

Anglo-Saxon Kings

The kings of Anglo-Saxon Britain each ruled their own kingdom and people in it. They also controlled their own army. Kings constantly fought to control other kingdoms and defend their land.

When the Anglo-Saxons first settled in Britain, there were seven other kingdoms. However, by AD 878, there was only one kingdom left; Wessex. The other kingdoms had been overrun by Vikings who established their own kingdoms.

King Alfred the Great

One of the most famous Anglo-Saxon kings is Alfred the Great.

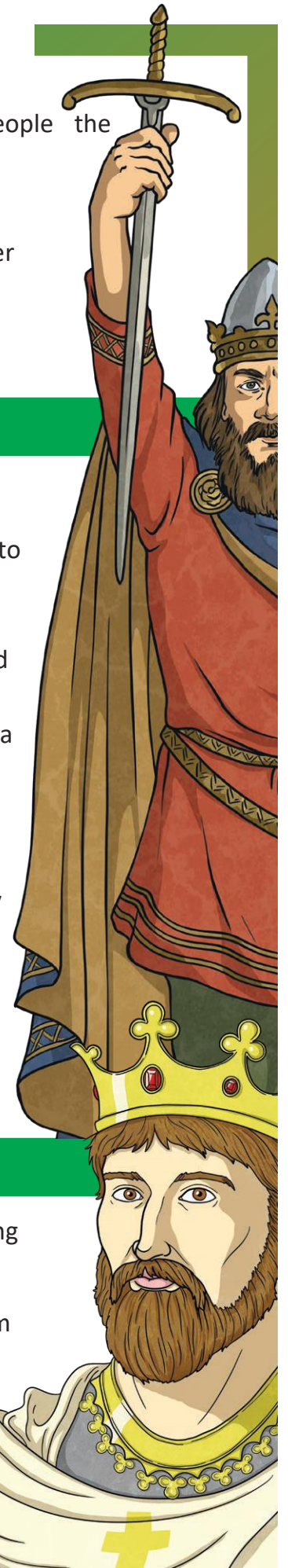
Alfred became king in AD 871 and he was the first Anglo-Saxon king to defeat the Vikings in battle and bring some peace to the English people. In AD 878, the Vikings invaded Wessex and forced King Alfred into hiding, though he did not surrender. In the same year, King Alfred and his followers defeated the Vikings at the Battle of Edington. The battle was fierce and Alfred was said to have charged into battle like a wild boar.

King Alfred knew that although he had been able to prevent the Vikings from invading Wessex, he would never be able to control them in the rest of England. So, in AD 886, he created a treaty which gave the Vikings control over northern and eastern England, an area which later became known as 'Danelaw'. The treaty allowed King Alfred to keep control over Wessex as well as West Mercia and Kent. This treaty helped to keep the peace between the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings.

King Athelstan

Athelstan was the grandson of Alfred and became king after his father, King Edward, died in AD 924.

During his reign, he drove the Vikings back further from Anglo-Saxon lands and was able to claim control over a greater area. In AD 927, Athelstan won back the kingdom of York from the Vikings. He also established control over King Constantine in Scotland and the other northern kings.



Athelstan is remembered for forming good relationships with leaders from other countries. He also had strong links with religious leaders and he founded many churches.

Edward the Confessor

Edward became king in AD 1042 and reigned until AD 1066. His nickname 'the confessor' came from his reputation as a religious man. Much of his reign was peaceful, with the country thriving, and he kept the country united.

Following his death, a war raged between Edward's heir, Harold, William of Normandy and Harald Hardrada, all of whom felt they had a claim to the throne. William was the victor and was crowned the next king.

