

# How green was my dragon...

THE great thing about make-believe is that it's cheap, organic and environmentally friendly. All of which is true of Carl Heap and Tom Morris's account of the life of St George.

Aimed at children over seven, it offers ethical Easter entertainment as wholesome as hot cross buns. But there may be an element of culture shock for some kids, turning from game consoles to olde English customs like Mumming and Morris dancing. Even The Archers have moved on! The play's two big questions are 'who was St George?' and 'what's a dragon?' In fact, the man so rowdily celebrated at Wembley Stadium was originally a Turkish Roman soldier, sacrificed for refusing to renounce his Christian faith in the Palestine of 303AD. Here,

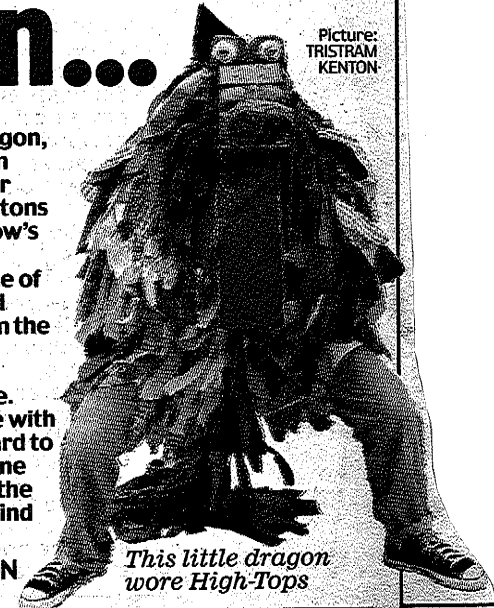
## St George & The Dragon (Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith)

Verdict: Introducing St George and his carbon neutral dragon ★★☆☆☆

however, he is represented, according to another legend, as the son of a medieval Coventry Lord who grew up in a forest after being abducted by, er, fairies. Then, the dragon yet another George is said to have slain in Libya is co-opted as a modern symbol of racial intolerance and religious bigotry. Thus inspired by political correctness (and a dragon-shaped birthmark), Michael Cox's compound George goes on a crusade to find a suitable monster. After a few false

starts, he happens upon a 'real' dragon, improvised here as a tinker's wagon with chicken wire wings, a big paper mouth and jugglers tossing fiery batons in lieu of his toasty breath — the show's one concession to CO2 emissions. Before that, George stars at the siege of Antioch in a battle of beach balls and buckets of boiling tinsel poured from the ramparts. The trouble with such recycling of props and myths is it inevitably leans towards pantomime. And amid such lusty farce (complete with cross-dressing panto-dames) it is hard to get emotionally involved. Still, anyone looking for an Easter alternative to the reptile house at their local zoo will find this a green and pleasant romp.

PATRICK MARMION



Picture:  
TRISTRAM  
KENTON

*This little dragon  
wore High-Tops*