

The Aylesbury Club and the Duck Dinner

The Duck Dinner is held in Aylesbury each year by the Aylesbury Club, which was originally formed in 1810. Its objects then were “good cheer, good humour and good neighbourhood”, and its members met each month on the Friday nearest to the full moon during the period from November to April. The founder members included prominent local dignitaries of the day including Earl Temple, Lord George Grenville, the Reverend Sir George Lee, Bart, and Colonel Nugent. The annual subscription was two guineas to pay for wine and each dinner cost 7/6d. Interestingly dinner was served at 4.p.m. Our present habitual times for eating have only come in during the past century – no doubt as a result of the invention of firstly the gas light and then the electric light. Wine was limited to one bottle per member although there was a proviso that:

“Such members as chose to remain after the president has quitted the chair, to pay for the wine they may call for, at the rate of 6/- per bottle”

Apparently the dining sometimes got out of hand; it is reported that on 21st January, 1832 an inquest was held in respect of one Robert Brazil, who died as a result of choking on stewed beef which he had been “eating voraciously” at Judkins Bakehouse”.

The club continued until the 1950’s when it seems to have faded away. However in 1973 Maurice Buckingham, the then Mayor of Aylesbury, re-constituted the club with the same laudable objects, and it is now as strong as ever, although its members are now more temperate.

The Club’s only raison d’etre apart from the above objects is to continue the tradition of the annual duck dinner, and the Club and its members hope that all its guests will enjoy tonight’s dinner.