

TODDINGTON ST. GEORGE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

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RE Newsletter No.2

Dear Parents and Carers,

We send home newsletters each term about the work going on at school in relation to Collective Worship, Religious Education and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development.

The values we have shared this term are:

January	Excellence
February	Faith
March	Commitment
April	Humility



Festivals and Celebrations

There are many festivals and celebrations for different faiths. We focus on 3 faiths in particular in Lower schools (the children learn about 6 faiths by the time they are 11).

This term

- Epiphany
- Chinese New Year
 - Lent
 - Easter

A more comprehensive list of the faith festivals for 6 faiths, national days and some additional celebrations are included for Parents and Carers to see at the end of this newsletter.

What are we up to in RE in school this term?

We teach the **RE syllabus for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton: Identities, Meanings and Values**. Year groups will be studying different key questions. In the Early Years RE is not taught as a specific subject but festivals are celebrated and stories are shared within the year group themes and Early Learning Goals (e.g. Understanding the World, PSE Respect for others). We use the excellent resources of RE Today in each year group to support the teaching and learning.

This term the current curriculum focusses on

- Year 1
 - What does it mean to belong?
 - Salvation - What is Easter?

- Year 2
 - Who is an inspiring person?
 - Salvation - Why is Easter special for Christians?

- Year 3
 - How and why does a Christian follow Jesus?
 - Salvation - What are the events from Palm Sunday to Easter Day and what do Christians learn from them?

- Year 4
 - Where, how and why do people worship?
 - Salvation: Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'?

The RE curriculum is exciting, challenging and thought provoking and often uses music, art, drama and poetry to support children's learning. We focus on the three faiths of Judaism, Islam and Christianity and as children move on to Year 5 and 6 they learn about at least 3 other faiths.

What have we been learning about and celebrating?

This term our **values have been Excellence, Faith and Commitment and Humility**.

Children have thought about

- Is being the best is the same as doing your best?
- What is excellence?
- Who do we know who shows excellence as a value in their lives?
- What helps us do our best?

We have also thought about what it means for people to have a faith.

- What is faith?
- Can you see or touch faith?
- How might you know if someone has a faith?
- What do people of faith do?
- Is that the same in all faiths?
- Who have been leaders in the world faiths?

We learnt about commitment

- What do we commit to – our football teams, our hobbies, our family and friends?
- We thought about commitment to a faith and how that is shown.

We moved on to think about being humble and the idea of humility.

This is a complex value for young children but they amazed us with their thoughtful ideas about

- How someone might show they are humble?
- Is it hard to be humble?
- Is humility the same as being kind of different?
- How did Jesus show humility to others?

These values allow the learning of new ideas, reflection time, thoughtful thinking time and offering of ideas for what we call the 'big questions' children ask. As a staff we are always delighted by the way children offer their ideas, contribute and respect each other in our values times as a school.

Quick catch up since the last RE newsletter re last term:



Advent. We began **Advent** by making our Advent wreath and lit the candles weekly to take us through the time of waiting and preparation for Christmas.



Christmas

Celebrating **Christmas** was as lively and happy as ever and each class contributed to a wonderful Christmas displays that were based on Christmas Carols. There were also three great Christmas productions: Years R's 'I spy Christmas', Year 2's 'The Innkeepers' and Year 4's Silent Night. They were enjoyed by children, staff and parents.

A big well done to all who participated. We were amazed by the confidence of so many children up on the stage, especially those who sang solos! Our Christmas service was a special time shared with Reverend Linda and the Key Stage 2 Choir. The Key Stage 2 Choir was in great demand again, they performed at the Shoebox Service at St George's Church, the Christmas tree festival again at the church and at Carols on the Green.

This Term: We started the term way back in January celebrating Epiphany

Epiphany and King and Queen Day!



Mrs Spencer led two acts of Collective Worship explaining **Epiphany**.

Epiphany marks the end of the 12 days of Christmas and celebrates the visit of the Wise Men/Magi to the baby Jesus.

These men, often called Kings or Magi, brought valuable gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to honour the baby. The gift of gold was the gift people usually gave to their King. By giving gold they were recognising Jesus as their King. The second gift, frankincense, is a white gum from a tree which when hardened will burn giving off a fragrant smell. It was burnt as an offering to God during worship, used as a medicine and a perfume. The third gift, myrrh, also a gum from a thorny tree was used for healing wounds because it is antiseptic, soothes redness and relieves pain.

The day before Epiphany is the twelfth day of Christmas and is sometimes referred to as Twelfth Night. In the Church calendar the Epiphany season lasts until Shrove Tuesday.

Mrs Spencer set a problem for the children to solve $20 + C + B + M + 19$. The children worked out what this means. (Ask your child and see if they can remember). Children were randomly selected (by sitting by chance on a golden sticker on the floor in the hall) to come and try the Galette des Rois, the special Epiphany cake. Two children, **Esme and Oliver**, found a golden card sweet and were crowned king and queen for the day. They wrote the puzzle in chalk on the door of each classroom, or on the whiteboard, as a blessing from God for all of us in school or the year ahead.



Open the Book

Our team of Open the Books storytellers who come in and enact plays from the Storyteller Bibles are back again this term! The children love their plays and the time to reflect on the story told. We are so grateful to the team for coming in to school and giving up their time to be with us. They have shared stories from the **Old Testament** about Joshua, Ruth, David and Samuel and Eli and stories from the **New Testament** this term to take us to Easter.

Some of our Open the Book team join with the Bible Buddies helpers and they went to an 'Easter Experience' in Clapham. It was a wet day but the children enjoyed walking with a 'real donkey' as they told us when they came back. They followed the donkey as if they were arriving in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. They then followed the actors as the Easter story was acted out for them in a beautiful garden setting. Thank you to Mrs Vickers for organising this, and for arranging the minibus too.

Back-hooray!

We are pleased to say that Hooked on Worship is back! This is an opportunity for a group of children to plan a collective worship topic and present it to the school. The children have had the opportunity to stay in one lunchtime a week to plan and prepare. They work together as a team and are guided by Mrs Vickers. The children volunteer to be part of the team so that they really want to take part in the event. We let the children know in Collective Worship when to meet to plan their next 'Hooked on Worship!' Year 3 and 4 have led 'HOW' on our **values of Excellence and also Faith and Commitment**. Both have been really thoughtful, well led, happy times.

Faith Tour; Year 4

Condors and Kestrels went to Bedford to explore **three places of worship, a Mosque, a Gurdwara and a Church**. The children had a wonderful time comparing and contrasting the three special places of worship, learning more about how different people worship, asking some thoughtful questions and

experiencing first hand some of the sights and sounds inside these special places. They also made great take home tasks linked to their visits which we displayed at Parents Consultations in February.

St George's Church visit: Year 1

Puffins and Penguins went to visit St George's Church to explore special places linked to their RE topic. Rev Linda was there to greet them and show them around the beautiful features of the **village church**. All the children came away with a sense of awe and wonder. They were inspired to create some wonderful **stained glass** designs after their visit.

Chinese New Year

This term we have celebrated **Chinese New Year** and Year R. led a wonderful Chinese Dragon dance. They learnt a song and played instruments to welcome the dragon to come and dance. Chloe's Mum taught us how to write Chinese characters. She explained the celebration and festival really well and Year R really learnt a lot. We also learnt about which year is celebrated each year. This year is the **Year of the Pig**. Do you know which year, under the Chinese calendar, you were born in?

After **St David's Day** we moved on to **Lent**.

Before Lent began, we decided this year to start with **Shrove Tuesday** Pancake making and Mrs Spencer, Mrs Cornelius and Abigail showed how to get batter ready to make pancakes with eggs and milk and flour as you 'cleared out your pantry, fridge or larder of goodies' before the Lent period began. We decided Mardi Gras celebrations held in other countries for Shrove Tuesday also sounded fun - and a school carnival might be a good idea for next year!

Year 4 went up to Conger Hill and thanks go to Toddington Old Boys and Mr Buckingham for supporting our walk by making sure we could get to the hill!

The children have learnt about how **Ash Wednesday** is observed around the world in Christian communities and what the day symbolises as the 40 days of Lent begin. We decided to have two things to thank God for every day as our Lent focus this year, so helping us not to be tempted to being grumpy or negative. (Some staff still decided they would give up chocolate or wine instead!).

The **Year 3** children presented a wonderfully performed play **The Three Trees** which brings the Bible stories from Christmas (Christ's birth) to Easter (his resurrection) together very beautifully.

Our **RE Day on Easter and Salvation** was a really good day and a PowerPoint that shows what we did is on the website. The Land Art crosses children made are so interesting and striking-we hope you had a chance to come and see them, and thank you for sending things in to decorate them.

The Easter service was today and we talked about **Easter Egg hunts** and looking for eggs (always fun!) then we thought about how we can 'hunt' for the meaning of Easter too, and then we thought about the promise of new life and of God's love for us that Christians believe Easter offers.

And so.....do join the **PTA Easter Egg hunt** on Easter Sunday-see their last newsletter (also on the website under the Parents tab) for details.

Have a very Happy Easter holiday!

comments or suggestions, please speak or write to Mrs Archer or Mrs Spencer. Thank you.

Success Shields

These are given as recognition of an achievement outside of school

Children who received a shield in **December** are:

Aayush Football	William G Stage 4 Swimming	Nelly K Stage 5 Swimming
Kaila Stage 2 Swimming	Mia S Stage 2&3 Gymnastics	Ellie P Football inc England U8's
Aine Irish Dancing		
Mia S 2 nd Hotshots Tournament		

Streetdance Stars of the Week – KS1 & KS2

Gabriella H, Lucy S

Children who received a shield in **January** are:

Niamh B Diving Squad	Sophie B Level 5 Swimming	Euan M Man of the Match
Rosie Stage 5 Gymnastics	Freya D Stage 3 Swimming	Florence Stage 2 Swimming
Jasmin W 3 Years at Stage Coach	Charlotte D Artist Badge	Rosie Stage 2 Swimming
Daniel B Drama Performance	Samuel D Stage Blue Swimming	Aine Artist Badge
Gabriella H Stage 4 Gymnastics	Mia S Hotshots – Best Match	Samantha W Stage 2 Swimming
Marcus Beaver of the Week	Lily R Rainbows feel Good Stage 1	Florence Rainbows feel Good Stage 1
Mia S Blue Peter Badge	Harry R Man of the Match	Aine Irish Dancing
Millie Irish Dancing	Maisie B 1 st Place Swimming	Faye Singing Exam
Ollie S Half Marathon	Chloe R Stage 4&5 Gymnastics	Harry V Karate Student of the Week
Logan G Man of the Match	Rory Player of the Match	Lucy S Gymnastics
Lily R Artist Badge		

Streetdance Stars of the Week – KS1 & KS2

Oliver D, Aine

Children who received a shield in **February** are:

Chloe R Swimming Stage 4	Aine Irish Dancer of the Week	Oliver D Karate Student of the Week
Sophie C Selected for LTFC	Jessica C Irish Dancer of the Week	Nubia Brownie Badges
Eden C Swimming Stage 3	Alice B Rainbow Bear	Joshua M Level 8 Gymnastics
Aaron E Swimming Stage 5	Ollie C Swimming Stage 5	Lara M Bronze Lifeguard Award
Lara M Hotshots Player of the Camp	Charlotte D Hotshots Best Match Play	Mia, Ellie and Ethan 2nd in Hotshots Tournament

Streetdance Stars of the Week – KS1 & KS2

Joshua S, Faye M

Children who received a shield in **March** are:

Rory L Blue Peter Badge	Freya D Blue Peter Badge	Rosie W Level 4 Gymnastics
Tyler Man of the Match	Ollie C Level 4 Swimming	Lily R Blue Peter Badge
Jack R Blue Peter Badge	Lara M Blue Peter Badge	Isobella C Grade 1 Ballet
Dylan T Red Belt Karate	Rory L Man of the Match	Freya D 1 st Grading in Wing Shun
Lauren S Red Belt Karate	George Russell Man of the Match	Ishaan Public Speaking
Nubia Night away with Brownies	Lara M Rookie Lifeguard	Leon Cubs Bronze Awards
Grace Wilson Beavers Badges	James A White Belt Karate	Aine Irish Dancing
Mia S Diamond Blue Peter Badge	Lucy S 7 th in Gymnastics Comp	Chloe R Stage 5 Swimming
Abbie K Stage 5 Swimmimg	Joseph C Warrior of the Week – Goal Keeping	Mia S Stage 1 Gymnastics
Leon Karate	Mia S Player of the Month - Hotshots	Rory L Karate Red Belt
Callum M Woody from Beavers	Aydin Karate Purple Belt	Lily-Jayne Swimming Level 4
Isla-Marie Level 2 Gymnastics	Niamh Swimming Stage 4	Nelly Swimming Stage 3
Charlotte D Lifeguard Bronze 1	Sam T Hotshots Player of the Month	Aaron Martial Arts
Logan G Football Man of the Match		

Streetdance Stars of the Week – KS1 & KS2

Harry W, Lily-Jayne, Finley C, Abbie K, Dillan W, Gabriella H

Religious festivals and celebrations January to April 2019

January



5th or 13th January BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH (1666 CE) *Sikh*

This is celebrated as the Birth Anniversary of the tenth Guru, who instituted the Five Ks and established the Order of the Khalsa on Vaisakhi (Baisakhi). Like other anniversaries associated with the lives of the Gurus, the day is referred to as a Gurburb, and is marked by the ending of an akhand path, an unbroken reading of the whole Guru Granth Sahib, which lasts for 48 hours.



6th January EPIPHANY *Christian (Anglican and Roman Catholic)*

This is the twelfth day of Christmas. It celebrates the visit of the *magi or* wise men to the infant Jesus, bearing symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Some Mediterranean Catholic countries welcome the ‘magic wise men’ who arrive by boat, bearing gifts for children. In the Church calendar the Epiphany season lasts until the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. Roman Catholics celebrate this day on Sunday 7th January.

February



5th February CHINESE NEW YEAR / SPRING FESTIVAL / CHUNJIE / YUAN TAN *Chinese*

New Year’s Day is the most important event in the traditional Chinese calendar and marks the beginning of the first lunar month. The festival is colourfully celebrated with fireworks, dances (such as the famous Lion Dance) and the giving of gifts, flowers and sweets. Gold is a dominant colour to symbolise the wish for prosperity, and red is also much used as a lucky colour. Business accounts should be settled and all debts paid before the New Year begins. Celebrations can last three or more days. 2019, which is 4717 in Chinese culture, is the year of the Pig, one of twelve symbolic creatures whose character is held to affect the nature of those born at this time.

New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day are celebrated as a family affair, a time of reunion and thanksgiving. The celebration was traditionally highlighted with a religious ceremony given in honour of Heaven and Earth, the gods of the household and the family ancestors. The sacrifice to the ancestors, the most vital of all the rituals, united the living members with those who had passed away. Departed relatives are remembered with great respect because they were responsible for laying the foundations for the fortune and glory of the family.

Chinese New Year celebrations are notable for colour, noise, giving gifts and paying debts. It is a time for looking both backwards and forwards.

March



1st March St. DAVID’S DAY *National Anniversary* of the death of St David, the patron saint of Wales, who lived in the 6th century CE. As monk, abbot and bishop he helped to spread Christianity among the Celtic tribes of western Britain.



5th March SHROVE TUESDAY (Pancake Day) *Christian (Western Churches)*

Commonly known as Pancake Day, this is the day before the start of Lent. Traditionally it is a day for repentance and absolution in preparation for Lent (‘shrive’ means to receive or make confession). Pancakes were originally made to use up all the rich foods, such as butter and eggs, before Lent. In some parts of the world people celebrate Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) by holding carnivals.



6th March **ASH WEDNESDAY** *Christian (Western Churches)* The first day of Lent when Christians remember the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness and the temptations he faced during this time. In Catholic and some Anglican churches, services are held where the worshipper's forehead is marked with a cross of ash, which has been made from burning the palm crosses of the previous year – hence the name Ash Wednesday.



17th March **St. PATRICK'S DAY** *National*

This is a day celebrated in honour of the patron saint of Ireland, who lived in Britain in the 4th century CE. After his escape from being held hostage in Ireland, he became a priest and returned there to evangelise. His symbol is the shamrock, sprigs of which are worn on this day. Parades are held in Dublin and elsewhere, often of a secular nature.



21st March **PURIM** *Jewish* Purim is a carnival festival recalling the saving of the Jewish community of Persia through the actions of a young Jewish woman, which is retold in the Book of Esther (the *Megillah*). The whole book/scroll is read twice in the synagogue, once on the evening of Purim and then also on the morning after. Colourful costumes and masks are often worn amid lots of noise as the name of Haman (the villain of the story) is drowned out by the congregation with rattles and hooters and boos whenever it is read. Many people come in fancy dress. *Hamantashen* (cakes filled with poppy seeds, literally 'Haman's pockets', or with jam or chocolate) are baked and eaten at this time.



21st March **HOLI** *Hindu*

A spring festival lasting one to five days. Bonfires are lit and revellers throw coloured powders and dyes over each other. Various stories and customs are associated with the festival: the throwing of coloured dyes is linked with Krishna and his antics with Radha and the gopis (milkmaids); another story associated with Holi is that of Prahlada and

During Holi, practices, which at other times could be offensive, are allowed. Squirting coloured water on passers-by, dunking friends in mud pool amidst teasing and laughter. In fact, on the days of Holi, you can get away with almost anything by saying, "Don't mind, it's Holi!"



21st – 23rd March **HOLA MAHALLA/HOLA MOHALLA** *Sikh*

In 1680 Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, introduced this festival at Anandpur in Punjab, India, as an alternative to the Hindu festival of Holi. It includes competitive displays of swordsmanship, horsemanship, archery and wrestling, together with displays of weapons and symposia of poetry. It is a colourful occasion, particularly for young Sikhs. It is celebrated on the day of Holi, or the day after.



31st March **MOTHERING SUNDAY** (*Simmel Sunday*) *Christian* Mid-Lent Sunday, the 4th Sunday in Lent, has now become secularised and is more popularly known as Mother's Day. It was, traditionally, a Sunday when Christians revisited their 'mother church' and took gifts to their mothers, which often included a *simmel* cake.

April



3rd April **THE PROPHET'S NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENT/LAILAT (LAYLAT) UL ISRA WA-L-MIRAJ** *Muslim 27th Rajab.* This festival celebrates the journey of the Prophet Muhammad, in the tenth year of his prophethood, from Makkah to Jerusalem, and through the heavens to the presence of God, all in one night. On this night Muslims believe the Prophet received the command that they should pray five times each day. The rock in Jerusalem from which the Prophet ascended is now contained in the Dome of the Rock. Muslims mark this night by reading the *Qur'an* and saying additional prayers.



14th – 20th April **HOLY WEEK** *Christian (Western Churches)*

This is the most solemn week of the Christian year, in which Christians recall the events of the final week of the earthly life of Jesus.



14th April **PALM SUNDAY** *Christian (Western Churches)*

Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week, when Christians remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where later he would be arrested and crucified. Many churches commemorate the day by processions, with the congregation carrying symbolic palm leaves folded in the form of a cross, or branches of palm trees.



14th April **VAISAKHI/BAISAKHI** *Sikh*

The Sikh New Year Festival. In 1699 CE, on Vaisakhi, the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, founded the Order of the Khalsa. Five men, who later came to be known as the *Panj Piare* (the Five Beloved Ones), were prepared to offer their lives when the Guru asked for volunteers. According to tradition this is when he initiated both these Panj Piare and many others into the *Khalsa*, with men taking the name '*Singh*' (lion) as a reminder to be courageous, and women taking the name '*Kaur*' (princess) to emphasise their dignity. On this day Sikhs, both young and more mature, are nowadays initiated into the *Khalsa* by 'taking *amrit*'; in doing so they commit themselves to a discipline that includes daily prayers and the wearing of the external markers of *Khalsa* identity (the Five Ks), dedicating their lives to the service of others and the pursuit of justice



18th April **MAUNDY THURSDAY** *Christian (Western Churches)* Christians remember the Last Supper, at which Jesus blessed bread and wine and commanded his disciples to remember him whenever they did this. From this instruction comes the institution known under a variety of names – the Eucharist, the Mass, the Holy Communion, the Breaking of Bread. It has become the central act of worship in almost all Christian traditions. In Roman Catholic and some Anglican churches the feet of twelve members of the congregation are washed in remembrance of Jesus' washing the feet of the twelve disciples. The name 'maundy' comes from a Latin term '*mandatum*' ('commandment'), signifying Jesus' new commandment to his disciples, as recorded in John 15.



19th April **GOOD FRIDAY** *Christian (Western Churches)*

This day commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. Although essentially a sombre day, it is called 'Good' since, for Christians, it is the ultimate example of God's sacrifice when Jesus gave up his life for the world. Meditative services are held in church to mark the time that Jesus spent on the cross. Traditionally, particularly in the Roman Catholic world, fish rather than meat is eaten on Fridays. Hot cross buns, although now found in supermarkets throughout the year, were formerly associated with Good Friday.



20th April - 27th April **PASSOVER/PESACH** *Jewish*

This major Jewish festival lasts eight days and commemorates the liberation of the Children of Israel and their Exodus from slavery in Egypt. The highlight is the *Seder* meal, held in each family's home at the beginning of the festival, when the story of their deliverance is recounted, as narrated in the *Haggadah* (the Telling, or the Story). *Matzah*, (unleavened bread) is eaten throughout the festival, as are other foods that contain no leaven (yeast). There is a major spring cleaning in the home shortly before the festival to ensure that no trace of leaven is left in the house during Pesach. Coconut pyramids and *matza* balls (which are put in soups) are foods that might be eaten at this time. As a result of the regular telling of the story of slavery and freedom, Jews are called upon (more than 30 times in the Torah) to remember the stranger 'because you were strangers in Egypt'. This sense of having been a slave people and a migrant people is central to Jewish consciousness and is recalled daily in Jewish liturgy and weekly in the practice of *Shabbat*.



20th April **HOLY SATURDAY (Easter Eve)** *Christian (Western Churches)* This is the last day of Lent. Special services involving the lighting of the *Paschal* Candle and the renewal of baptismal vows take place in the evening in preparation for Easter.



21st April **EASTER DAY** *Christian (Western Churches)* Easter Day is the most important festival of the Christian year, since this is when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus three days after his death by crucifixion in Jerusalem over 2000 years ago. For Christians, Easter is a day marked by special religious services and the gathering of family members together. Easter Candles are lit in churches on the eve of Easter Sunday, as a resurrection symbol of Christ as the light of the world, though some believe that these may have originated in the Pagan customs of lighting bonfires to welcome the rebirth/resurrection of the sun God. Easter and the Jewish Passover are closely related, especially in the complex method of fixing the date of Easter. The resurrection of Jesus took place during the Passover. Christians of the Eastern church initially celebrated both holidays together, but the Passover can fall on any day of the week, and Christians of the Western church preferred to celebrate Easter on Sunday, the day of the resurrection. The name Easter comes from Eostre (pronounced yo'ster), an ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess. In pagan times an annual spring festival was held in her honour. Some Easter customs have come from this and other pre-Christian spring festivals.

The Easter Bunny, a popular image of the festival, originated with the hare, an ancient symbol for the moon. According to legend, the bunny was originally a large, handsome bird belonging to Eostre, the Goddess of Spring. (Eostre is also known as Ostara, a Goddess of fertility who is celebrated at the time of the Spring equinox.) Eostre 'resurrected' the bird into a rabbit, which may explain why the Easter bunny builds a nest and fills it with (coloured) eggs. The first edible Easter bunnies were created in Germany during the early 1800s, made of pastry and sugar. The white lily as a symbol of the resurrection and of purity has become the typical Easter flower. The Madonna lily was used for years as the Easter lily, but it often failed to bloom in time for Easter, and so the Bermuda, or white trumpet, lily is often used instead. The egg is another popular symbol of Easter. Eggs were dyed and eaten during spring festivals in ancient Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome. Coloured eggs were not, however, associated with Easter until the 15th century. Many churches today follow old traditions of colouring hard-boiled eggs and giving children little chocolate eggs as symbols of the resurrection.



23rd April **ST GEORGE'S DAY** *National* St George is the patron saint of England. His particular significance to England is not clear since he lived and died in the Middle East as a martyr for his Christian faith, but it is possible that his popularity grew after the Crusades, when his red cross on a white background was adopted as the symbol of the English Crusaders.