

The Brothers' Friendly

Let others tread the thorny paths of fame,
And earn, by strife or politics, a name.
Be ours, the ways of pleasantness and peace,
Be ours the task to bid distress to cease,
To cheer the hours of poverty and pain,
To hear no voice ask for our help in vain,
To take the anguish from the parting groan,
To hush the widows low, despairing moan,
To glad the orphans young and guileless heart,
And generous feelings cause in all to start.

No homage will we pay alone to state,
The good with us shall be the only great,
Though Odd our name-though wrapt in mystery's
shroud-
Our acts, our deeds shall speak for us aloud,
By them alone we seek to stand or fall-
We hold the hand of fellowship to all.
Could but the world our secret actions see,
Mankind one mighty brotherhood would be.

The Brothers Friendly Society of Chipping, held its first meeting on the 10th January 1789. Societies such as this were self help groups made up of working men, who by forming savings clubs could offer each other financial help and support in times of sickness, accidents and in the event of a members death, then to their family.

There was also a good fellowship side to the Chipping Society. Their monthly meetings were held in the Talbot Hotel, and liquor always formed a part of the evening's expenditure. A certain amount of pageantry was attached to the Society. They held their first Annual Day in June 1791. In later years it was called Club Day and held on Ascension Thursday. The day began with a church service in St Bartholomew's. Almost one hundred years later, on the Club Day of the 1st June 1889, the vicar, in the course of his sermon, said that he didn't know why they in Chipping had been accustomed to celebrate their Club Day on Holy Thursday, but he thought that they ought to celebrate it with due regard to the fact that it was on this day that the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven. He knew that to many their Club Day afforded numerous temptations, but hoped that by faith in the Holy Spirit, they would be able to show others temperance and moderation. From this it appears that on some previous occasion, they had not. After the service there was a parade around the village, with a band to accompany them, followed by dinner at The Talbot Hotel. In 1791 there were 75 dinners at a cost of £3.15s.0d, with a further £2.7s.0d spent on liquor.

The Society elected a treasurer, two stewards and a clerk, or secretary and elections were held annually. The first treasurer was Edmund Parkinson, James Noble was the clerk and Richard Stirrup and James Dilworth were the stewards.

A box with three locks and three keys was purchased and kept at the meeting room in the Talbot Hotel. In the box were kept the books, papers, securities and cash belonging to the Society. In June 1889 The Preston Guardian reporting on the Club Day, said that the Society had £103.12s.0d in the meeting room safe, it would be hard to imagine such a thing being reported in any newspaper today.

Any person wishing to become a member had to satisfy the committee that they had a sound constitution, were free of any lameness, sickness or disorders. They were not to be employed in any dangerous business, such as that of a miner, painter, gilder, soldier, seaman, or a militia man. However, should any existing member be impressed as a soldier, sailor or militia man, they were to be allowed to retain their membership. In 1789, new members had to make an initial payment of 5s and a further 8d for a copy of the rules. Thereafter a subscription of 2s had to be made quarterly. Any member who did not make this payment could be expelled. In the Overseer's Account book for Chipping it is recorded that on the 28th July 1823 John Bainbridge was to be given 16s to pay off his arrears to the Society. The payment was not accepted by the Society and was returned to the Overseer, but there is no mention of John Bainbridge being expelled.