

ST GEORGE – 23 APRIL

St George has been the official patron saint of England since his adoption by Edward III when he formed the Order of the Garter in St. George's name in 1350. St George was certainly included in the Church's calendar by the 11th century and at the Council of Oxford in 1222, St George's Day was declared a public holiday. By mischance, the New Minster in Winchester was burnt down on St George's Day in 1065, in spite of a relic of St George being among the Minster's possessions.

His popularity stems from the time of the early crusades to the Holy Land as he was reputed to come to the aid of crusaders at Antioch in 1098. Many of the Normans under Robert Curthose, son of William the Conqueror, took him as their patron. The cult was further advanced by King Henry V, at the battle of Agincourt and Shakespeare made a lasting impact by giving Henry V the famous phrase:

Cry God for Harry, England and St. George!

Edward Gibbon among others, argued that George of Cappadocia (died 361), the Arian bishop of Alexandria, was the original St George, but it is more accepted that he was a Roman officer martyred circa 300 near Lydda during the persecution by the Emperor Dioclesian. The legend of St George and the Dragon is an allegory of the triumph of the Christian hero over evil, which St John the Evangelist portrayed as the dragon. In a similar way, St Michael, St Margaret, St Sylvester and St Martha are also usually pictured slaying dragons.

He is also the patron saint of many other places and organisations including The Scouts

*"Prepared and alert a Scout follows the lead
Of our Patron Saint George and his spirited steed."*

Baden-Powell in "Scouting for Boys"

In Catalonia the legend is that when St George killed the dragon, he gave the maiden a red rose, as a result, on the 23rd of April, especially in Barcelona City, it is traditional for men to give their girlfriend/fiancée/ wife a red rose, and the lady in question corresponds by returning a book.

He also appears on The George Cross slaying a dragon. This is awarded to civilians for outstanding acts of bravery and bears the legend 'For Gallantry' – it is the civilian equivalent of the Victoria Cross



Also on the list of patronage for St George are:
Aragon, agricultural workers, archers, armourers, Beirut, Lebanon, butchers, Canada, Cappadocia, cavalry, chivalry, Constantinople, Crusaders, equestrians, farmers, Ferrara (Italy), field hands, field workers, Genoa (Italy), Georgia, Germany, Gozo, Greece, herpes, horsemen, horses, husbandmen, Istanbul, knights, lepers, leprosy, Lithuania, Malta, Moscow, Palestine, Palestinian Christians, plague, Portugal, riders, saddle makers, saddlers, skin diseases, skin rashes, soldiers, Teutonic Knights, Venice.



So whoever or wherever you are on 23 April, you will be in good company when you celebrate St George's Day.

MYTHS AND MAGIC

Recent research by Witney based, fostering agency, familyplacement.com has revealed that the public still believe many of the negative myths and misconceptions about foster care.



According to the research, a significant proportion of people think that most foster children have extreme behaviour problems, that all of the children come from broken homes, that you have to jump through hoops to be approved to foster and that most foster carers are unpaid work, untrained "mother earth" type volunteers.

As agency manager and researcher, Andy Clipson has explained the reality is more complex. "Although some of the children can be very trying, and applicants do have to complete a robust vetting process, in practice, providing a safe and nurturing home for a child, can be a magical experience. There is nothing quite like seeing a child relax, become happier and begin to thrive in your care and knowing you have made a real difference for them."

To help people realise this level of achievement, the agency pays all of its foster carers a significant weekly fee in addition to a maintenance allowance for the child and all carers have access to around the clock support. If you think you could help make a difference for a local child, or would like further information, please telephone Andy Clipson on 01993 201514, email info@familyplacement.com or www.familyplacement.com

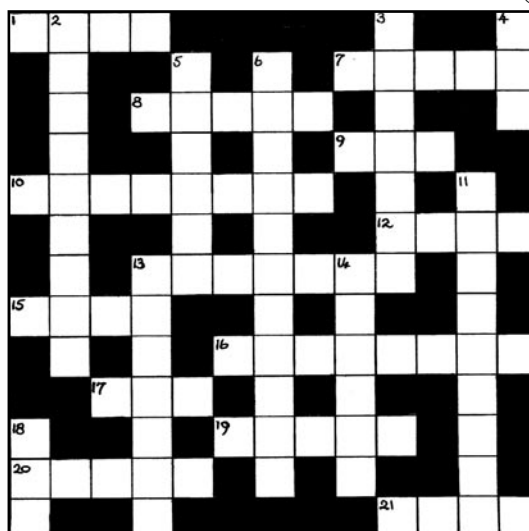
APRIL CROSSWORD BY ALISA

Across

- 1 Drink (4)
- 7 Frilford has one (5)
- 8 Craft (5)
- 9 Drink (3)
- 10,14,6
Event this month (4,4,6,11)
- 12 Press (4)
- 13 See 2
- 15 Game (4)
- 16 Bird (8)
- 17 Drink (3)
- 19 Game (5)
- 20 Drink (5)
- 21 Local farm (4)

Down

- 2,13 across
North St residence (9,7)
- 3 Dream (7)
- 4 See 13
- 5 Address (4,2)
- 6 See 10
- 11 Archer (5,4)
- 13,4 Side-show (7,3)
- 14 See 10
- 18 Donkey (3)



Tom Taylor – died 10 February 2004

(from Didcot Baptist Church News)

Tom, together with his sisters and brother, grew up in the church and was actively involved in the Boys' Brigade and as a local preacher helping the smaller churches around Didcot. He met and married Frances and moved to Marcham and became involved in the Baptist Church. After a number of years running the village shop and Post Office, they moved to Devon for a while but more recently moved back to this area when Frances took the job of warden at Cherry Tree Court, Harwell. Tom had been in poor health for the past four years. The thanksgiving service for Tom's life was at St Matthews Church, Harwell on 18 February.