



King Alfred the Great and the Battle of Ethandun

Andrew Staden

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This is the third or fourth blurb I have written on Amazon for a publication and the first things to note are that this is by far the shortest (at 14,000 words) and that the topic itself is very narrow. These facts are reflected in its minimal price.

Ethandun was the culmination of a campaign in 878 by Danish Vikings under the leadership of King Guthrum to conquer Wessex, the last remaining Anglo-Saxon kingdom. It would be impossible to overstate the gravity of the situation in 878 and the importance of Alfred the Great's defeat of Guthrum to the very existence of England. King Alfred's seminal victory was crucial to the survival of the English as a nation and pivotal to the creation of the kingdom of England in the next century. In spite of this, beyond tales of Alfred burning some cakes and being upbraided by a humble swineherd's wife, many of us are unaware that there even was a Battle of Ethandun.

As I have said, the Battle of Ethandun is a narrow topic and this e-book is made up of just four chapters. Chapter One outlines the state of the Anglo-Saxon world prior to the events of 878 and the destruction by the Danes of the other three Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Northumbria, Mercia and the Kingdom of the East Angles. Chapter Two tells the story of the Viking invasion of Wessex, Alfred's desperate flight to Somerset and his recovery at the battle itself. Chapter Three examines the geography of the campaign and questions the theory that the battle took place at Edington in Wiltshire. And Chapter Four suggests how and where the campaign was actually waged.

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