

How it all began...

In June 1976 a comparatively new Dolton resident, Mrs. Irene Monks, had a bright idea. She ran it past her friend and neighbour, Mrs. Kathleen Harris, who also thought a village magazine would be a good thing. Their idea was to provide general, everyday information and, hopefully, get villagers to contribute with articles, letters, etc.

They did their 'homework' by looking at other local magazines and working out costings - costs to be offset by local advertising. They then put their thoughts to a public meeting where the idea was generally met with enthusiasm. So, a committee was formed and fund raising started. A 50/50 auction and cake sale raised £350 - enough to buy a duplicator.

In October 1976 - only four months later - the first issue of the Dolton and Dowland Diary was hot off the press! The data was typed on stencils, rolled off and then the pages collated and stapled by the committee. This task was later taken over by members of the Youth Club and their leaders. (In 1980 this included Martin Lock, Graham Hutchings and Mark Knight!)

The first copy was free to everyone and from then on cost 5p a month. Then, as now, the diaries were distributed by volunteers. Each new resident was given a free copy and their arrival announced in the diary - as were any births, marriages and deaths. With all the comings and goings in the village today, that would be far more difficult!

Apparently there were 28 different groups and organisations in the village at that time including a rugby club (though they had no fixtures!) and the Friends of the Earth. Many of these contributed a monthly report. Various issues of the Diary included a children's page, recipes, beauty tips, poems and competitions - with a regular feature being 'Pop Scene'!

By the time the diary was well established ordered copies were being sent as far afield as Canada and Australia - to relatives, friends and ex-Doltonians.

It's now 40 years on and the Dolton and Dowland Diary is still going strong (though I understand publication did stop for a while along the way). We now have a new team' in charge and we wish Alan, Maria and Roger every success in their new venture.

Jill Buckingham

(P.S. My mother, Mrs. Maude Fishleigh, was a member of the original committee and delivered the Diary around the village for many years.)