

# TAMWORTH aethelfest

12-15 JULY 2018

A programme of events that celebrate the life of

## aethelflaed 1100

Tamworth's Lady of the Mercians c870-918



### Getting Here

Tamworth is set in the rolling countryside of Staffordshire, at the heart of the UK, easily accessible by road and rail. All the venues for Aethelfest are located within walking distance of each other in the town centre, as shown on the map above.

**By Road** - Tamworth lies in the South East corner of Staffordshire, just 18 miles north of Birmingham. The A5 links Tamworth to the A38 and M42 Junction 10. The M6 Toll links the M6 to the M42. The Castle's postcode is B79 7NA if you need a postcode for your SatNav.

**By Rail** - Tamworth Railway Station is a 5-10 minute walk from the town centre. For National Rail Enquiries call 08457 48 49 50, or visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk).

**By Coach** - The main terminus is on Corporation Street in the town centre. For information call 08717 81 81 81 or visit [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com).

**On Foot** - Tamworth is flat and easy to navigate, although there are varying paving surfaces. The only exception is the pathway leading to Tamworth Castle, this is a steep incline and may present a difficulty to some people.

For accommodation, parking or more information about Tamworth, visit our website:  
[www.visittamworth.co.uk](http://www.visittamworth.co.uk)



[www.aethelflaed.co.uk](http://www.aethelflaed.co.uk)

Tamworth  
Borough Council



# welcome

2018 is a very special year in Tamworth as it marks 1,100 years since the death of one of the most powerful and influential women in Anglo-Saxon England.

It was on June 12, 918, that Aethelflaed 'Lady of the Mercians' took her last breath in Tamworth – the capital of the ancient kingdom of Mercia - before being finally laid to rest in St Oswald's Priory in Gloucester, alongside her husband Aethelred.

The anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed (also known by the Victorian spelling of Ethelfleda) will be marked throughout the year in Tamworth with a number of major events, including the unveiling of a new six-metre statue, the creation of the town's biggest ever piece of community art, a major commemorative church service, talks, a special guided walk, commemorative ale and an academic conference weekend drawing academics and delegates from all over the world.

Come and join us as we celebrate the life of Aethelflaed...

For further information about Aethelflaed and the events please visit:  
[www.aethelflaed.co.uk](http://www.aethelflaed.co.uk)



Photograph by Harvey Payne, age 7.



N.B. All event details were correct at time of print and are subject to change.

# events

12TH JULY

## The Tamworth and District Civic Society Annual Lecture

7:30pm, St Editha's Church, Tamworth

The 2nd Annual Tamworth Lecture. Renowned historian, author and broadcaster, Michael Wood, will deliver a commemorative lecture about Aethelflaed to mark the 1,100th anniversary of her death. Tickets priced £10 (TDCS Members) and £12 (public) available from The Tamworth and District Civic Society from 13 June (email: [treasurer@tamworthcivicsociety.com](mailto:treasurer@tamworthcivicsociety.com)) For updates on this event visit TDCS Facebook (@tamworthcivicsociety)



13TH JULY

## Tamworth Literary Festival presents a talk by Martin Carver: Aethelflaed and the origins of Stafford

7:30pm, St Editha's Church

Tamworth Literary Festival, in conjunction with the Friends of Tamworth Castle, welcomes archaeologist, writer and broadcaster Martin Carver to take you on a fascinating journey to discover life since the death of Aethelflaed. Professor emeritus, Department of Archaeology, University of York, Martin will give an insight into the last 1,100 years, including the excavation of a fort built by Aethelflaed in Stafford.

Tickets are priced at £7.50, available from [www.facebook.com/TamworthLiteraryFestival](http://www.facebook.com/TamworthLiteraryFestival) or tel 07562 653565 or online: <https://bit.ly/2wUhmbm> (Friends of Tamworth Castle, along with anyone joining the Friends organisation on the night, can attend this event for free, membership is £12.00 per annum)



14TH JULY

## Tamworth Literary Festival presents a talk and book signing: Aethelflaed and Women's Worlds: Reconstructing Early Women's Voices in Fiction

11:00am to 3:00pm, The Globe Inn

Dr Sara Read chairs a panel of eminent published female authors examining Aethelflaed the woman. Annie Whitehead's talk '**The Aethelflaed Paradox**' will discuss how she researched the life of Aethelflaed and fictionalised her story 'To Be a Queen'.

Marianne Whiting's talk '**Shieldmaidens in Myth & Reality**' discusses the process of researching and fictionalising the lives of Viking women. Dr Jennifer Evans' talk '**Make her Bath of Seawater: The Medical Compendium of a Medieval Medical Woman**' takes us through the medical advice covered in a rare example of a female authored text.

Ticket price of £10 (includes a buffet lunch) available from: [www.facebook.com/TamworthLiteraryFestival](http://www.facebook.com/TamworthLiteraryFestival) or <https://bit.ly/2GtKyFF> or tel 07562 653565.



13-15TH JULY

## Academic Conference

Tamworth Borough Council, Marmion House

Aethelflaed's part in history is of great interest to historians, scholars and academics across the world and will be explored in depth during a weekend conference to be held in Tamworth as part of the anniversary events.

Tamworth has been chosen to host the conference because of its importance in Anglo-Saxon history and as a seat of royal power in the ancient kingdom of Mercia. Scholars from UK and international universities will descend upon the town for the 13 -15 July conference to take part in a packed programme of lectures, exploring a range of themes such as women and political power in early Medieval Britain, the re-making of Mercian rulership, the uncontested succession of Aethelflaed's daughter as an exceptional example of female succession and Tamworth in the Domesday Book. Another of the papers will explore the origins and development of St Editha's Church, which was dedicated to Aethelflaed's niece, Saint Editha.

Visions of Mercia Photographic Exhibition – Visions of Mercia is a collaboration between Carl Phelpstead, a professor of medieval literature at Cardiff University, and his photographer brother, Ben Phelpstead. This exhibition of photographs documents the afterlife of Anglo-Saxon Mercia in the West Midlands today. It includes images of Anglo-Saxon sites, places named after Mercia or famous Mercians, and locations associated with modern writers who have evoked Mercia in their work. The photographs juxtapose past and present, the familiar and unfamiliar, utopia and reality, blurring together social document, personal memory, questions of regional identity, and our quest to find a place called home.

The conference is being co-ordinated by scholars from Keele, Chester and Manchester Universities. Artefacts from Stafford Archives and Chester will be on display for people attending the conference. **To view the full conference itinerary and to purchase tickets, visit [www.aethelflaed.org](http://www.aethelflaed.org) (Tickets must be booked in advance)**

*Confirmed speakers include: Barbara Yorke, Alexandra Makin, Sarah Greer, Vanessa King, Morn Capper, Alex Burghart, Courtney Konshuh, Robert Gallagher, Ben Guy, Rebecca Thomas, Bob Meeson, Matthew Blake, Andrew Sargent, Melanie Maddox, Charles Insley, Carl Phelpstead, David Roffe, Philip Morgan.*



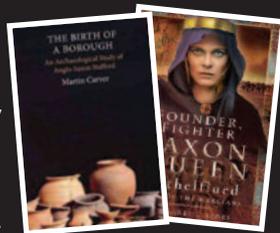
13-15TH JULY

## Lecture Publications Sale

10:00am-4:00pm, The Heritage Hub, Middle Entry

Tamworth Heritage Trust will be displaying the maquette of the new Aethelflaed statue along with lots of interesting information about Tamworth's Lady of the Mercians.

They will also be providing a pop-up book shop for authors to sell publications appertaining to Anglo-Saxon Tamworth and Aethelflaed.



14TH JULY

## Founder, Fighter, Saxon Queen: Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians in Tamworth

9:00am - 4:00pm, Tamworth Library

Dr Margaret Jones will be in Tamworth Library to discuss her new book as well as giving two talks focusing on Aethelflaed's contribution to the founding and growth of Tamworth. That achievement is set in the context of her experience as a child refugee, and of her heroic achievements as Lady of Mercia. Coloured slides will help illustrate the wealth of sculpture, stained glass and painting associated with her legend.

Dr Margaret Jones has published several biographies of remarkable women, including Heretics and Hellraisers, a study of early 20th century US radicals. Founder, Fighter, Saxon Queen, her new biography of the Lady of the Mercians, is her fourth book.

Each talk lasts approx. 50 mins and will be at 10am and 2.30pm. To book a seat at one of the talks, please contact Tamworth Library on 0300 111 8000 or email [tamworth.library@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tamworth.library@staffordshire.gov.uk)



14TH JULY

## A special Tamworth Anglo-Saxon history display

9:00am - 4:00pm, Tamworth Library

Tamworth Library will be hosting a special Tamworth Anglo-Saxon display including a 1913 Tamworth Herald report of the unveiling of the original Aethelflaed statue by the castle. Also on view will be Mal Dewhirst's poem, 'Manifesto Tamworth' which is about Aethelflaed.

14TH JULY

## Anglo-Saxon Guided Tour

10:30am, Tamworth

Join Tamworth Guild of Town Guides – the professionally qualified Green and Blue Badge tourist guides for Tamworth - who will be offering a special Anglo-Saxon walking tour of Tamworth on Saturday 14 July to mark the 1,100th anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed.

Tours will begin outside the Bandstand in the Castle Grounds at 10.30am and will last approximately one and a half hours. Please prepare for walking some distance as we follow part of the line of the burh fortifications. Tickets cost £6 each and must be pre-booked with Tamworth Tourist Information Centre, Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7BZ (Telephone 01827 709581/618).

For further information and to find out about any extra tour times or dates, visit the TGTG website at:

[www.tamworthtownguides.co.uk](http://www.tamworthtownguides.co.uk) or ask at the TIC.

Keep up to date by liking the guides on Facebook –

Tamworth Town Guides (@TamworthGuildOfTownGuides)



14TH JULY

## Saxon Encampment

10:00am - 4:00pm, Castle Grounds

Join us for a day of Saxon-themed family fun and entertainment while you enjoy the unveiling of the magnificent community arts project, Mercian Mosaic.

Children's activities include:

- Saxon coin making
- Toys and games
- Parchment writing
- Jewellery making
- Crafts
- Storytelling and much more.



14TH JULY

## Mercian Mosaic

10:00am - 4:00pm, Castle Grounds (weather permitting)

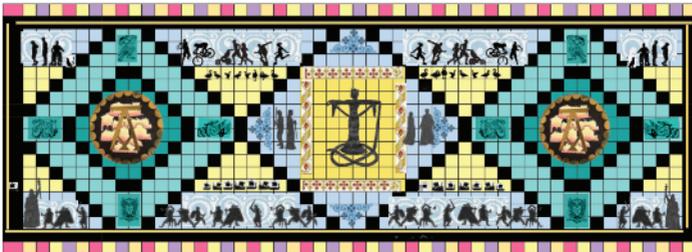
1,400 individual yard square tiles have been decorated by people of all ages to create a large and striking saxon themed image. These tiles will be laid out on the lower lawn of the Castle Grounds for one day only on Saturday 14 July.

The hundreds of tiles were completed by willing volunteers from across the town, including schools, church and community groups, sheltered housing schemes and art groups.

The project has been managed by Maggie Carney, retired Tamworth school teacher who has devoted the past 2 years ensuring this huge piece of art comes to fruition.

This project was funded by Arts Council England and Tamworth Borough Council and supported by Ankerside Shopping Centre.

NB – if inclement weather conditions are forecast on the day, the mosaic will not be laid out. For further updates, keep a look out on social media @tamwortharts&events



14-15TH JULY

## Saxon Living History

11:30am - 4:00pm, Tamworth Castle

Come and find out what life was like for those living in Tamworth during Saxon times. Learn about our very own warrior princess Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians, find out about Saxon battle tactics, take your place in the shield-wall and see if you can solve our runic puzzles! Have a go at digging for artefacts and find out about Saxon archaeology as you discover how objects can tell us about the past; and finally follow the riddles in the castle rooms and claim a small prize if you complete the quiz sheet!

Admission times: 11.30am-4.00pm

Admission: Adults (16yrs+) £7.50,

OAP (65yrs +) £6.50, Child (5-15yrs) £5.00,

Child (2-4yrs) £3.00, Under 2 yrs free.

No pre-booking necessary.



*Tamworth Castle has recently been awarded funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver a brand new exhibition on Saxon Tamworth and the Staffordshire Hoard. Based on the themes of Battle and Tribute, the exhibition will explore the origins of Tamworth and look at how the warring tribes and warrior society formed the backdrop to the Kingdom of Mercia. Keep up to date by checking our website: [www.tamworthcastle.co.uk](http://www.tamworthcastle.co.uk)*



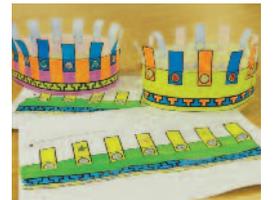
14TH JULY

## Crown Making Workshop

11:00am - 2:00pm, Tamworth Community Together CIC Hub, Castle Grounds.

People are invited to get the 'warrior queen' look by designing their own crowns at a special arts and crafts crown-making workshop in the picturesque Castle Grounds.

Just drop in to the hub at any time between 11am and 2pm and let the creativity flow. Crown templates can also be downloaded from [www.aethelflaed.co.uk](http://www.aethelflaed.co.uk) if you'd like to design one with the children at home.





## Roundabout Art

**Tamworth Railway Station**  
The Lady of the Mercians, "Our Aethel" has taken residence in Tamworth.

Award-winning public artist and sculptor, Luke Perry, was commissioned by Tamworth Borough Council to create a landmark sculpture for the Offa Drive/Saxon Drive roundabout outside Tamworth Railway Station, where it will greet visitors to the town. After public consultation, the people of Tamworth chose Aethel to represent their town and draw people into the town centre.

The 'big and iconic' figurative piece reflects the town's Anglo-Saxon history with an 'alternative, modern twist' to place it firmly in the 21st century.

This project was funded by Arts Council England and Tamworth Gateways Project.



**#dotheaethel**

**HOW TO... #dotheaethel**

**Step 1** - Take a photo of you/friends/family/colleagues doing the pose of Our Aethel statue.

**Step 2** - Nominate a friend or group to do it too!

**Step 3** - Share your photo with us on social media @VisitTamworth

Remember to hashtag **#DoTheAethel**

Artist, Luke Perry

To find out more visit: [www.aethelflaed.co.uk](http://www.aethelflaed.co.uk)

13-15TH JULY

## Aethelflaed Ale

Friday - 4:00pm-10:45pm

Saturday - 12noon-10:45pm

Sunday - 12noon-9:00pm

**Tamworth Brewery, Market Street**

Tamworth Brewery Co. has developed a pale and a dark version of the 2017 CAMRA award-winning ale 'Ethelflaed' called 'Our Aethel'. The pale version is a very hoppy Citra-style ale while the dark is a rich velvety stout and almost black in colour.



To accompany the special ales Tamworth Brewery will also be selling limited edition Aethelflaed tankards, which can be purchased at a cost of £3.00 each.

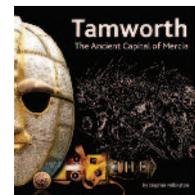
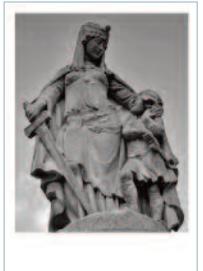
## Aethelflaed merchandise

A selection of Aethelflaed merchandise is available to purchase from Tamworth Tourist Information Centre and Tamworth Castle.



### Greeting Card

Obtainable from Tamworth Tourist Information Centre, Marmion House, Lichfield Street, and from the Tudor House Cafe at 111, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, at £2 each. The Civic Society's striking image of Tamworth's Millenary Memorial (1913) on this versatile card (with envelope) provides a great souvenir or gift for the historic Aethelflaed 1,100 commemorations. Suitable for framing.



**Tamworth - The Ancient Capital of Mercia**  
**Book by Stephen Pollington**  
On sale for £5 from Tamworth Castle

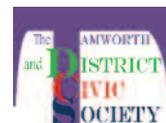
# OTHER events

12TH JUNE

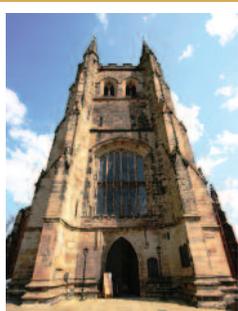
## National Service of Commemoration for the 1,100th Anniversary of the Death of Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians St Editha's Parish and Collegiate Church

HRH The Earl of Wessex (Prince Edward) youngest son of HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, will lead the national tribute to his royal ancestor, the warrior princess of Wessex, who led the Mercians to victory over the Vikings, shaping the destiny of all England.

On 12th June, 1,100 years to the day of her death in Tamworth, hundreds of VIPs will come here from across the UK - to Aethelflaed's royal stronghold and home, this ancient capital of Mercia - and gather in the magnificent church dedicated to Aethelflaed's niece and Tamworth's patron saint, Editha. Guests at the event will include His Excellency the Danish Ambassador, bishops, lord-lieutenants, military and civic representatives, historians and archaeologists.



This is an invitation-only and ticket-only event organised by The Tamworth and District Civic Society.



Tamworth Library will be serving tea and coffee between 11:00am -1:00pm on Tuesday 12th June during the Aethelflaed commemoration service.



8th-12th  
June 2018

## GLOUCESTER'S WARRIOR QUEEN

BOX OFFICE 01452 396572 [WWW.AETHELFLAED2018.CO.UK](http://WWW.AETHELFLAED2018.CO.UK)  
BLACKFRIARS TALKS, LIVING HISTORY, GUIDED TOURS



# about aethelflaed

Daughter of King Alfred the Great, Aethelflaed is a key figure in the history and making of England. Aethelflaed was born in the early 870s – the eldest child of King Alfred and Eahlswith.

Aethelflaed received a good education and grew up reading books, playing chess and learning combat and the strategy of war and battle.

At the time, England was made up of several smaller kingdoms including Wessex in the south where King Alfred was based, Mercia in the Midlands, and Northumbria in the north. All were under threat from growing Viking forces.

Aethelflaed married Aethelred – the ruler of Mercia – and spent most of her life in the kingdom. She ruled Mercia jointly with her husband and together they led the battle to defend the ancient kingdom against Viking invaders.

Alongside Aethelflaed's brother, Edward the Elder, the couple launched a series of military campaigns in the 10th century which brought large parts of England under Anglo-Saxon control. At the same time, Aethelflaed and Aethelred embarked on a major programme of building and fortification, creating defensive and strategic burhs (fortified towns) throughout Mercia, and including Tamworth, a centre of royal power, where she spent much of her time in later life. Her fortification of Tamworth was the forerunner to Tamworth Castle.

After her husband's death in 911, Aethelflaed became the sole ruler of Mercia and continued her campaign to further defend and expand her kingdom for another seven years. It is thought that she was one of Britain's three most important rulers at the time, alongside her brother Edward, who had taken over from her father as King of the Anglo-Saxons, and the King of the Scots.

She was a formidable warrior and was thought of as 'queen' by many of her subjects. She leaves a legacy as one of the most powerful female rulers of the time.

Aethelflaed was a great influence to her nephew Aethelstan, who later became king and is widely regarded as the first king of all England.

Aethelstan features alongside Aethelflaed on the stone statue at the foot of Tamworth Castle which was erected in Victorian times. She is also aunt to St Editha, who Tamworth's parish church is dedicated to.

When Aethelflaed died, the uncontested succession of her daughter, Aelfwynn, as Mercia's leader is considered to be a move of successful female succession that wasn't matched again until the coronation of Elizabeth I after the death of her half-sister Mary in 1558.

Aethelflaed took her final breath in Tamworth on June 12 and was then taken to Gloucester to be buried alongside her husband in St Oswald's Priory.

For more information about the history of Aethelflaed, please visit [www.tamworthcastle.co.uk/aethelflaed](http://www.tamworthcastle.co.uk/aethelflaed).

