St George

23rd April is a day of celebration in England, as it marks St George's Day.

We actually know very little about the life of St. George. However, we do know that he wasn't actually English - he was born in what is now modern-day Turkey, in approximately AD 280.
He was raised as a Christian, and joined the Roman Army as a young man. He was tortured and then killed by the Emperor Diocletian, for refusing to renounce his Christian faith. In death, he became a martyr.

St. George's emblem was a red cross on a white background.
Legend has it that during the First Crusade to Jerusalem in 1098, St. George appeared as a vision to lead the Christian knights during a siege.
The Crusades were a series of religious wars, fought to gain or maintain control over Jerusalem and other Holy places.) About 100 years later, King Richard III fashioned his army's uniform on the cross of St. George. Many soldiers often turned to St. George for protection.

St. George was canonised (declared a saint) in AD 494 by Pope Gelasius. However, it was not until 1350 that St. George became the patron saint of England.
King Edward III, who was the reigning monarch in England at that time, chose St George as the country's patron saint as he was admired by many for his bravery in the face of terrible suffering. King Edward also created the Order of the Garter at this time, which to this day is the highest order of chivalry. The badge representing the order shows St. George

St. George is also the patron saint of scouting. He was chosen as the qualities of St. George reflect those desirable in a scout: responsible, truthful, devoted to duty, brave, noble and dedicated to helping others.

The story of St George and the Dragon was created long after his death as a way of showing his bravery.