

## GOINGS ON AT THE WHITE HART

*The Aylesbury Club was originally formed in 1810 and while history does not record where the club met, it seems fairly certain that it sometimes would have met in The White Hart in Aylesbury. This inn was for the first half of the 19th century one of the most famous inns outside London. It was located next to the Assize Court, and comprised a three gabled building, with a gallery running round a courtyard, and seems to have been the social and business centre of the town.*

*The main business of the town was conducted in the Change Room, while taxes were collected in the Crown Room, and the Church collected tythes in the Mitre Room.*

*Its most famous landlord was Mr. J. K. Fowler, who regularly entertained local dignitaries like Disraeli, the Rothschilds, the Verneys and Lord Lonsdale at the Inn.*

*In 1835 he helped organise the famous steeplechase from Waddesdon to Aylesbury, which caused crowds to come to Aylesbury from London and far and wide. The course was alongside the turnpike road so that the public could watch, and included crossing the river Thame at a point 28' wide. It proved so popular it became an annual event. The after-race dinners held at The White Hart were magnificent. Squire Drake of Amersham once gave a dinner for 70, and one of the courses alone was 26 different dishes of fish!*

*On one occasion the Marquis of Waterford while drunk decided to ride his horse up the steps of the front door and into the dining room. This was achieved successfully, but going out proved more difficult and pieces of furniture and a number of windows were smashed by the frightened horse.*

*In 1851 during the Stewards' dinner after the race someone decided to emulate the feat, and despite protests from Mr. Fowler brought his horse into the dining room. Another guest, a Mr. Manning, then boasted he could jump the horse over the dining table — which he proceeded to do to great applause. However, another guest tried to do the same thing only to have the horse's hoofs hit the table, so sending cloth, plates, glasses, etc. crashing to the floor. Mr. Fowler then called a halt to further equine activity and the horse was taken out.*

*However, the episode became famous, and the little grey horse which had jumped the table was sold by its owner at a price far in excess of its market value.*

*Despite its fame, for some reason the author could not discover, the White Hart did not survive long after this and was demolished in the 1860s.*

## THE AYLESBURY CLUB

# Duck Dinner



**TUESDAY, 19th OCTOBER 1993**

**at**

**THE WALTON LOUNGE**

**THE CIVIC CENTRE, AYLESBURY**

