



Flag of England

The Flag of England is the St George's Cross (heraldic blazon: *Argent, a cross gules*). The red cross appeared as an emblem of England in the Middle Ages, specifically during the Crusades (although the original symbol used to represent English crusaders was a white cross on a red background) and is one of the earliest known emblems representing England.^[2] It also represents the official arms of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, and it achieved status as the national flag of England during the 16th century.^[1]

Saint George was adopted as the patron saint of England in the 13th century, and the legend of Saint George slaying a dragon dates from the 12th century.



Diamond Jubilee of the British Monarch

I may be a staunch republican (not the party, the ideology, damn right wingers), but someone has to give it to her, 60 years as the Queen of England is something worthy of note.

On the 6th February 1952, King George VI died and his daughter Elizabeth ascended to the throne of the Commonwealth. She's now been there for 60 years - the second longest any British Monarch has reigned, second only to Victoria.

This is not just a celebration of the longevity of the current monarch, but also of our great British traditions - and the life of the English Monarchy which has lasted for well over 1000 years, one of the oldest continuing Monarchies in the world.

I may firmly believe in a political republic, but as our British history goes, this is something that we have, to be proud of.

Our monarchs have presided over one of the most notable nations the world has ever seen, and the reign of our monarchy is a look back at the extensive history of our nation. I'm not having a go at other countries, i know they all have something great to be proud of, but this is one of ours - This is the commemoration of a tradition that represents the great extensive history of Britain.

Whatever you might think about the monarchy or traditions, this is one that we Brits can really be proud of.

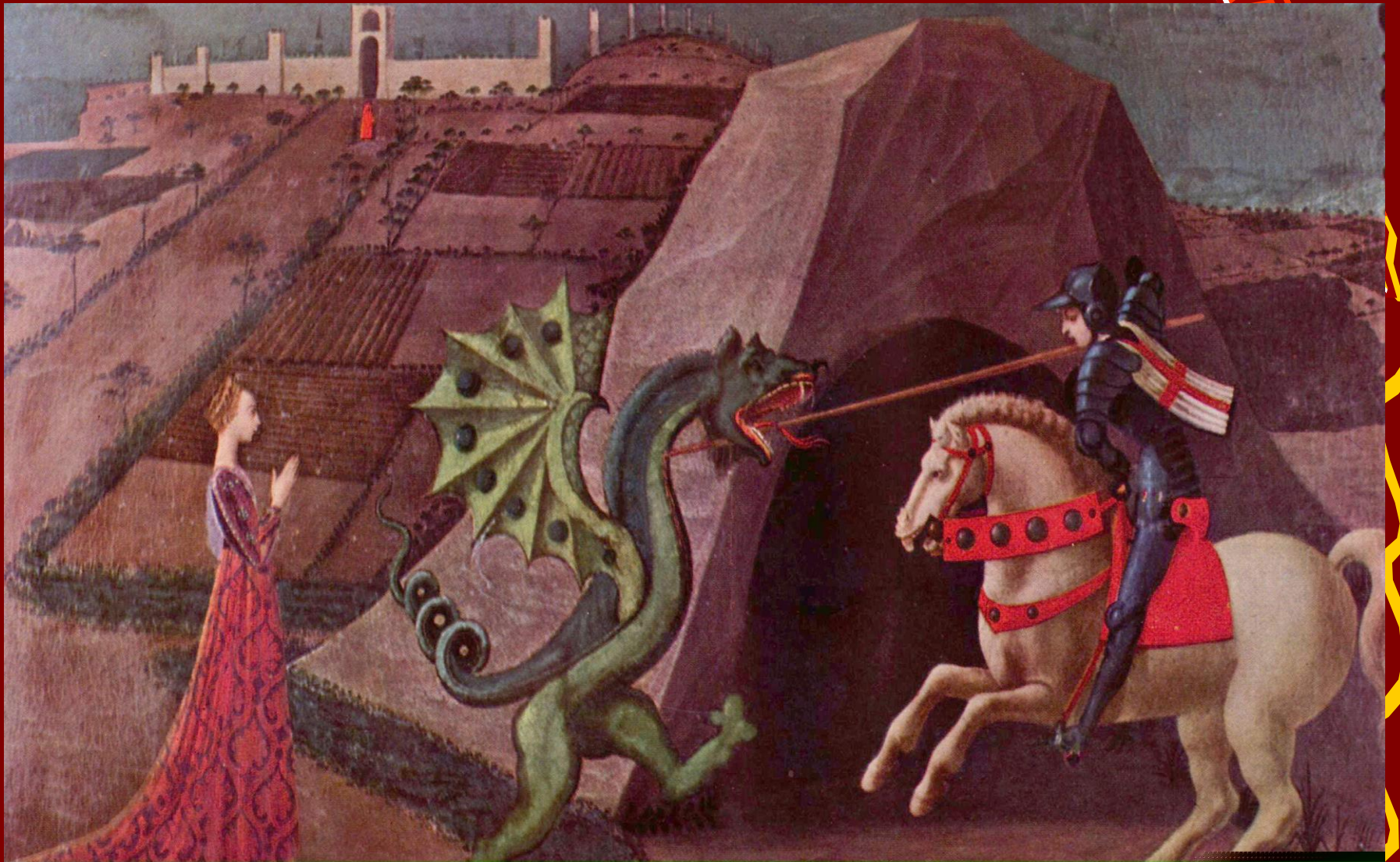


Origins



- At the beginning of the Crusades the Pope decided that English crusaders would be distinguished by wearing a white cross on red (whilst French crusaders wore a red cross on white and Italian knights were allocated a yellow cross on a white background)[3] In January 1188 the French King, [Philip II of France](#) accepted the claim of the English to the red cross on white,[4] In the same year [Henry II of England](#) and [Philip II of France](#) agreed to exchange flags (France later changed its new white cross on red for a white cross on a dark blue flag).[4] Some French knights continued to use the red cross regardless, and as English knights wore this pattern as well, the red cross on white may have become an early standard crusader symbol irrespective of nationality.[5] On the origins of the flag (dating as far back as 1096) the Duke of Kent remarked:
 - "The St. George's flag, a red cross on a white field, was adopted by England and the City of London in 1190 for their ships entering the Mediterranean to benefit from the protection of the Genoese fleet. The English Monarch paid an annual tribute to the Doge of Genoa for this privilege." [6] [HRH The Duke of Kent](#)
 - It can thus be deduced that the 'Cross of St. George' would have flown in England prior to the second crusade. The St George's Cross was also used as an emblem (but not as a flag) of England in a roll of account relating to the Welsh War of 1275.[1] The English royalist forces at the [Battle of Evesham](#) in 1265 used a red cross on their uniforms to distinguish themselves from the white crosses used by the rebel barons at the [Battle of Lewes](#) a year earlier.[7]
 - St George's cross may not have achieved the representative national flag until the 16th century, when all other saints' banners were abandoned during the Reformation. Thereafter it became recognised as the flag of [England and Wales](#). The earliest record of St George's Cross at sea, as an English flag in conjunction with royal banners but no other saintly flags, was 1545.[1]





Flying the flag

Sporting events

- The flag is also seen during other sporting events in which England competes, for example during England Cricket matches (the Cricket World Cup and The Ashes), during Rugby Union matches[8] and in football. [9] It is also used in icons on the Internet and on the TV screen to represent teams and players from England.
- Before 1996, most of the flags waved by supporters were Union Flags (it is now arguable that this situation has now reversed). [10]





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Church of England



Churches belonging to the Church of England (unless for special reasons another flag is flown by custom) may fly St George's Cross. The correct way (since an order from the Earl Marshal in 1938) is for the church to fly the St George's cross, with the arms of the diocese in the left-hand upper corner of the flag.[11]



City of London

The flag of the City of London is based on the English flag, having a centred St George's Cross on a white background, with a red sword in the upper hoist canton (the top left quarter). The sword is believed to represent the sword that beheaded Saint Paul who is the patron saint of the city.[12]



Perceived association with the far right



- For many years, the Cross of St George had come to be associated by some with far-right groups such as the [British National Party](#), the [National Front](#) and, more recently, the [English Defence League](#). Many people consider this association to be unjustified as it is the Union Flag which is predominantly used by groups such as the British National Party.^[14] The Cross of St George is often used by far-right groups, usually alongside the individual flags of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, the frequent use of the English flag by sports supporters and other groups has gone some way to disassociate the flag from any lingering association with the far-right and the Cross of St George is now frequently flown throughout the country. Despite this, displaying the flag remains controversial to a minority of people in England^[15]
- Some minorities living in England have stated that they still view the flag with suspicion: during a poll of readers of [New Nation](#), "most black people interviewed said they felt alienated by the flag of St George and still associated it with the [BNP](#)".^[15] However, many young, non-white people do display the flag, particularly for sporting events.^[16]



Incorporation into the Union Flag



- The Flag of England is one of the key components of the Union Flag. The Union Flag has been used in a variety of forms since the proclamation by Orders in Council 1606, [17][18] when the Flag of Scotland and the Flag of England were first merged to symbolise the Union of the Crowns. [19] (The Union of the Crowns having occurred in 1603). In Scotland, and in particular on Scottish vessels at sea, historical evidence suggests that a separate design of Union Flag was flown to that used in England. [20] However, following the Acts of Union of 1707, which united the Kingdom of Scotland and the Kingdom of England to become the Kingdom of Great Britain, the 'English' version of the Union Flag was adopted as the official Flag of Great Britain. [21]
- From 1801, in order to symbolise the union of the Kingdom of Great Britain with the Kingdom of Ireland, a new design which included the St Patrick's Cross was adopted for the flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. [22] The Flag of the United Kingdom, having remained unchanged following the partition of Ireland in 1921 and creation of the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, continues to be used as the flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
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- The Saint George's Cross. In the Union Flag this represents the entire Kingdom of England, including Wales.
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- The English version of the First Union Flag, 1606, used mostly in England and, from 1707, the flag of the Kingdom of Great Britain.
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- The Scottish version of the First Union Flag saw limited use in Scotland from 1606 to 1707, following the Union of the Crowns.
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- The Second Union Flag, 1801, incorporating Cross of Saint Patrick, following Union of Great Britain and Kingdom of Ireland.



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