

APRIL

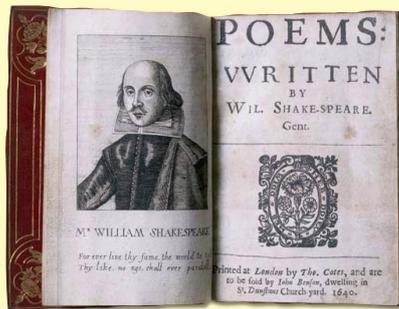


St George's Day, 23 April, commemorates England's patron saint, a third century Roman soldier whose parallel career as dragon-slayer is shown on a Victorian half-sovereign and in many Eastern Orthodox icons.

*Whan that Aprille, with hise shoures soote,
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote...
...Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages*



In *The Canterbury Tales* of the 14th Century, **Geoffrey Chaucer's** pilgrims set out on their journey across southern England only when winter has passed and April showers herald spring's arrival.



Both **William Shakespeare** and **J.M.W. Turner** have a birthday on **23 April**. Rather neatly, this is also the date of Shakespeare's death in 1616 at the early age of 52. Turner, seen here in a self



St George's Hall, Liverpool, opened in 1851 and containing law courts and concert halls, was described by Pevsner as 'the freest neo-Grecian building in England and one of the finest in the world'. When the original architect Harvey Lonsdale Elmes died during its construction Sir Charles Cockerell took over and was responsible for the sensational interiors.

William Shakespeare



portrait painted in his teens, died at the ripe old age of 76 in 1851, having pre-empted impressionism decades before the Impressionists in works such as *The Fighting Temeraire* and moving even further towards abstraction in his later years.



The Spaghetti Harvest, one of the greatest **April Fool's Day** pranks, was broadcast by the BBC on 1 April 1957 as an item in the Panorama current affairs programme.



By the time *Good Housekeeping* showed a child coping with **April showers** in 1922, **James Smith's** magnificent umbrella emporium in New Oxford Street had already been in business for over 90 years, also equipping gentlemen with sword-sticks, parasols and shooting sticks.



St George's mushroom (*Calocybe gambosa*) is an edible fungus that grows mainly in woodlands. Its name derives from when it first appears in the UK, in late April. Care must be taken not to confuse it with the highly poisonous *Inocybe erubescens*, which grows in the same habitats.

