

16th February 2021

Pancakes

“Первый блин (всегда) комом.”
“The first pancake is (always) a blob.”

Russian Proverb

Over the past year, my wife and I have been sharing the cooking. For one thing, I enjoy cooking. For another, it means we're dividing the responsibilities in at least one part of our lives. I'm a better cook than I used to be, and more adventurous too. I can now prepare things without sticking religiously to a recipe – and they turn out to be edible as well!

However, I've not yet turned my hand to baking. My wife is an excellent baker, so why should I fill a gap that isn't there? And anyway, because following shows like *The Great British Bake Off* is like watching an Olympic sport, I've decided to leave all this baking malarkey to the people who're good at it! But therein is my downfall. How am I going to know I *might* be good at it, and could get better, unless I try?

The Russian proverb above – *Pervyy blin (vsegda) komom* – tells me that with every batch of pancakes, the first one is a blob. The Swedes say, “We're all children in the beginning”. We might put it as: “You have to crawl before you walk.” And if your pancake-making begins with a blob? You have to start somewhere.

Traditionally, today is known as Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday at the start of the Season of Lent. The word “shrove” comes from “shrive”, meaning “to absolve”. Consequently, as the last day for Christians before the forty days of penitence in preparation for Easter, Shrove Tuesday became a day of indulgence, using up all the enjoyable food that might be given up self-sacrificially during Lent. Pancakes became the food of choice, using up eggs, fats, milk and flour, enjoyable to eat before the rigours and fasting that was to follow. So “Pancake Day” has come into common usage.

What might I do today as I look forward to Lent? I think I'll be resolving to do better, and maybe start things I need to try out. Baking, perhaps. Maybe pancakes would be a good place to begin ... even if my first pancake *does* turn out to be a blob!

A prayer for today

A blob, Lord? Teach me to keep trying, and that things will get better. Amen

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>