



ENGLISH TWELFTH CAKE

Lester Smith has provided this seasonal Carpenter & Westley slide image of the English Twelfth Cake. He has found this explanation at www.historicfood.com: "Although the tradition of making these cakes dates back to the medieval period, John Mollard's 1803 recipe seems to be the earliest printed recipe for an English Twelfth Cake. These decorated cakes were an important element in the celebrations for the feast of Epiphany. They were at the height of their popularity when Mollard wrote his cookery book. It was the custom for each guest at a Twelfth Day entertainment to take on the role of a particular character for the whole evening. This was achieved by choosing a card at random from a pack. These were illustrated with images of various comic characters. As well as the King and Queen, who led the revels, there were many others – Counsellor Double Fee, Mrs Prittle Prattle, the Duchess of Puddle Dock, Toby Tipple and Sir Tun Belly Wash were all popular. The evening's entertainment ended with the finale of cutting the elegantly iced cake, which was usually very large and decorated with two crowns for the king and queen and sugar paste or wax images of the other characters." Some of the characters mentioned here are similar to the ones he showed in the Society's recent virtual meeting (see pages 2 and 20).