



## Athelstan

Athelstan also known as the Glorious Athelstan was born in 895 in the Kingdom of Wessex, his father was King Edward (The Elder), and his mother was Egwina, Athelstan was the grandson of King Alfred The Great. He spent his formative years at the Royal Courts of Tamworth and Gloucester, with his aunt, Ethelfleda who was known as the Lady Of Mercia and when his father King Edward died in 924, Athelstan's younger brother, Elfweard succeeded to the throne of King Edward on 17th July 924, and Athelstan inherited Mercia, however, Elfweard died in August 924 whilst he was in Oxford. This left the path clear, and Athelstan inherited everything. His Coronation took place on the 4th September, 925, (Many believe this was earlier on 17th July 925) in Kingston Upon Thames, which was to be the place where seven Saxon Kings were to be crowned, he became king of Mercia, and Wessex.

His military strength was to prove useful, as many battles were to take place, he fought invaders from Scotland, and Ireland, ensuring his rise and increase in power on the Scottish, Welsh borders. To secure political alliances he arranged for four of his sisters to marry, one became the wife of the Roman Emperor Otto I, one was destined to become the Queen of France, he also arranged that one of his sister's would marry the Danish leader Sithric, who was the King Of York, after a treaty was signed at Tamworth, however, his brother in Law Sithric was to die a year later, Athelstan recognised his opportunity, he seized York, which had been held by the Danes, his relentless determination brought the submission of King Constantine of Scotland, the Kings from the North, and an agreement from the Welsh kings, he was destined to rule the whole of England. In 937 he secured victory following a bloody battle and skirmish with the Celts, Scots, Norwegians and the Danes at the Battle of Brunanburgh.

In 937 Athelstan became the first king of all England when the country became unified. He also strengthened the laws, regarding the production of coins, and introduced stiff penalties for dishonest practises, he was an avid collector of art and religious icons, donating many to the church. He also oversaw the translation of the bible into English.

He did not marry, and when he died on the 27th October, 939 in Gloucester aged 44 years, he had remained childless, chose to be buried at Malmesbury Abbey in Wiltshire, a favourite of his, in preference to his family mausoleum at Winchester. Although his tomb still survives, his body was lost decades after his death. He was succeeded by his brother Edmund.