

# St George's Day: raining on the PR parade

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The desperate attempts by [Downing Street](#) and [English Heritage](#) to get us excited about St George's Day are a product of political and commercial expediency.

This morning my Polish hairdresser was cutting an Irish foreman's barnet before attending to my thatch. Three people in London thanks to economic migration. I suspect I am the only one who passed the cricket (or at least football) test and actually backs this nation in sporting contests. But the whole point of being English is NOT celebrating a national day. It doesn't mean we don't feel positive about our country though.

I have noticed that black Britons have been happy to wave the St George's flag since the general (over)-excitement about England's appearances at various world sports tournaments over the last decade. Perhaps they enjoy rejecting the racist political connotations that once accompanied the red cross on a white background. More likely we fly the flag because we think it is fun to show solidarity – however fleeting – over something where no-one gets killed.

Any attempt by Scottish Gordon Brown to boost his English nationalist credentials will feel like an exploitation of community spirit. People get a sense of civic togetherness from the bottom up, not because our leaders exhort us to. I realise that state-engendered patriotism is part of our history, as [Linda Colley's](#) *Britons* famously narrates. But I hope a modern media-sceptical public will be suspicious of this kind of attempt to spin history and myth.

As for English Heritage, it is obviously just a sad marketing exercise to get us to drag our children around lame medieval enactments at various ruined castles. It is natural justice and entirely in keeping with real English traditions that the heavens have opened and we have some proper English weather to rain on their PR parade.

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