

Another legend has Alfred disguising himself as a minstrel or travelling player to gain entrance to the Danish camp and overhear their battle plans

Alfred was a key ship designer and because of this was able to design ships for the Navy. He recruited experienced sailors to make the Navy stronger and ensure that Wessex was protected.

He died on 26 October 899, although how he died is not known. He was buried in Winchester and a statue can be found in the city today.

His father was the king of Wessex, by the end of his reign Alfred was known as 'King of the English'

He had four older brothers who all ruled as king before he did.

Alfred was the first English king to write

There were many famous Anglo-Saxon kings, but the most famous of all was Alfred, one of the only kings in British history to be called 'Great'.

He had a passion for learning and believed education was very important. Alfred was well educated and was able to translate Latin books into English, so his people could read them.

In 870 Alfred and his brother Aethelred fought nine battles against the Vikings.



Queen Elizabeth II is a direct descendant of Alfred the Great

Alfred was the first English king to write books.

Alfred's main priority as King was to survive Viking attacks. Before his birth there was 4 Anglo - Saxon kingdoms, however when he died all that remained was Wessex (the rest had become Danelaw).

As he was very popular, there were many stories told about the great king.

One story says that his mother promised her four sons a book of English poetry to the first child who could learn to read. Alfred worked so hard that he was able to memorise the entire book and recite it by heart—he was 4 years old!

There are many legends about King Alfred. The most famous recounts that when he was hiding from the Vikings in the Somerset Levels an old woman asked Alfred to watch her cakes baking but he was distracted and the cakes got burned. The old woman, who did not recognise Alfred as the king, scolded him for his carelessness!

To strengthen his kingdom against further attacks and invasions, he built fortified towns called 'Burhs'. These are towns which are protected by strong walls

In 886 Alfred captured London (the capital) and was the most powerful ruler in England.

In a 2002 BBC poll Alfred was voted 14th Greatest Briton of all time

In 868, Alfred married Ealhswith, a descendant of the Mercian royals. This was probably decided before he was born to try and bring the two kingdoms together. They

Alfred's fortified towns or burhs formed the basis of the English system of boroughs and shires