

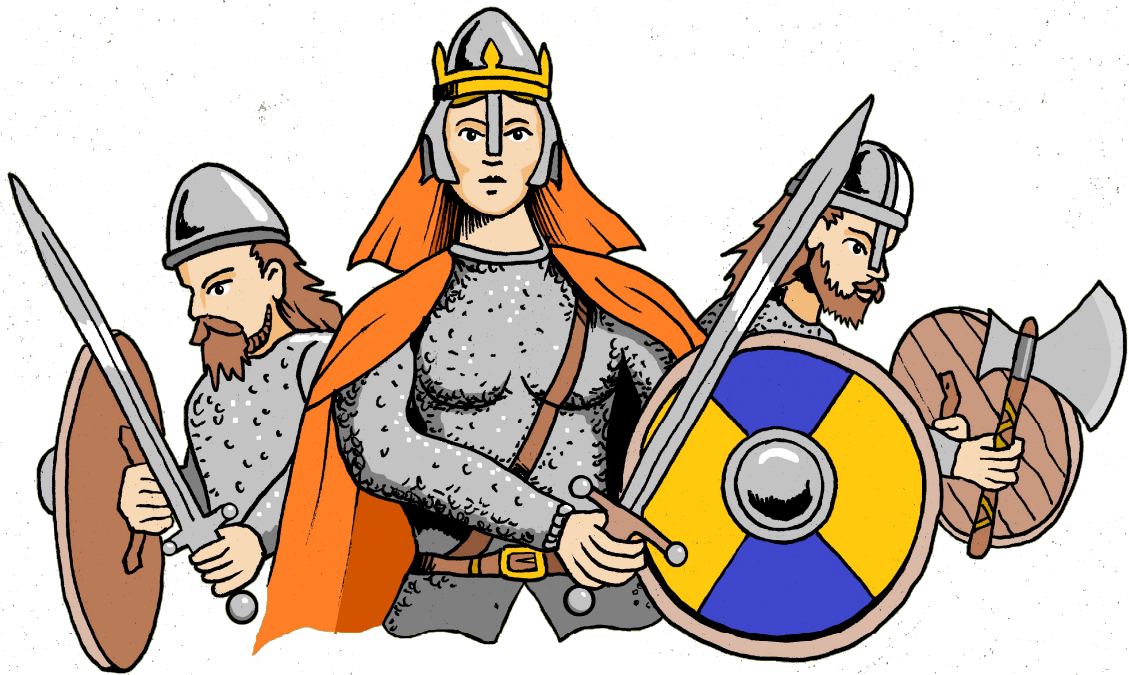


HISTORY BITES

LITTLE NIBBLES OF HISTORY

Who was the Lady of the Mercian's ?

You will have heard of the Warrior Queen Boadicea,
but have you ever heard of Aethelflaed?



She led her troops in the Battle of Tettenhall.

You probably haven't heard of that Battle, have you?

Well, she was described as the Lady of the Mercians, and was the oldest daughter of Alfred the Great, and she played a major part in the England of today.

It goes back to 793AD when the Vikings invaded England and then jumps forward 117 years when Aethelflaed took England back.

She was the daughter of King Alfred the Great, the King who supposedly burned the cakes! But in a time when women were seen as second citizens, she stood up and faced her enemies, supporting her King and entering into battle herself to ensure invaders did not depose her husband!

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1



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Who was the Lady of the Mercian's ?

As happened to Princesses in those days, to strengthen the alliance between Mercia and Wessex, she married the much older Aethelred, Lord of the Mercians. Rather than solely being his wife and child-bearer, she became a talented leader and political thinker.

They only had one child, a daughter named Aelfwynn, because she had a difficult birth. So difficult that they had no more children.

She claimed, *"it is unbecoming of the daughter of a king to give way to a delight which, after a time, produced such painful consequences"*.

Background

For the last 100 years Danish Vikings had controlled the north of England and were plundering and destroying large parts of Mercia.

As they moved down the country Alfred the Great, and then his son, Edward of Wessex, launched offensive attacks against the foreigners. Edward then joined his army of Wessex, with that of his sister, Æthelflæd.

Aethelflaed

Aethelflaed had already been known as someone who was prepared to stop the Vikings' continued invasion of England.

She had overseen the fortifying of the city of Chester before the Vikings attacked and failed in 907.

The Battle

Fortunately, the Vikings didn't know that she had joined forces with her brother, Edward the elder, and his army of Wessex.

The Danish Kings had bought a force directly into the heart of Mercia, they stopped at around Bridgnorth, in Shropshire. There they set about devastating the land and plundered whatever was valuable. Then they decided they'd had enough and turned to return, but they didn't account for Aethelflaed.



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The two armies met at Wolverhampton, which in those days was called Tettenhall, hence the Battle of Tettenhall on the 5 August 910. Interestingly, it is sometimes called the Battle of Wednesfield, which really tells us where it was fought.

Now what she did was to crush the Danes by squeezing them between their two armies. It was an incredible defeat for as well as killing thousands, two Danish Kings, Healfdene and Eowils died. It was the last defeat of a Danish army on English soil.

Aethelflaed and Edward then turned their armies to the south, eventually they unified England under a single monarch.

Aftermath

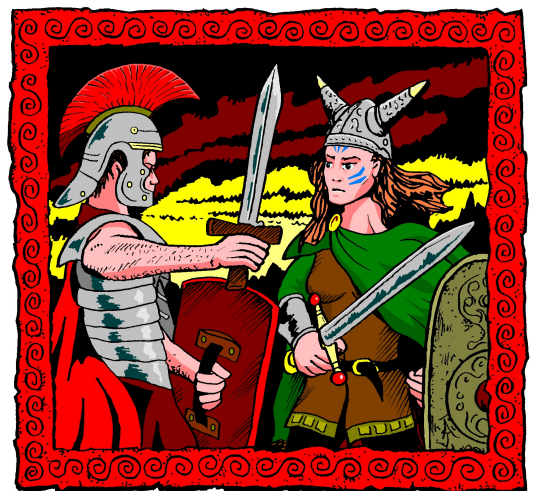
The defeat was so great it had the effect of stopping their raiding parties.

This allowed the country of England to unite under a single King. As the two armies merged, England united under one domestic monarch, King Edward the Elder of Wessex, who became the first King of England

While we haven't yet got a show about The Lady of the Mercians, we have got a great show about another warrior queen!

THE WARRIOR QUEEN

is all about Queen Boadicea and her battles with The Roman Empire, it's a great script with 12 catchy songs that your children will absolutely love. Just go to our website for more details





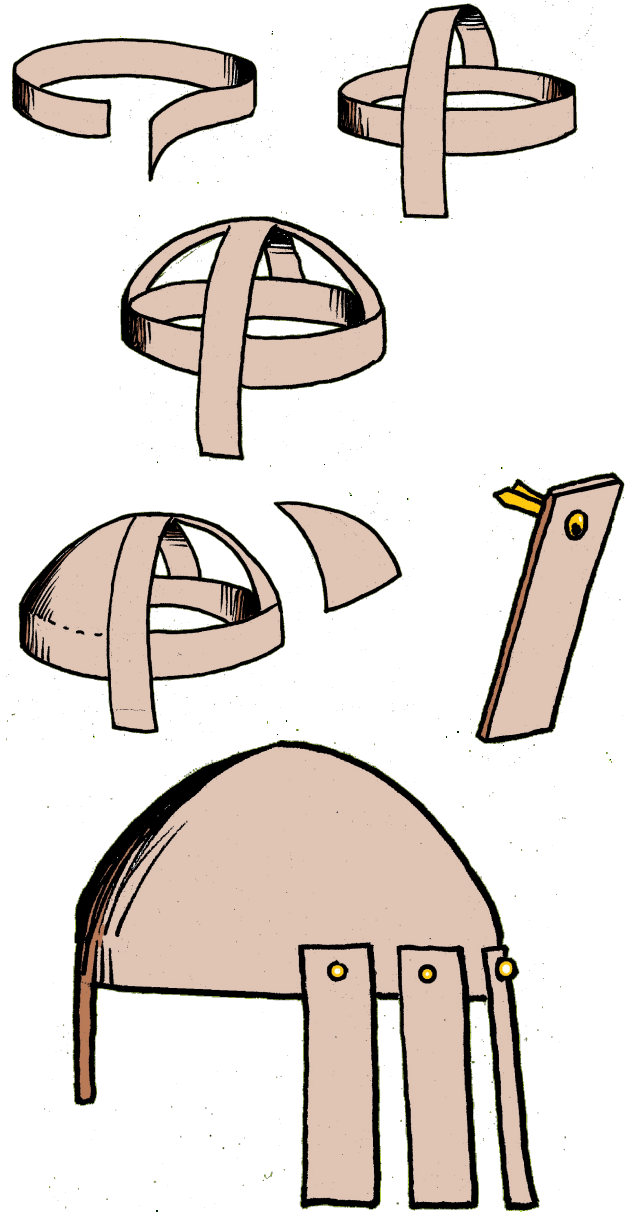
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1 lesson.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY Early Battle Helmet

1. Cut out a long strip of cereal box card and measure until it fits around the head, creating a simple crown. Fix with a strip of masking tape, ensuring the laminated side is facing inwards.
2. With another strip, create a curved bridge from the back to the front of the crown shape overlapping at the front to create a nose guard.
3. Create a bridge from one side of the crown to the other side with another strip of card.
4. Cut out four triangles of cereal box card roughly the same size as the four holes.
5. Using masking tape fill in the four holes.
6. Cut out some smaller strips of card and make a small hole with the point of a pair of scissors. Press through a paper fastener.
7. Attach the strips of card to the back of the helmet with the paper fasteners at regular intervals, creating a neck guard.
8. Paint grey or silver.



Isn't history fun?

<https://historycollection.com/aethelflaed-lady-of-mercia-britains-forgotten-warrior-queen/>

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/anglo-saxon/aethelflaed-aethelflaed-woman-who-vikings-anglo-saxon-england/>

<https://heritagecalling.com/2021/03/18/aethelflaed-lady-of-the-mercians/>

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4