



Saint George's Day



As you may know, other countries all over the world celebrate their patron saint. The closest to us and probably the most well known is Saint Patrick's Day for Ireland! This day is celebrated all over the UK and also widely in the USA. Why then can we not have our own patron saint's day?

St. George is the patron saint of England. His emblem, a red cross on a white background, is the flag of England. It was adopted by Richard the Lion Heart and was brought to England in the 12th century. The king's soldiers wore it on their tunics to avoid confusion in battle.

St. George's Day is on April 23rd, so, in a sense, this is England's National Day.

St. George Unofficial Bank Holiday is an independent group that wants a national bank holiday for England on 23 April:

"St George's Day should be made a national holiday in England," a Conservative MP has said.

On the eve of the patron saint's day, Andrew Rosindell suggested scrapping the May Day Bank Holiday to make way for a day off on 23 April.

"I feel that it is time that we asserted our Englishness," the Romford MP told GMTV.

Mr Rosindell insisted the move would not detract from England's commitment to Britain as a whole.

"Why should England be one of very few countries in the world that doesn't have a public holiday to celebrate their national day?" he said.

"If you look at everything that England and the English people over so many generations, many centuries, have achieved, we have a proud history - greater than most other countries - and yet there does seem to be a feeling in this country that you'd better not say anything or do anything to promote England."

Adapted from information at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6580997.stm> viewed 30/04/08

- What do you think? Do you think we should celebrate St. George's Day and make it a bank holiday, or not?
- Discuss this in pairs and feed back into the whole group.