



Therefore, it is in St George that we find that one who is feared and shunned is led back to its people. If left unattended, it becomes stagnant and toxic, but if expressed, becomes a cause for resurrection, rebirth and celebration. No-one knows the identity of St George; was he Turkish, Iranian or Greek? Whatever his real or imagined origins, he is, in fact, a highly appropriate patron of the English. For Peter Ackroyd has called us the 'mongrel' nation, and portrays our artistic expression as a rich tapestry of diverse cultures and peoples, which reach a sense of continuity that seems to lie in the land itself, rather than the colours and creeds of those who inhabit it.

Dragons, according to legend, are born under the land of Britain and the breath of fire imagery probably originated from volcanic movements and noxious gases which seemed to rise from the belly of the earth. Similarly, the confused and denied aspects of identity experienced by mental illness find their hero in St George, who coming forth on his milk-white steed will transfix and tame the dragon. No longer will the innocent be held to ransom, and the people held hostage. So let us celebrate St George, a worthy patron of Mental Fight.

Jacob Phillips is a committee member of Mental Fight Club. More about the associations of St George can be found in Dr Sam Riches' 'St George: Hero, Martyr & Myth' Price :£12.

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Mental Fi

Imaginary Patron: St George



Introduction

It might seem more than a little off-beat for a mental health group to create an event around the figure of St George. How did this ever come about? Well, just like William Blake, Ben Okri Nick Cave *and* the film *Fight Club*, St George was one of the 'Founding Muses' for MFC. It is well-known that his dragon-slaying myth has much psychic symbolism - as explored by MFC member, Jacob Phillips in this programme. Also, more obscurely, research reveals that St George actually has a reputation for healing the mentally ill. It was by chance that MFC's first meeting was held in the crypt of St George the Martyr Church on Borough High St, but it was soon noticed that there were many associations with both St George and his dragon-slaying reputation around the Borough. With that in mind, this weekend's Great Southwark Dragon Quest was born. Moreover, when we dug deeper into the far recesses of history, it quickly became clear that St George represents very much more than a narrow English belligerence (crusading, foot-balling, alcoholic or otherwise) In fact, St George crosses many boundaries, not least with his patronage of towns and countries around the world and his mythic origins lying somewhere between Turkey and Libya. His legend as we find it is brimming with such bipolar contradictions.

For example, as well as his macho reputation for his slaying of the dragon, St George is also the passive recipient of the most brutal of martyrdoms enduring everything from being boiled alive to subjected to the rack and the axe. Interestingly too, there lies in the English version of his tale, an association with the Virgin Mary and resurrection, with chastity and qualities generally associated with female saints. On this theme of renewal of life he often crops up in European paganism associated with the Green Man and the onset of Spring. (George means green and the leaf-clad faces that can be seen in many English churches are often called Green Georges). Startlingly, St George also appears in Islamic tradition as Al Khidir - again meaning 'the green one' - who is covered in leaves, who drank from the Fountain of Life and who lives forever.

and unassimilated trauma of an individual and much effort, to maintain its voracious condition is progressive. The longer the the greater the sacrifice.

Eventually this reaches a climax the daughter of the king. Symbolically energy, the pure expression of the threatened with destruction by loss at well in the words to the daughter, spoiled with royal clothes for the sacrifice. "As seen myself re-born in your offspring. I wedding, to have adorned you with music; but you are to be devoured by our essential essence, which is wedded influences and environment with which The flutes and tambourines are suggested realisation - the sweet song of self-ex George, who comes to the rescue, and great faith. It is important to note that instinctual, survival urges are assimilated allowing the princess to tie her girdle awestruck population. In imaginary the weapon in the armoury of the human spirit

One of the most peculiar aspects of the history of its propagation mirrors the way it was, from early times, a vehicle for connected with paganism and earth magic. death were given a coded expression. claimed by St George, who ensured that noted by students of folk song, who found tradition, which stemmed from very early the Padstow May Song, and connected



St George and Mental Fight

by Jacob Phillips

*“In many a church his form is seen
With sword and shield, and helmet sheen:
Ye know him by his steed of pride,
And by the dragon at his side”*

To the scientific and rational, St George is little more than a curiosity. His official legend is ‘tenuous’ to say the least. So many versions and theories of his identity proliferate, as does his adoption by diverse peoples, that the idea of any genuine sense of group identity being obtained from him is laughable. As he is neglected by those he is meant to champion and connected with movements which most of us would like to forget, perhaps he is the ideal patron for sufferers of mental illness, who society (consciously and unconsciously) also seeks to forget. Moreover, it is frequently the forgotten, the repressed, or that which is swept under the carpet, which provokes psychological pathology. As the behaviour and outlook of those suffering such pathologies can appear devoid of any rational or scientific explanation, perhaps we could remember the wise words that ‘a man without imagination is more an invalid than a man without a leg’, and use our imaginations to penetrate a little further into the mystery of St George.

Some time has passed since psychology first looked at ancient mythology, primitive religion and art, and found in symbolic expression, a myriad of glyphs by which humans seek self-understanding, St George is well-known as a dragon slayer. The dragon speaks to the imagination, of the fiery, instinctive, and potentially destructive aspect of ourselves. It is the animalistic part of us. It is concerned with survival, and is frequently a storehouse of neglected emotions and urges, deemed unacceptable by behavioural conditioning. When this aspect of human consciousness is condemned, or repressed, it becomes violently destructive. The Legend of St George seems to evoke such a scenario: in Jacques de Voragine’s version we are told of a pond infested by a monster, which had driven back all attempts

Running

Thomas Tobias, MFC
Welce

Rev Tony Lucas, St Geo
Local association

Elena Riu, Co
Frederico Monpou -

John Constable, Sou
*The Mystery of St C
George & The*

Rev James Buxto
A vision of St Ge

Dr Sam Riches - I
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Not My Best Side b
Read by Sarah Wheeler, Ju

Steve Rouse, P
*My Bes
Georgian/Engli.*

Rev Claudet
Sings her own vers

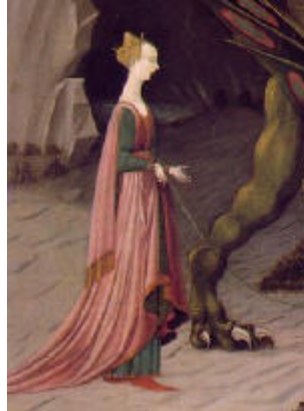
Not My Best Side

A Poem by U A Fanthorpe

Inspired by the painting by Uccello which hangs in the National Gallery



Not my best side, I'm afraid.
The artist didn't give me a chance to
Pose properly, and as you can
see,
Poor chap, he had this obsession
with
Triangles, so he left off two of
my
Feet. I didn't comment at the
time
(What, after all, are two feet
To a monster?) but afterwards
I was sorry for the bad publicity.
Why, I said to myself, should my
conqueror
Be so ostentatiously beardless,
and ride
A horse with a deformed neck
and square hoofs?
Why should my victim be so



It's hard for a girl to be sure if
She wants to be rescued. I mean,
I quite
Took to the dragon. It's nice to be
Liked, if you know what I mean.
He was
So nicely physical, with his
claws
And lovely green skin, and that
sexy tail,
And the way he looked at me,
He made me feel he was all
ready to
Eat me. And any girl enjoys that.
So when this boy turned up,
wearing machinery,
On a really dangerous horse, to
be honest
I didn't much fancy him. I mean,
What was he like underneath the
hardware?



I have diplomas in Dragon
Management and Virgin Recla-
mation.
My horse is the latest model,
with
Automatic transmission and
built-in
Obsolescence. My spear is cus-
tom-built,
And my prototype armour
Still on the secret list. You can't
Do better than me at the moment.
I'm qualified and equipped to the
Eyebrow. So why be difficult?
Don't you want to be killed and/
or rescued
In the most contemporary way?
Don't
You want to carry out the roles
That sociology and myth have
designed for you?

A Message from

With warmest good wishes

*I am so sorry not to have been with
occasion. We would have loved to come
us this time. Thank you so much for ser-
never ceased to be amazed at the variea
poem has taken on. I wrote it for a con-
it came second – because one of the jud-
poems never win first prizes. So I am d
My Best Side' is in fact winning; and I p
Fight Club in its very muc*

*I wrote the poem in a neuropsychic
receptionist. I was surrounding by patie
Love's, Labours, Lost, Shakespeare's hei
go and 'jest a twelvemonth in a hospital'
that too. I wrote to cheer myself up, a
misery, well it is. I experienced the he
mere on-looker at wretchedness. I my
clinical depression, but I have found i*

*I suppose the dragon in his conceit, the
George in his feeling of destiny all prese
do feel the need to apologise to Uccello
flouted. Elderly gentlemen at readings a
views about St George and the Dragon,*

*But I hope that this piece of frivolity wi
think poetry*

U A Fc

