

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 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. 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.

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.

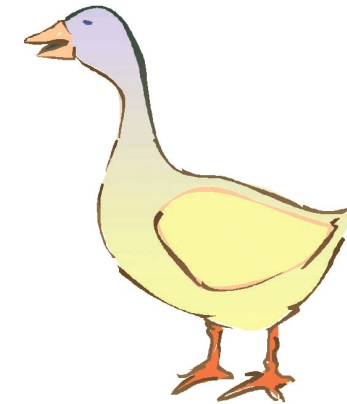
Duck Food

Extract from "The Aylesbury Duck" by Alison Ambrose

The principal aim of the duckers was to get the newly-hatched ducklings as fat as possible before their first moult, usually at eight weeks, when they could no longer be sold as ducklings. Fortunately ducklings have voracious appetites and it was not difficult to persuade them to consume large quantities of food. In the first week of life, the ducklings were fed several times a day on either a mixture of toast soaked in water and chopped up boiled eggs, or hard-boiled eggs mixed with boiled rice and bullocks' liver cut up into small pieces. After about the second week, this diet was gradually replaced with barley-meal or sometimes rice boiled and then mixed with 'greaves', (pronounced graves) which was boiled tallow scrap. This diet fattened the ducklings' flesh without building up the bones and was easily digestible. It was high in protein and fattened the ducklings quickly without making the ducklings' flesh taste greasy and undoubtedly gave them their delicious flavour. Some of the large-scale duck breeders boiled the carcass of a horse or sheep and gave it to the ducklings instead of 'greaves', with a similar effect. The ducklings were fed three times a day on this rich diet, at 7.30 am, 12.30 pm and at 4.40 pm, until they were ready for market. In addition, a supply of green food was necessary to provide vitamins and minerals so the duckers gave them nettles, cabbage and lettuce. If ducks were not given enough vitamin E they became giddy and kept falling over, and eventually died. A careful eye had to be kept on the ducklings as, if allowed to escape, they could easily devour the young sprouting vegetables in a cottager's garden, and their particular partiality to strawberries is commented on. Grit was needed to break up the ducks' food, to make it digestible, and it also helped to clean their bills. The Aylesbury breeders used a very suitable type of grit found at Gubblecote and Long Marston, near Tring, which is a fine gravel composed of angular flints, rounded pellets of chalk, tertiary flint pebbles and fragments of Upper Greensand which rest on the Gault. This special grit was responsible for keeping the bills their characteristic flesh colour. In 1894 the duckers paid 1s 6d (7.5p) load for this grit which was placed in the ducks' drinking water.

The Aylesbury Club

Good Humour, good cheer and good neighbourhood



Serving the Duck since 1810

DUCK DINNER

Saturday 10th May, 2014

At

The Oculus,
The Gateway,
Aylesbury.

President: Mr Ray Ghent

Members of the Aylesbury Club
Welcome you to The Annual Duck Dinner

Dinner Menu

Quail Egg Salad
With hickory mayonaise
Option Asparagus and Orange Salad

Roll and Butter

Half a Roast Duck
with The Aylesbury Club Plum and Brandy Sauce
Option Roast Beef or Stuffed Aubergine (v)

Roast and Dauphinoise Potatoes
with Fresh Seasonal Vegetables

Meringue Case filled with Strawberries and Cream

Selection of Cheese and Biscuits

Coffee and Mints



TOASTS

“The Queen”

by
Mr Ray Ghent
President Aylesbury Club

“The Aylesbury Duck”

by
Michael Rand
Chairman A.V.D.C

“Response”

by
Bob Chevin
