. In the past the Vicar has, quite wrongly, been expected to do this. Accordingly the P.C.C. has undertaken that our new Vicar will not be responsible for the maintenance and structure of the Church building or for any fund raising activities in the Parish. These are the tasks of the Laity, although the Vicar, as Chairman of the P.C.C., will no doubt give encouragement and support. Finally the P.C.C. has undertaken

that the Vicar will be informed of who ought to be visited. So do not blame the Vicar for any omission, but blame the P.C.C.

BENEFICE OF DORNEY.

Pastoral Measure 1968: Section 67.

We Kenneth John by Divine Permission Lord Bishop of Oxford acting under the provisions of the above mentioned Measure DO HEREBY DECLARE that during the period of THREE years from the date hereof the vacancy in the Benefice of Dorney shall not be filled and that during that time the Patron of the Benefice shall not be entitled to exercise his right of presentation without the consent of the Pastoral Committee and the Bishop.

Dated this First day of May One thousand nine hundred and seventy-one .

Signed KENNETH Oxon

P.D.S.P.