

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. 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 into the 1950's; the Bucks Herald recording in September 1954 that the author Sir Compton Mackenzie proposed the toast at the Bulls Head in Aylesbury and that the ducks were provided by the British Oil and Cake Mills demonstration farm at Stoke Mandeville. After this time the club seems to have faded away. However in 1973 Maurice Buckingham, the then Mayor of Aylesbury, reconstituted 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'être 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.

From The Duck Dinner 20 Years ago Aylesbury Plum Sauce

As older members will remember, the Club has had a chef devise its own special sauce, both to provide a suitably piquant accompaniment to what one writer called "The Prince of Birds", and so as to satisfy the epicurean tastes of its Members. For those who would like to try producing the sauce themselves at home, the recipe is set out below.

- 1 pint Demi-Glaze
- ½ lb. Red Plums
- 1 oz. Plum Preserve
- 1 oz. Demerara Sugar
- 2 tablespoons Lemon Juice
- ½ gill Brandy
- 1 oz. Butter

Skin and stone plums. Melt butter in pan. Add plums and cook gently until soft. Add lemon juice and simmer slowly for 5 minutes Place contents of pan in liquidiser and make a puree. Put the plum preserve, sugar and brandy in pan and gently simmer for 5 minutes. Add plum puree and demi-glaze. Simmer for a further 20 minutes.
Season to taste.