

Dining

Pub puts Aylesbury Duck back on the menu

Legendary dish makes comeback at Broad Leys pub, supplied by only breeder in England

by Anna Dowdeswell

Reporter

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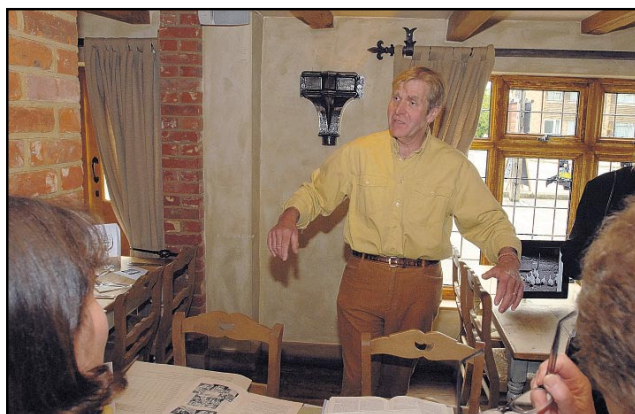
AYLESBURY Duck is back in town being served on a menu for the first time in about 50 years.

The Broad Leys on Wendover Road is the only restaurant in Aylesbury serving the legendary dish with traditionally-bred ducks supplied by the last remaining breeder of the bird, farmer Richard Waller.

Helen Wood, manager of Broad Leys, said: "There are not too many things Aylesbury is famous for, but everybody seems to know about Aylesbury ducks. We did a bit of research into it and found out there was only one seller left. We knew it would be a unique selling point for us and we thought how nice it would be to bring the ducks back to Aylesbury and to keep the tradition going. People have been able to experience it in other restaurants but not in Aylesbury - where it was originally from.

"We have played around with the styles and did a few testings. They were successful and now we have got a few weeks behind us we thought we should officially launch it so the town knows about it.

"So far the response has been very good, people have enjoyed the meal and sent their friends along, telling them they must try this genuine Aylesbury duck. One old couple came



Staff and customers at relaunch of the Aylesbury Duck dish at Broad Leys

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RICHARD
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in and they remembered some of the breeders in Weston Turville. It has sparked off many conversations. People are chatting and telling others about it and that's the best form of promoting it."

At its peak in the 1850s thousands of Aylesbury ducklings were exported by train to London's Smithfield Market and it was eaten by the upper classes. In 1861 cook Mrs Beeton declared it as a "universal favourite" in *The Book of Household Management*.

Mr Waller's farm in Chesham formed part of that heritage. He said his ducks were descendents of the first Aylesbury ducks: "It was my grandmother who brought them to Aylesbury in about 1870. She bought them for her dowry.

"Once you had a good strain you'd make sure you never got rid of it. You add to it, but not get rid of it. We have no reason to believe they have been bred out."

He supplies ducks to Waddesdon Manor, The King's Head in Ivinghoe, The Five Arrows in Waddesdon, but The Broad Leys is the first in half a century to put it back on an Aylesbury menu.

"My father said there were no Aylesbury restaurants or butchers



who bought Aylesbury duck - only people around the town. That's going back to the 1960s," Mr Waller said.

And he approved of the Broad Leys duck dish. "It was very nice. The breast was cooked to perfection - just off pink - and the leg was very tasty and cooked perfectly."



Broad Leys pub serves Aylesbury Duck for the first time. Head chef Rhett Earle prepares the meal