



Middle Nene Archaeological Group

Annual Dinner

26 November 2016

Here's is the list of dishes that will make up the menu for our dinner celebrating the life and work of William Shakespeare

Food and entertaining became, over the Tudor period, symbols of political and social influence. New and exotic foods came for the voyages of exploration, particularly from South America. For example, turkeys were available from the 1540's, and potatoes were imported from the middle of the century. These two will not be served at our dinner because they were regarded with deep suspicion and neither became popular for a hundred years or more. Indeed, raw vegetables and fruit were thought to be poisonous and cause disease. Gradually, a wider variety of fruit was cultivated, and vast quantities of citrus fruit were imported. The major change was the explosion in popularity of sugar, which caused an epidemic of tooth decay in the aristocracy, including Queen Elizabeth I.

The growing significance of food and the vast kitchens built in the great houses encouraged the publication of cookery books which are still available today. Estate papers, including those from Hampton Court, give detailed information about purchases of food and drink and name the officials who supervised the trade. Plays, poems and paintings refer to food preparation and eating; there are over 200 references to food and drink in Shakespeare's works.

This repository of information makes the selection of a menu a difficult choice, but I have tried to combine authenticity with modern tastes.

We will provide

- forks!; though these were only used to eat sticky sweetbread
- Manchet bread, expensive white bread, will be served so that you can wipe clean your plate and cutlery

so you can behave like your forebears.

Don't worry, we'll have the usual modern-day cutlery and crockery for the more sophisticated; contrary to the accepted wisdom of Hollywood, diners were expected to display delicacy and good manner at the table. The buxom serving wenches were also a myth, servers were young men, specially trained.

And so to our menu....in no particular order

Olive Main, Secretary



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A grete pie (a real mince-meat pie)

Chicken with orange sauce

Spinach flan/pie

Jumbles

Marchpane

Shrewsbury biscuits

Glazed parsnips

Herring pie

Baked salmon

Roast pork and apple sauce

Pears in syrup and red wine

Ginger cream

Claret jelly

Bread and butter pudding

Apple pie

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William Shakespeare

400th Anniversary



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