

# The Victorian Banquet at The Lord Warden Hotel

Patricia Allen

The Victorian Banquet was a grand, flamboyant and opulent affair. An elaborate social occasion filled with formal speeches and social etiquette rules. The cluttered table settings: the gilded china, gleaming glassware, silver cutlery, fresh hothouse flowers, lush green foliage and ornamental centre pieces, together with the choice of venue were always designed to impress the illustrious guests and show off one's wealth and standing in social society.

The dress to wear was the most important decision for the ladies. But what of the banquet menu itself? Well, this was a sumptuous, gluttonous affair. Picture an endless procession of soups, fish, meats, salads, vegetables, puddings, pastries, meringues, ices. Pity the pot washers.

Here is a menu reported in the Dover Express and East Kent Intelligencer of Saturday 15th November, 1862. The Banquet was held at The Lord Warden Hotel for the double purpose of celebrating the election of the new Mayor and celebrating the 21st Birthday of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

## The Bill of Fare...

**Soups** - Mock Turtle. Queue de Boeuf aux Crécy. Julienne. Mulligatawny.

**Fish** - Turbots with lobster sauce. Codfish with oyster sauce. Stewed Eels. Fried Smelts. Soles au gratin.

**Entrees** - Côtelettes de Porc with sauce Robert. Vol au Vent de riz de Veau. Olives de Boeuf en ragout. Curried Fowls.

**Relevés** - Roast Turkeys and Sausages. Roulade de Veau. Haunch of Mutton. Sirloin of Beef. Hams. Tongues. Boiled Fowls with oyster sauce. Raised Pies of Game. Boeuf braze a la flamande. Roast Goose.

**Rots** - Pheasants. Wild Ducks. Partridges. Snipes.

**Entremets** - Gateaux a la Russe. Compote de Poires. Pommes Meringues. Gelee varie. Vases de Patisserie. Crème de Kirschwasser. Pains à la Mecque. Boudins aux Cinque Ports. (Cinque Port Blood Sausages).

But of course, the majority of Victorians could afford (health-wise if not money-wise) to dine as magnificently as this. They ate far more calories than we do today, but they were much more physically active. Obesity was rare.



*Banquet at The Lord Warden Hotel*



*Lord Warden Hotel, Dover*