

Aethelflaed

Gloucester's Anglo-Saxon Warrior Queen



Educational Resource Pack

Written by Alyson Meredith Illustrated by Kate Sheppard

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This educational resource pack has been created as part of a city-wide programme of activities to celebrate the life of Aethelflaed, on the 1,100th anniversary of her death. Gloucester-based organisations decided to commemorate the life of this influential, historical and female leader who helped shaped Gloucester to be the place it is today. We are pleased to have been able to bring the story of Aethelflaed back to life through this informative and exciting pack. The 2018 anniversary programme was delivered in partnership with:



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All resources have been produced by Alyson Meredith, Kingsholm Primary School, illustrated by Kate Sheppard ©, and with input from Gloucester City Council archaeologist, Andrew Armstrong. The pack has been edited and co-ordinated by Michelle Lee, Gloucester Culture Trust.

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CONTENTS

There are two sections in this pack. Section 1 gives you all the information the children will need to complete the worksheets or other activities you may wish to set. A lot of the information can be used for several of the activities. Section 2 contains a series of worksheets based around the Anglo-Saxons and Aethelflaed.

Section 1

Aethelflaed - Education pack information	1
Aethelflaed - Narrative	5
Background information and brief timeline for Aethelflaed	6
Background information and detailed timeline for Aethelflaed	7
Aethelflaed as a political leader	11
Life in Anglo-Saxon times	15
Map: settlement of Anglo-Saxon Britain	17
Anglo-Saxons as warriors	18
What can help us find out about the past?	19
Archaeology	20
Runes alphabet	21
Anglo-Saxon poetry examples	22
Map of Gloucester - 1000AD	23
Anglo-Saxons and Gloucester	24
Did you know?	25



Section 2

What we know and what we want to find out	27
Anglo-Saxons and Aethelflaed - what do we want to learn?	28
Aethelflaed: a timeline template	29
Aethelflaed timeline images	30
Aethelflaed: a biography	34
Aethelflaed - question sheet	35
Aethelflaed - facts and guesses	36
5 great things about Aethelflaed	37
Anglo-Saxon religion and belief	38
Identifying Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms	39
Runes alphabet	40
Anglo-Saxon villages	41
Archaeology - what is likely to survive and what is not?	42
Anglo-Saxon Story Board	43
Anglo-Saxon Newspaper template	44
Poem writing - English and runes	45
Poster template	46
Anglo-Saxon story templates	47
Anglo-Saxon poetry worksheet	50
Colouring sheets	53

Aethelflaed:

Education Pack Information

This aim of this teaching pack is to raise awareness and understanding of Aethelflaed. It will enable young people to take part in the process of exploring her importance, help them evaluate the quality of work, and define what is important to them. The teaching pack is aimed at Upper Key Stage 2 but could easily be adapted and used with younger children.

The main Learning Area is 'The world around us'. Several curriculum areas (especially English) are well embedded in the suggested activities. It is hoped that the activities will provide an enquiry-based learning experience which enables pupils to look and learn proactively. Pupils can take a broader approach looking at the life of Aethelflaed and how it has been important both locally and nationally.

Much of the information in this pack covers the National Curriculum requirements. Some aspects of the curriculum points below are areas covered in this teaching pack:

- *Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind.*
- *Know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world.*
- *Gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.*

The knowledge we have of Aethelflaed and the Anglo Saxons offers many opportunities for cross curricular work. This booklet provides you with a variety of lesson ideas which can be used as one-off lessons, a day of activities or as part of your history curriculum.

You will find various suggested activities within this pack and all of the resources required to do these. The activities include investigating and problem-solving opportunities. It is important to note that this topic is relevant to the pupils and provides opportunities for them to have active and hands on enjoyable experiences, which are both engaging and challenging. It gives the opportunity to integrate a range of skills and can be adapted to suit various ages and learning styles. It is hoped that this pack will generate an interest in the history of the children's local area.



SECTION 1



Narrative: Aethelflaed, Queen of Mercia

Aethelflaed (pronounced Eth-el-fled) was the most powerful woman of the Anglo-Saxon era. Daughter of Alfred the Great, she ruled the kingdom of Mercia, an area extending from Lincolnshire in the northeast, the Wirral in the northwest and as far south as the Thames. She was a successful military strategist, fighting the Vikings, taking and holding land as far north as the border of Yorkshire, and bringing their leaders to pledge loyalty to her.

Aethelflaed came to power at a time when England was made up of many kingdoms, each with its own culture and traditions. Mercia was one of the largest and was fiercely independent. She made Gloucester its spiritual, cultural and learning capital.

Aethelflaed also made a difference nationally. Her military and political leadership laid the foundations for joining England's numerous kingdoms into the single country we know today.

1. Aethelflaed and her family:

- a. Her name - 'Aethel' means 'noble'
- b. Parents and siblings - a dynasty of leaders, warriors and politicians
- c. Husband, Aethelred, a political marriage
- d. Aelfwynn, her (unmarried) daughter and successor
- e. Edward, king of Wessex, Aethelflaed's brother who deposed his niece, Aelfwynn and sent her to a nunnery
- f. Aethelstan, future King of England, was brought up at her court

2. Mercia, Aethelflaed's kingdom:

- a. Its geographic position in the country extending from Lincolnshire to Wirral to the Thames
- b. Gloucester, established by Aethelflaed as the main seat of power in the Mercian kingdom, affecting spiritual and cultural activity in Gloucester today.
- c. St Oswald's Priory:
 - i. A church that served the royal palace at Kingsholm
 - ii. Centre of learning
 - iii. St Oswald, founding Anglo-Saxon saint

3. Aethelflaed, a powerful woman:

- a. Ruler in a land at war
- b. Skillful leader who learned from her father, Alfred the Great
- c. Most successful leader of her generation of Anglo-Saxons
- d. Skilled politician, balancing factions that wanted an independent Mercia with the vision of a united England
- e. Worked with other kingdoms/leaders to defeat the Vikings
- f. Got Viking warriors in the north to pledge loyalty to her
- g. Her successes enabled the union of kingdoms into a single England

Background Information and a brief timeline for Aethelflaed – Lady of the Mercians.



870

Birth of Aethelflaed, eldest child of Alfred and his wife Ealhswith of Mercia.

877-878

The Vikings enforce the partition of Mercia and occupy Gloucester for some months. Aethelflaed would have been 7 or 8. Parents had to flee and probably ended up hiding in the Somerset marshes with her father and mother.

885 – 887 (exact timing not known)

Aethelflaed marries Aethelred at some point between 885 and 887 – she would have been between 15-17 years old. It was an arranged marriage for political reasons.

889- 890

Worcester fortified as a burh, probably on the orders of Aethelred and Aethelflaed. The Priory of St Oswald is founded, probably initially dedicated to St Peter.

890

The Anglo-Saxon chronicles began. These were a collection of records recounting what was happening at the time. They cover

different subjects including farming and agriculture, the economy and laws of the time, as well as wars and battles. The chronicles also contain several long poems.

902

Aethelred became ill – Aethelflaed was increasingly in charge of Mercia. She appeared to be ruling on behalf of Aethelred from this point.

907-910

Aethelflaed fortified the town of Chester, created around 910. The Mercian Register records that Aethelflaed constructed a burh at Bremesbyrig (location unknown) importantly Aethelred is not mentioned.

911

Death of Aethelred. Aethelflaed became sole ruler of Mercia; exceptional at the time anywhere in Europe.

911-918

In the same year she came to power, Aethelflaed surrendered London and Oxford and all the lands between them to her brother Edward of Wessex. Aethelflaed captured lands, built fortresses and burhs. She advanced on the Vikings and captured several cities.

918

Aethelflaed died at Tamworth Staffordshire on the 12th of June. She was carried 75 miles to be buried at Gloucester in St Oswald's Priory.

Background Information and a detailed timeline for Aethelflaed – Lady of the Mercians



870

Birth of Aethelflaed, eldest child of Alfred and his wife Ealhswith of Mercia. Alfred's brother was Aethelred, King of Wessex at the time.

871

Vikings invade Wessex. Several battles fought against them. Aethelred died, and Alfred (Aethelflaed's father) succeeded him. Peace made with the Vikings after the battle of Wilton.

874

The Vikings force King Burgred of Mercia into exile and installed a puppet king Ceolwulf.

876

Further Viking attacks.

877

The Vikings enforce the partition of Mercia and occupy Gloucester for some months. The Anglo-Saxon chronicle states '{the Vikings} ... ravaged the kingdom of Mercia... and with one involved movement encamped in the town of Gloucester.' Some translations of the Chronicle say that the Vikings 'built booths' in Gloucester which could represent temporary camp or a trading site.

878

In mid-winter the Vikings left Gloucester and carried out a surprise attack – capturing Chippenham – Alfred was staying at Chippenham at the time and was forced to flee. Aethelflaed would have been seven or eight – presumably after fleeing she was hiding in the Somerset marshes with her father and mother?

878

Later this year the West Saxons defeated the Vikings at the battle of Edington – they surrendered and their king, Guthrum, was baptized with Alfred acting as God-father. Could Aethelflaed have witnessed this? Guthrum and his followers settle in East Anglia which is ruled as a Christian – but Danish – Kingdom.

879

Death of Ceolwulf of Mercia. Aethelred of Mercia becomes ruler of 'English' Mercia – the south and the west. He is likely to have been ealdorman of the Hwicce (a former minor kingdom – now province of Mercia – essentially Worcestershire and Gloucestershire). How he assumed

rule over English Mercia is unclear but as the most powerful surviving Ealdorman he makes an obvious choice. Gloucestershire and Worcestershire were probably the most intact and undamaged regions in Mercia following the Danish attacks. At some point after 881 he acknowledged the lordship of King Alfred.

879-886

Largely peaceful period – some raids, but key point is that Alfred fortifies his realm – creating 'burhs' or forts in key locations across the land. As the Vikings have no siege equipment this seriously limits their ability to attack. This is fundamental to securing the kingdom and enabling the later conquest of England. Aethelflaed will have seen the construction of and lived in many of these 'burhs'. The construction of burhs was a policy that she and her husband would bring to Mercia and use to recapture Danish Mercia.

887

Aethelflaed marries Aethelred at some point between 885 and 887 – she would have been 15 – 17. It was a political alliance and was effectively an arranged marriage. The 'capital' of English Mercia at this time was Gloucester, which whilst not recorded as a burh, almost certainly acted as one.

886-889

The only child of Aethelflaed and Aethelred is born – Aelfwynn – a daughter. Exact date not known – but certainly early in the marriage.

889

Worcester fortified as a burh, on the orders of Aethelred and Aethelflaed?

Late 880s or 890

The Priory of St Oswald is founded, probably initially dedicated to St Peter. The creation of the chronicles of the Anglo-Saxons.

894

Battle of Buttington – forces led by Aethelred (combined Wessex, Mercia and Welsh) defeat the Vikings.

902

Aethelred becomes ill – Aethelflaed increasingly in charge of Mercia. Appears to be ruling on behalf of Aethelred from this point.

907

Aethelflaed fortified the town of Chester – helping to extend English Mercia to the north.

909

A combined West Saxon and Mercian raid into Danish territory recovered the bones of St Oswald from Bardney Abbey in Lincolnshire to St Oswald's, which was renamed in his honour.

St Oswald's may represent an attempt by Aethelflaed (and Aethelred) to further establish their role as the inheritors of the Mercian royal family.

910

The Mercian Register records that Aethelflaed constructed a burh at Bremesbyrig (location unknown) importantly Aethelred is not mentioned.

911

Death of Aethelred. Aethelflaed becomes sole ruler of Mercia – exceptional at the time anywhere in Europe. She did not take the title Queen but was known as the Lady of the Mercians (Myrcnahlædige). The political circumstances in Mercia at this time are rather unusual. Lord Aethelred died leaving no known close male relatives and any earlier Mercian royal dynasties appear to have ceased to exist or been cooperating with the Vikings. Mercia badly needed stable rule and a continuation of good working relations with Wessex. Aethelflaed was the sister of Edward of Wessex and had effectively been ruling Mercia since Aethelred fell ill. She provides continuity of leadership and maintains the important alliance. Aethelflaed was also part Mercian via her mother, which must have helped. This is still a very unusual act for a European state at this time. Aethelflaed must have been an impressive and forceful character.

In the same year she came to power Aethelflaed surrendered London and Oxford and all the lands between them to her brother Edward of Wessex. This was probably a temporary measure rather than a permanent surrender of Mercian territory (later sources still refer to this land as Mercian territory). This was frontier territory at the time – and by transferring it to Edward, Aethelflaed at once gives her brother a land border with Danish territory from which he can attack but also frees Mercian troops from the responsibility of defending that area. It releases the Mercians to go on the offensive in the Midlands.

912

Mercia under Aethelflaed captured and fortified Scargeat (location unknown) and Bridgnorth. At the same time Edward is securing land north of the Thames – so the two rulers are co-operating.

913

At the same time Aethelflaed is attacking towards the heart of the old Mercian kingdom. She captured and fortified Tamworth and Stafford. Tamworth was the historical capital of Mercia so its capture would have been a moment of some significance to put it mildly. How would Aethelflaed have felt riding into a city freed after 30 or more years of Danish occupation? Especially since this happened under her sole leadership.

914

Further advances and fortress building by Mercian forces. A fresh Viking force (certainly either Danish or Norwegian) sailed up the River Severn and invaded Mercian territory around

Hereford. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that 'the men from Hereford and Gloucester and from the nearest burhs met them and fought against them and put them to flight...' Importantly this happened while the main Mercian field army was on campaign further north. It shows that the military reforms of Aethelred and Aethelflaed had succeeded in making Mercia far harder to attack. Later in the year Aethelflaed built a burh in Warwick – Edward seems to have co-ordinated by building burhs to the east.

915

Lady Aethelflaed built three further burhs on the Welsh border.

916

Lady Aethelflaed sent an army against Tewdr, King of Brycheiniog (in south Wales) destroying the Royal crannog (a fortified dwelling) and capturing his queen and court. Tewdr survived and made his submission soon afterwards. Aethelflaed probably held the overlordship of at least three of the Welsh Kingdoms.

917

Aethelflaed captured Derby – a very significant victory as this was a major Danish base. The Mercian register relates 'Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians, with the help of God, before 1 August obtained the borough which is called Derby, with all that belongs to it; and, there also 4 of her thegns, who were dear to her, were killed within the gates.' (Thegns were the rank below earlormen and probably acted as senior officers in the Mercian army – so this was a costly attack).

918

The Vikings of Leicester – now surrounded and isolated – surrender to Aethelflaed without a fight. Aethelflaed entered negotiations with the Vikings of York (who were now ruled by the unpopular Norwegian pagan Ragnall who had taken control of York in 911 after fleeing Dublin) in the summer of 918 the Danish Christians of York promised to submit to her overlordship – presumably in return for her help getting rid of Ragnall.

918

Sadly this came to nothing as Aethelflaed died at Tamworth Staffordshire on the 12th of June. She was carried 75 miles to be buried at Gloucester in St Oswald's Priory. Her death was widely recorded in Britain; being noted in the Welsh and Irish Annals the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Mercian Register. The Mercian Register described her as 'holding dominion over the Mercians... with lawful authority' The Annals of Ulster refer to her as 'a very famous queen of the Saxons'. Aelfwynn recognised at Lady of the Mercians. However, after some months, Edward removed Aelfwynn and became king of Mercia as well as Wessex.

Aethelflaed as a political leader – does anyone compare?

We have had many significant female leaders in the last 100 years. For example, Margaret Thatcher. The UK now has another female prime minister and Elizabeth II has been queen for more than six decades. Some of our female rulers have been powerful political forces and helped change the way we see women in our society.



Against the odds, history shows that nearly 1,100 years ago we had a powerful female leader who helped shape our country into what it is today. When Aethelflaed, "Lady of the Mercians", died in Tamworth she was considered and is still considered to be one of the most powerful political figures in tenth-century Britain.

Today many people may not even have heard of her and some would argue that she was not a major player in the story of the making of England. However, Aethelflaed was in fact a hugely important figure before her death in 918, aged around 50. Indeed, the uncontested succession of her daughter, Elfwynn, as Mercia's leader was a move of successful female powerplay not matched until the coronation of Elizabeth I after the death of her half-sister Mary in 1558.



Aethelflaed was born in the early 870s. Her father, Alfred "the Great" had become King of the West Saxons in 871, while her mother, Eahlswith, may have been from Mercian royal kindred.

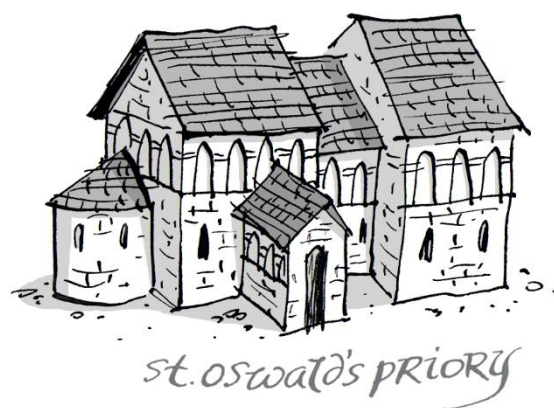
At the time, Anglo-Saxon "England" was made up of a series of smaller kingdoms, including Wessex in the south, Mercia in the Midlands and Northumbria in the far north. All of these kingdoms faced the threat of the Viking forces.





Aethelflæd spent most of her life in the Kingdom of Mercia and was married to Æthelred. Mercia had seen some dark days by the time of her marriage. In the eighth and early ninth centuries, the Mercian kings had had good cause to consider themselves the most powerful rulers in southern Britain. But by the 870s, the kingdom had suffered dramatically from the Viking assaults which had swept across England.

Aethelflæd and Æthelred together engaged in massive rebuilding projects at Gloucester, Worcester, Stafford and Chester. They were responsible for overseeing the refounding of churches and new relic collections. In 909 the relics of a seventh-century saint, Oswald was moved to a new church in Gloucester. This is thought to be when the church changed its name to St Oswalds. Æthelred was buried alongside Oswald in 911, and Aethelflæd joined him seven years later.



Politics

At the time, Aethelred and Aethelflæd did not call themselves king or queen, instead, they used the title "Lord/Lady of the Mercians. Many did however consider Aethelflæd a Queen, especially the Welsh and Irish.

Even before her husband died Aethelflæd appeared to be ruling on his behalf. After her husband's death In 907, Aethelflæd fortified the town of Chester – helping to extend English Mercia to the north. In 909 a combined West Saxon and Mercian raid into Danish territory recovered the bones of St Oswald from Bardney Abbey in Lincolnshire to St Oswald's, which was renamed in his honour. St Oswald's may represent an attempt by Aethelflæd (and Aethelred) to further establish their role as the inheritors of the Mercian royal family. The sole rule of Aethelflæd was exceptional at the time anywhere in Europe. The



political circumstances in Mercia at this time are rather unusual. Lord Aethelred died leaving no known close male relatives and any earlier Mercian royal dynasties appear to have ceased to exist or been cooperating with the Vikings. Mercia badly needed stable rule and a continuation of good working relations with Wessex. Aethelflaed was the sister of Edward of Wessex and had effectively been ruling Mercia since Aethelred fell ill. She provided continuity of leadership and maintained the important alliance. Aethelflaed was also part Mercian via her mother, which must have helped. This is still a very unusual act for a European state at this time, Aethelflaed must have been an impressive and forceful character.



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Mercia under Aethelflaed captured and fortified Scargeat (location unknown) and Bridgnorth. At the same time Edward is securing land north of the Thames – so the two rulers are co-operating.

From 913-918 her political force is at its best. Aethelflaed attacked towards the heart of the old Mercian kingdom. She captured and fortified Tamworth and Stafford. Tamworth was the historical capital of Mercia so its capture would have been a moment of some significance to put it mildly. Further advances and fortress building were undertaken by Mercian forces. A fresh Viking force (certainly either Danish or Norwegian) sailed up the River Severn and invaded Mercian territory around Hereford. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that 'the men from Hereford and Gloucester and from the nearest burhs met them and fought against them and put them to flight...' Importantly this happened while the main Mercian field army was on campaign further north. It shows that the military reforms of Aethelred and Aethelflaed had succeeded in making Mercia far harder to attack. Later in the year Aethelflaed built a burh in Warwick – Edward seems to have co-ordinated by building burhs to the east. Lady Aethelflaed built three further burhs on the Welsh border. Lady Aethelflaed sent an army against Tewdr, King of Brycheiniog (in south Wales) destroying the Royal crannog and capturing his queen and court. Tewdr survived and made

his submission soon afterwards. Aethelflaed probably held the overlordship of at least three of the Welsh Kingdoms.

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Life in Anglo Saxon times – Information sheet

Everyday life in Anglo-Saxon times was not an easy one. They did not have shops or nice warm houses. The society was divided into 3 different classes. England was still very much a rural country and there were not many large towns, most of the country was still covered in large forests. Historians believe that there were only about 1 million people in England at the time of the Anglo-Saxons. This is a very small number as today there is believed to be over 65million.

The lowest class were the slaves, they had a very harsh unfair life. Above them were the churls, some of this group of people were well off while others were still very poor. At the top of the class system were the thanes (the Saxon upper class). They enjoyed feasting, hunting and controlling areas. They were expected to give their followers gifts such as weapons.

Most of the early Anglo-Saxons lived in villages which were mostly self-sufficient. They built their own houses, grew their own food and made their own clothes. They would trade for things that they needed from outside of the village (such as salt).

By the time of Aethelflaed things had changed a little bit and about 10% of people lived in towns. Many of the towns were created for the purpose of trade and were very popular and flourishing. England had changed and now had an efficient system for local government. Monasteries had been built and the arts were being developed.

Anglo-Saxon churls began to lose their freedom and the Lords of the land had a lot more control of the people. By the 10th century Anglo Saxons developed burhs – these were fortified settlements. By 1086 London had about 16,000 people and other large towns only had around 5,000. In the towns there were plenty of different craftsmen

including people who worked with wood, leather and iron. Wooden ships were built and the Anglo-Saxons exported wool and slaves. The burhs offered protection from attackers such as the Vikings as well as being market towns.

Family was very important to the Anglo-Saxons and if a member of your family was killed you were expected to avenge them. A system was developed where you could receive compensation if someone had killed a member of your family. The person who killed them would have to pay you a sum of money which varied depending on your class, if they did not do this then you were allowed to seek revenge. If you were a slave then nothing needed to be paid to the families.

Rich Anglo-Saxons lived in wooden houses just like the rest of the population, but they normally had tapestries hung on the wall, showing their wealth. They had wooden furniture which would have been very simple and made by craftsmen. During the day they enjoyed hunting, and in the evenings, they enjoyed storytelling, riddles and games such as chess. Some would be entertained by people singing and playing instruments such as the harp.



These maps show the changing settlement of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain



Anglo-Saxons as warriors

The Anglo-Saxons had to fight to protect the land in England against the Vikings. By the time of Aethelflaed, Burhs had been built. These provided some protection for the Anglo-Saxons as well as being flourishing market towns.

Anglo-Saxon armies were not normally very big, made up of a few hundred men. They would use swords, spears, axes, bows and arrows. They also had wooden shields and helmets offering some protection.

Everybody fought on foot and battles were brutal. During battles many Anglo-Saxons would have been killed or injured.

The most common weapon was the spear, the most feared weapon was the battle axe, but the most valued weapon was the sword. The swords were made by craftsmen who took a lot of pride and time in making them. During close combat the Anglo-Saxons had a knife called a scramasax.



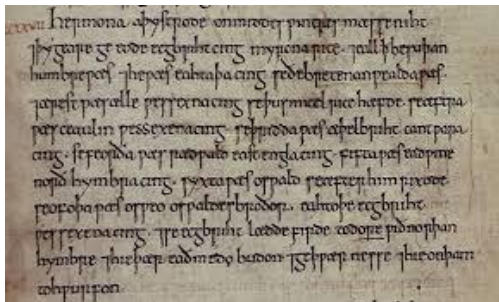
What can help us find out about the past?

Visual clues around us

Can we spot things in buildings around us?
What are they made from? (Did you know bricks were rarely used before the 1500s).



Remains of St Oswald's Priory at the Museum of Gloucester



Possible extract of Anglo-Saxon chronicle

Documents

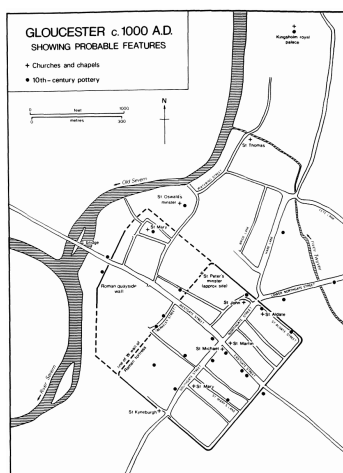
We can find information in wills; histories written by people in the past as well as census information.

Archaeology

We can often find things below the ground in the foundations and remains of older buildings. Artefacts (objects) can tell us so much about the past including what materials were used, what they ate with etc.

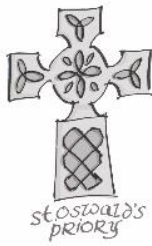


St Oswald's Priory, Gloucester



Maps and plans

We can find information on maps and plans. These often reveal to us what a place was like at a certain time in history.



Archaeology

Helping us to find out
about the past.

We can find out lots about the Anglo-Saxons by looking at archaeological evidence.

What do archaeologists do?

























Archaeologists study the things people made, used and left behind. The purpose of archaeology is to try to understand about our past, thinking about how people lived and what civilisations were like.

They excavate areas to find items from the past. This is often called 'a dig'.

Archaeologists have to be very careful when doing this as things can often be very fragile. They use specialised tools as well as also spoons, knives, picks and brushes.

Some things archaeologists often find include buildings, art, body remains, pottery and money.

This is the Anglo-Saxon rune alphabet.

							
F/V	U	TH	A	R	C/K/ Q	G	W
							
H	N	I	J/Y	EI	P	Z	S
							
T	B	E	M	L	NG	D	O

Anglo-Saxon Poetry.

An original Anglo-Saxon poem:

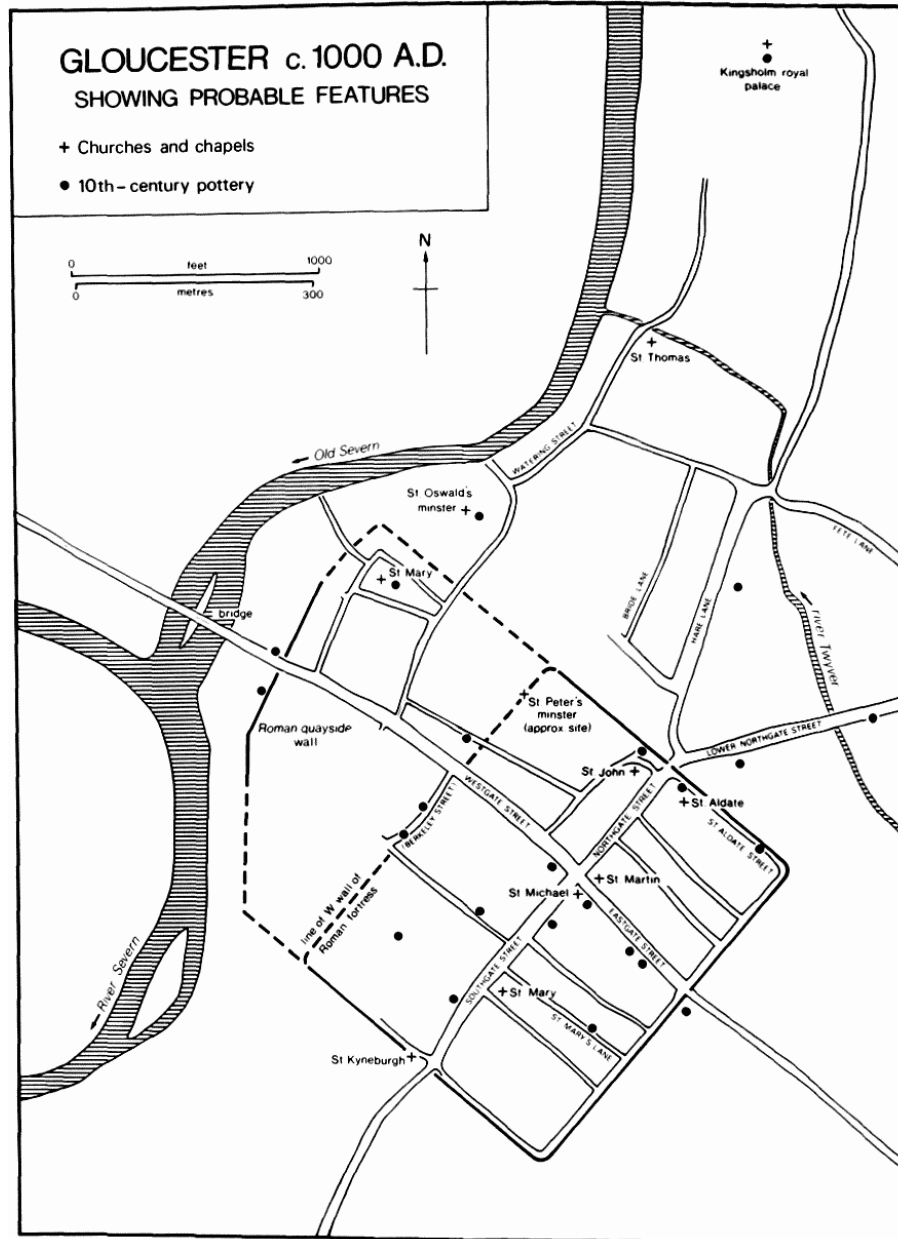
Hwæt! wē Gār-Dena in geār-dagum,
þeod-cyninga, þrym gefrunon,
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.
Oft Scyld Scefing sceapen aþreatum,
monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,
egsode eorlas. Sy ððan ærest wearð
feasceaft funden, he þæs frofre gebad
weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,
oð þæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra
oferhronrade hyran scolde,
gombangyldan. Þæt wæs god cyning!

We can translate this Anglo-Saxon poem into English today:

Lo! We of the Spear-Danes in days gone by
of the kings, of fame have heard,
how those nobles did great deeds
Often Scyld Scefing, from the army of his enemies,
from many warriors, took the mead-benches
terrified the nobles. After he was first
discovered, a foundling, he gained a consolation
waxed under the heavens, prospered in glory,
until eventually everyone in surrounding tribes,
over the whale-road, had to obey
and yield to him. He was a good king!



A map showing Gloucester around 1000AD



This map shows what Gloucester is thought to have looked like at around 1000AD.

What features can you spot?

Do you think any of these things were created during the Anglo-Saxon time?

Do any of the things on the map still exist in Gloucester today?

Anglo-Saxon Gloucester (577AD - 900AD)



The Anglo-Saxons captured Gloucester in 577 AD after they won a battle against the native Celts. We do not know if there were people living in Gloucester at that time.

In the late 7th century the Anglo-Saxons founded a monastery at Gloucester and the town began to revive. Craftsmen and merchants came to live in Gloucester once again.

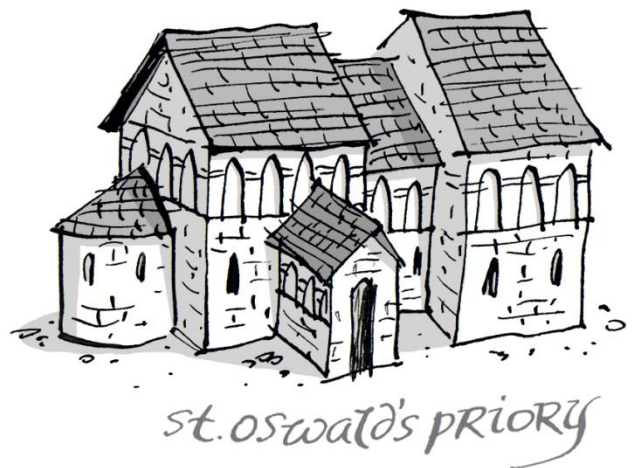
In the late 9th century the Anglo-Saxons created a network of fortified towns called burh. In the event of a Danish attack all the men in the area would gather in the burh to fight. Gloucester was made a burh. In 915 AD men from Gloucestershire gathered in the town then went out to fight the Vikings and defeated them in battle.

Gloucester flourished in the 10th century and it had a mint. A suburb grew up outside the North gate.

Did you know?

That the Great Roman walls of Gloucester were still standing during Anglo-Saxon times. They were re-used and refortified by Aethelflaed. The Roman name for Gloucester was *Glevum* and it was a mostly-uninhabited ruin when Aethelflaed laid out the Saxon burh. Any occupation in the town was more akin to a village or farmsteads within the ruins of the former Roman town rather than anything recognisable as an urban centre.

Bits of the Roman city wall and some of the gates were still standing when Aethelflaed arrived and she used them as a basis for the new street pattern which persists to this day. Stones from the old Roman civic buildings were recycled to build St Oswald's.



Can you spot the remains of St Oswald's Priory in Gloucester?

What do you notice about the building now?

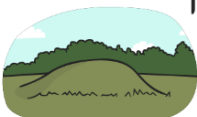
SECTION 2



*What I already know
about Aethelflaed:*

Key questions:
What do we want
to find out?

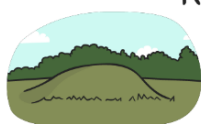
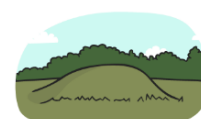
*What I would like to find
out:*



The Anglo-Saxons and Aethelflaed

Three things I want to learn about
Aethelflaed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Aethelflaed - a timeline

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Do you know anything else about Aethelflaed?



870—Birth of Aethelflaed



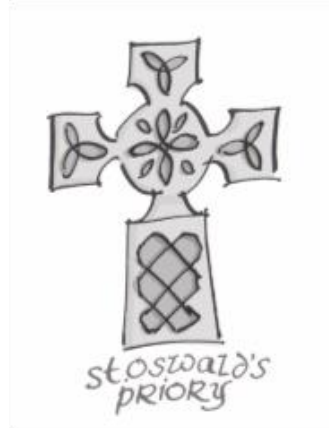
877-888—Aethelflaed and her parents fled to Somerset



885-887—Aethelflaed married Aethelred



889-890— St Oswald's Priory founded



890- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles began



902—Aethelred became ill



911—Aethelred died



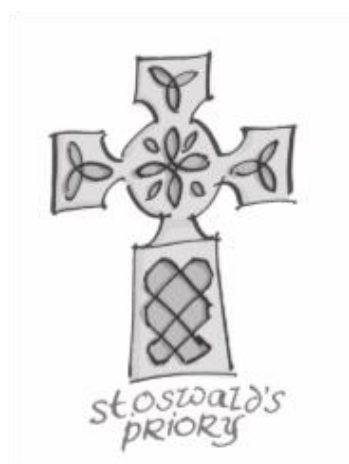
907-910—Aethelflaed fortified Chester



911-918—Aethelflaed advanced on the Vikings



918—Aethelflaed died and was carried 75 miles to Gloucester





870—Birth of Aethelflaed



877-888—Aethelflaed and her parents fled to Somerset



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918— Aethelflaed died and was carried 75 miles to Gloucester





Aethelflaed: a biography

Features	Notes for my biography
<i>Title</i>	
<i>Introduction paragraph. Key 1 or 2 sentences to give an overview.</i>	
<i>Childhood events/ early life events and achievements</i>	
<i>Key events in her personal life e.g. marriage/ children.</i>	
<i>Key life events and achievements. This is likely to be at least 2 paragraphs</i>	
<i>Concluding paragraph</i>	

Aethelflaed

Question Sheet



What period of British history was she alive in?
When was she born and when did she die?

Where did she live?

What do we know about her family?

How do we know about Aethelflaed? what evidence do we have that she lived?

What is her connection to Gloucester?

What is she best known for in history?

Use the table below to write a summary of your ideas about Aethelflaed. On the left write facts only. On the right, put your own ideas about her, e.g. her family, home, job, role as a leader. Remember that the things you write on the right are your own personal opinions not facts!

What FACTS do you know for sure?	What can you guess about Aethelflaed?

Aethelflaed - the Warrior Queen!

Can you find out some interesting facts about Aethelflaed?



Anglo-Saxon Religion and Beliefs

By Aethelflaed's time, Anglo-Saxons were Christian. In the earlier Anglo-Saxon times, there were many different gods that people worshipped. These included Woden, Tiw, Thor and Frig. The names of these gods have influenced the names we use for our days of the week: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Can you work out which god's name is used for which day?

- Tiw' day is _____
- Woden's day is _____
- Thunor's day is _____
- Frig's day is _____



Can you use the words below to fill in the gaps?

Thor Frig elves Britain gods
superstitious Tiw Christians Woden

When the Anglo-Saxons came to _____, they were _____.

They worshipped lots of different _____.

The main Anglo-Saxon gods included _____, _____, _____, and _____. These gods names are remembered in the days of the week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday). The early Anglo-Saxons believed in goblins, _____ and dragons. Gradually the Anglo-Saxons changed their beliefs and many of them became _____.

Identifying Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms

On the Map:

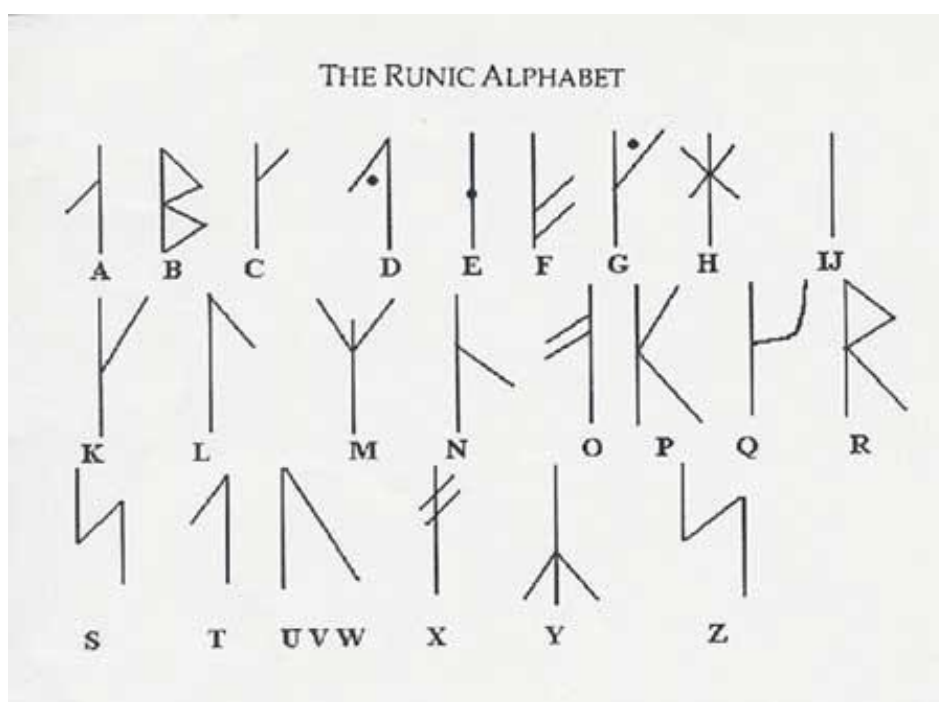
- colour the areas settled by the Anglo-Saxons in the 10th Century
- label the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms



Runes- the early Anglo-Saxon alphabet

DID YOU KNOW:

- Runes were letters used by early Anglo-Saxons to write very short messages to show something belonged to you.
- They were also used to write inscriptions on gravestones.
- They were usually carved on wood or stone (not written in books).
- The Alphabet is called a 'Futhork' from the first 6 letters.
- Christians did not understand runes. They thought they were evil and could be used to cast spells.



See if you can write your name in runes...

Can you tell me some facts about the Saxons using the alphabet above?

Anglo-Saxon Villages

- Anglo-Saxons villages were built near natural resources such as rivers and forests.
- The natural resources were needed to provide the villagers with the things they needed to survive.
- Most Anglo-Saxons grew their own crops and kept sheep, pigs and cattle. They also hunted other animals and fish for food.
- They made household things and farm equipment from pottery, wood and metal. They made clothes from cloth they wove themselves.
- The Anglo Saxons did not have shops like we do. They traded goods such as slaves and hunting dogs with people from other countries for the things that they were not able to make like glass.
- Most Anglo-Saxons built their houses facing the sun to get as much heat as possible.
- It was only later in Anglo-Saxon times that buildings started to be built out of stone. Early Anglo-Saxons built their houses form wood and straw.

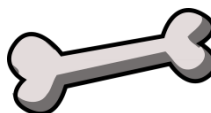
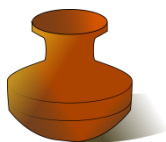
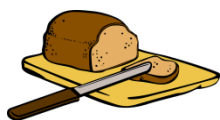
Can you design your own
Anglo-Saxon village?



Archaeology

We know that some things are more likely to survive from the past than other things. Fill in the table using the pictures below and your own ideas, deciding what sort of things are likely to have survived from Anglo-Saxon times and which are not.

Likely to survive	Not likely to survive



Name: _____

My Anglo-Saxon Story board

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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The Anglo-Saxon times

THE PEOPLE'S FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER

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[illegible]This image shows a full page of primary-ruled paper. It features ten sets of horizontal dashed lines, each set consisting of three parallel lines. These lines are evenly spaced vertically across the entire page, providing a guide for letter height and placement for young learners. The background is white, and there are no margins or additional markings.This image shows a vertical rectangular sheet of white paper designed for handwriting practice. It features ten evenly spaced horizontal dashed lines across its entire width. The left edge of the paper is bordered by a solid black line, while the top, bottom, and right edges are open. There is no text or other markings on the page.

Create a poem about Aethelflaed and then convert it into Anglo-Saxon runes. It could be a rhyming poem or not. We want to see the poem in English and then in Anglo-Saxon runes.

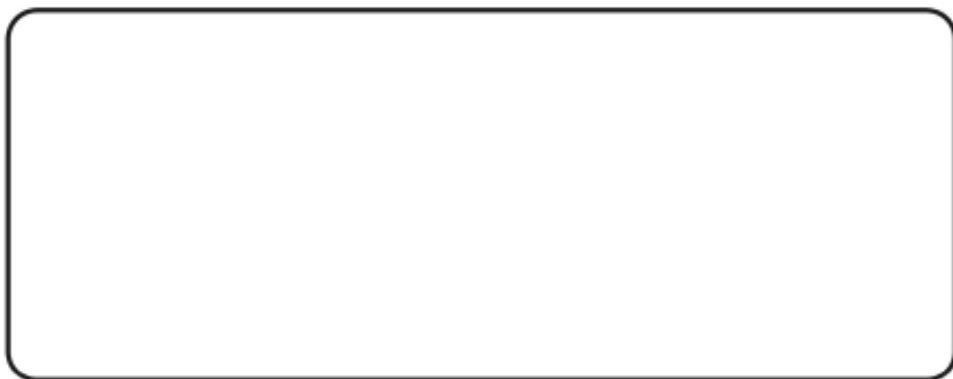
My English poem:

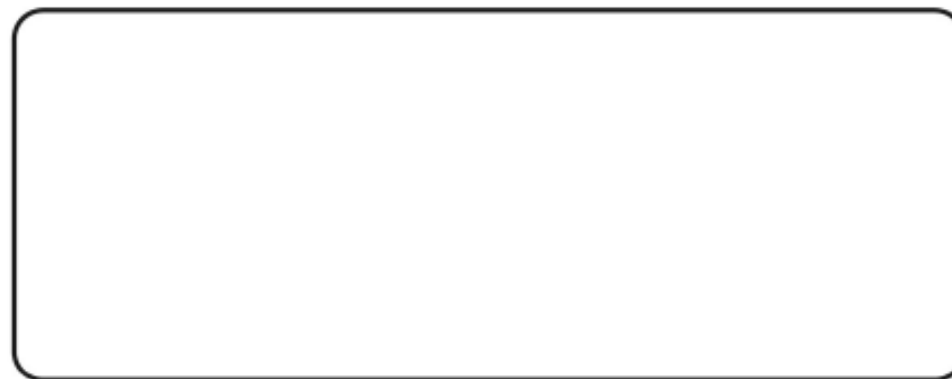
My Anglo-Saxon runes poem:

Create a poster trying to round up soldiers to fight against the Vikings. What could you add to the poster to encourage them to join you?




A large empty rectangular box for creating a poster.









Here is part of a song written by JPDL, especially to celebrate Aethelflaed. JPDL is a poet and lives in Gloucestershire. George Moorey, a resident of Gloucester, wrote the music.

Could you write your own song about Aethelflaed and the Anglo-Saxons?

A THOUSAND YEARS PASS, MILLENNIA FLOWS AND
SHE'S STILL REMEMBERED IN LYRICS AND PROSE
HER REMAINS ARE RESTING IN GLOUCESTER, HER SOUL
SCRIBED TO THE HISTORY OF STORYS TOLD

MICHAN LA DIGA... LADY OF MERCIA
TALES OF HER ACTIONS SPANNING A MILLENNIA

NICH LA CLAFED, PASSED ON THE POWER
WIDOWED WAS ALFRED'S FIRST BORN DAUGHTER

TOOK TO THE PATH THAT WAS PLOTTED BEFORE HER
ADOPTED THE TACTICS OF WAR FROM HER FATHER

SAGA ECLIPSED BY HER HUSBAND AND BROTHER
THESE WORDS WERE WRITTEN FOR A FOUNDING MOTHER.

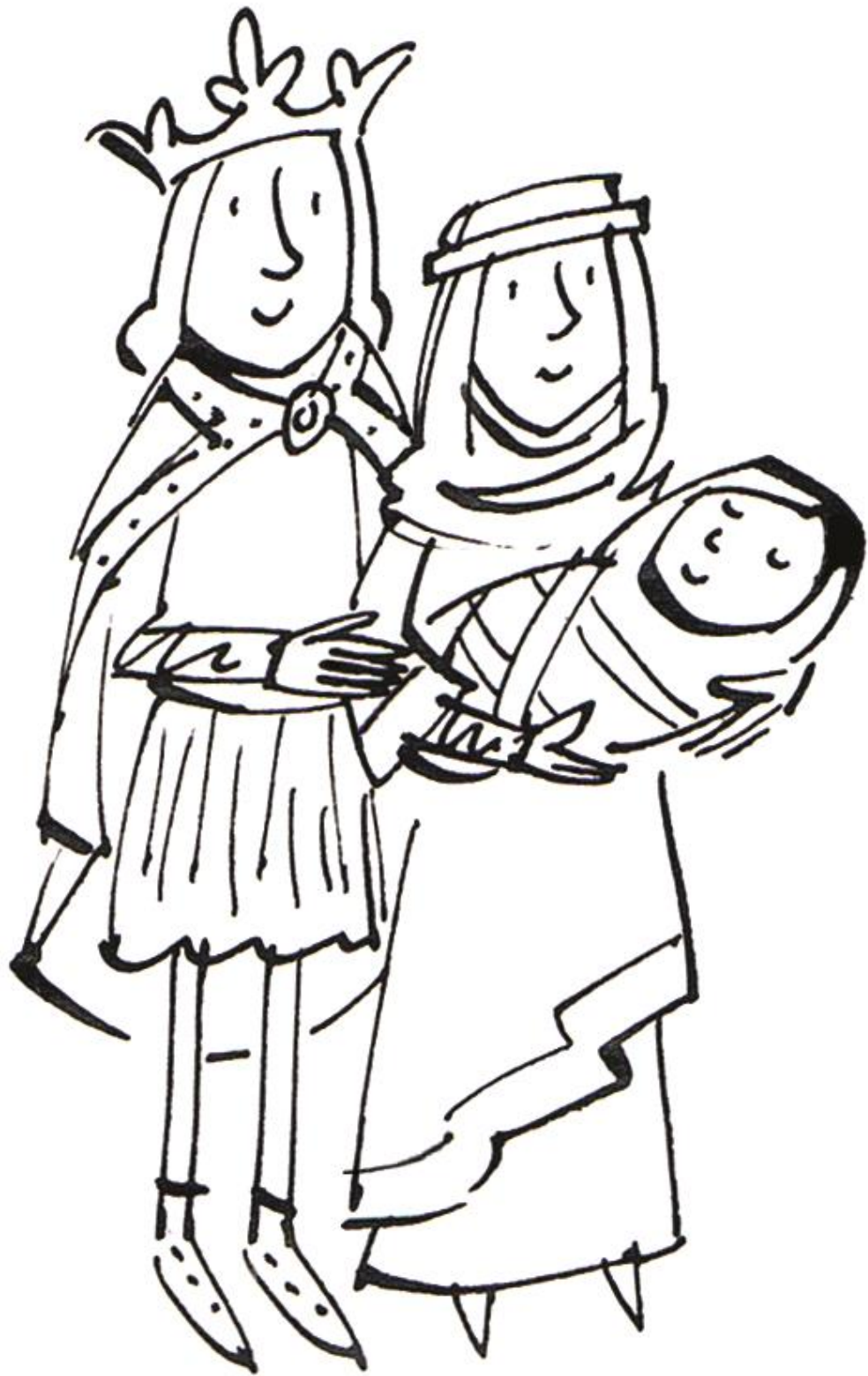


Below is a poem which was adapted from a song written by Eloise Hopkins & JPDL. (both residents of Gloucestershire), especially to celebrate Aethelflaed.



Could you write your own song or poem about Aethelflaed and the Anglo-Saxons?

*Founding Mother on a chessboard of Kings
Æthelflæd, a noble beauty. The delight of her subjects
And the dread of her enemies
A woman of enlarged soul
A thousand years pass and millennia flows and she's
still remembered in lyrics and prose.*



870

Birth of Aethelflaed



877-888

Aethelflaed and her parents flee to Somerset



885-887

Aethelflaed marries
Aethelred



st. oswald's priory

889-890

St Oswald's Priory was founded



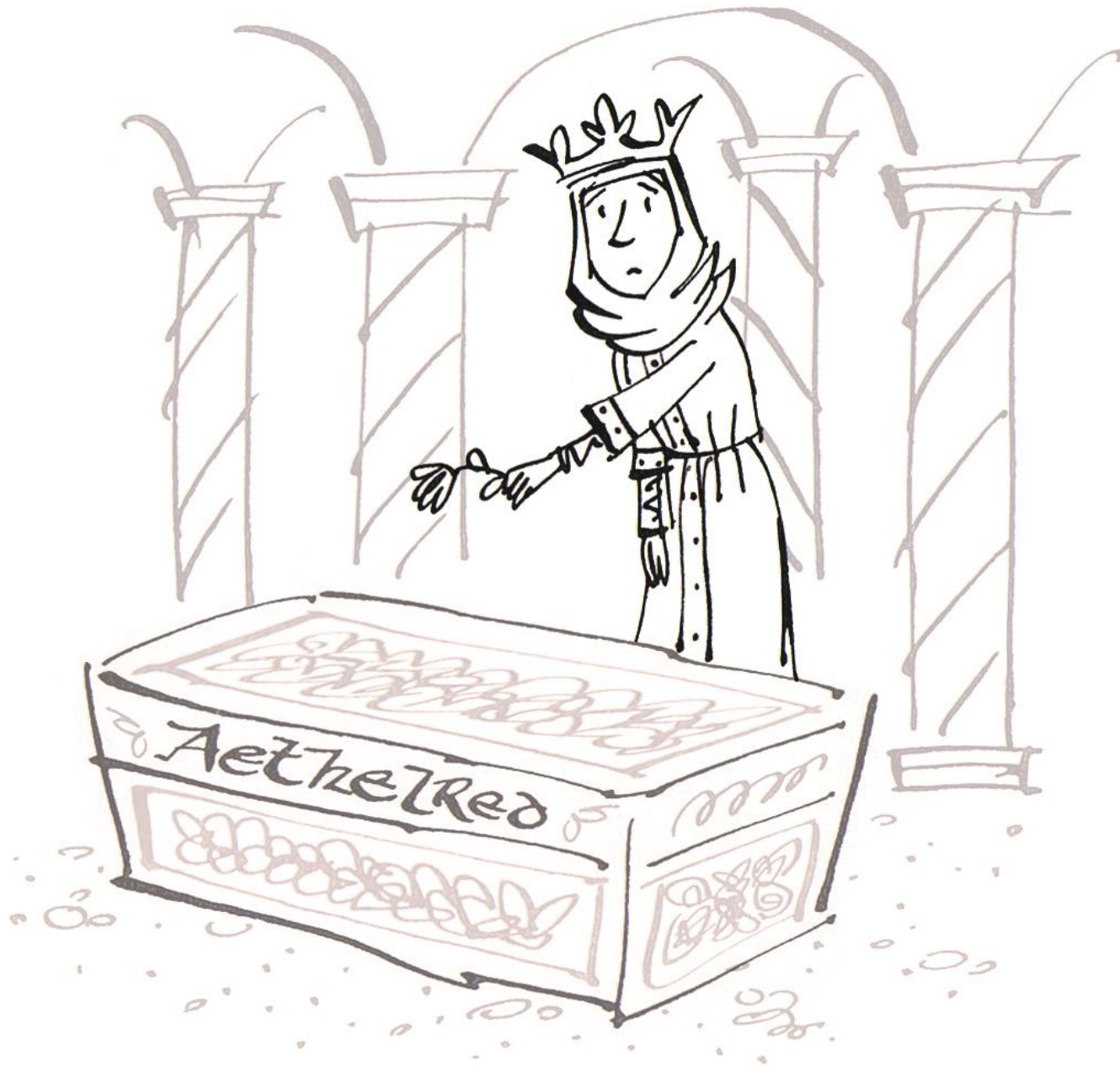
890

The Anglo-Saxon
Chronicles began



902

Aethelred became ill



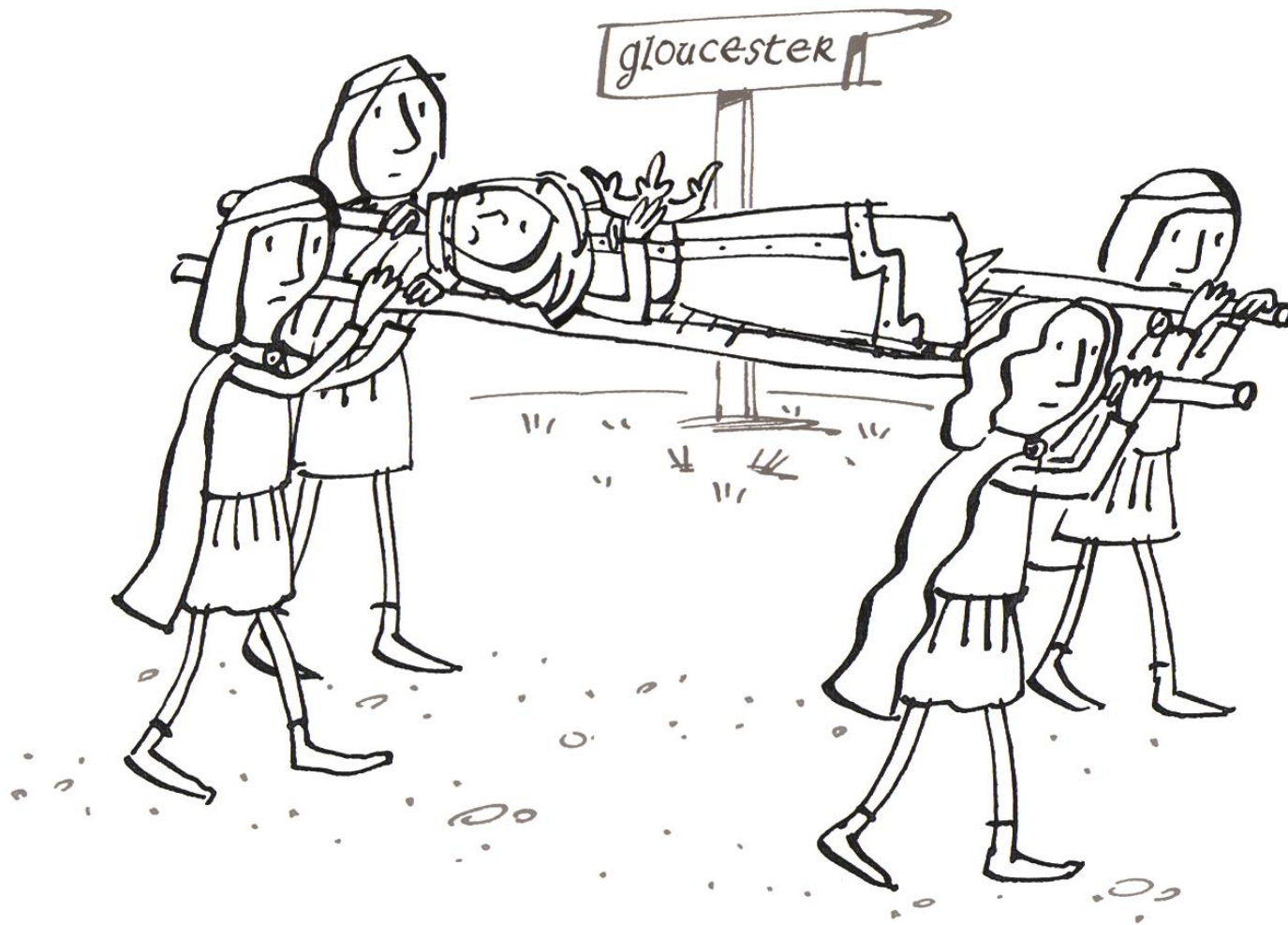
911
Aethelred
died



907-910
Aethelflaed fortified
Chester



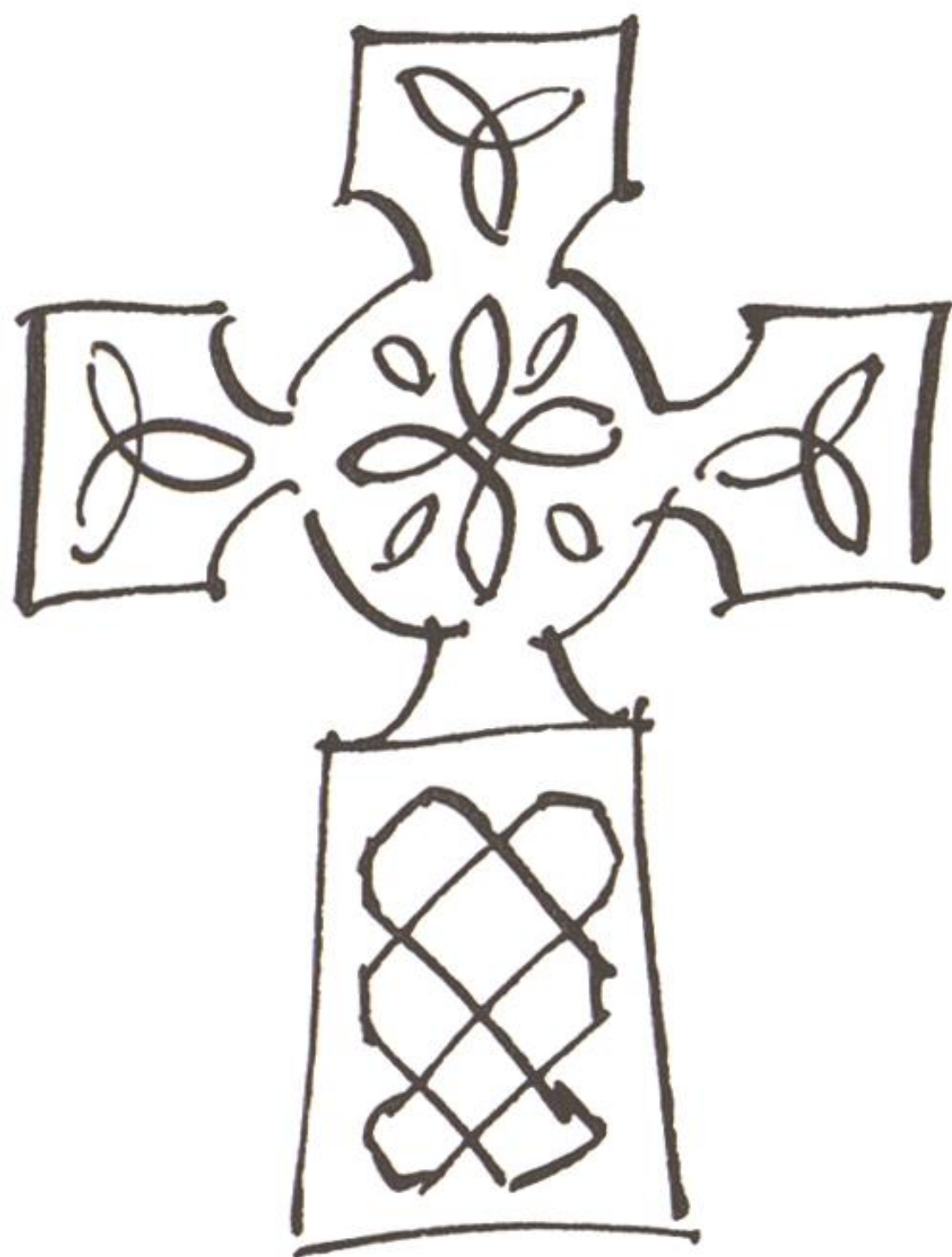
911-918
Aethelflaed
advanced
on the
Vikings



918

Aethelflaed
died and was
carried
75 miles to
Gloucester





st. Oswald's
PRIORY

Thank you to all that have contributed to the making of this educational resource pack.

