

Battle plans are being made to commemorate Ethandun

Plans are being developed to mark the 1,150th anniversary of the Battle of Ethandun – possibly one of the most important battles fought on English soil - with a day of celebration in and around the village of Edington in May 2028.

The Battle of Ethandun took place in May 878 when King Alfred the Great's West Saxon army defeated the Viking Army, led by Guthrum. It was a pivotal victory which preserved Wessex as an independent kingdom and marked a turning point in the Viking wars, laying the foundations for the eventual unification of England.

Although planning is still at an early stage, a steering committee is working with re-enactment groups, historical societies and local organisations and individuals to identify key themes and objectives.

“We are determined that the event will focus on Edington, and we are hoping to identify a suitable site and the groups, organisations and individuals we can work with to bring this event to fruition,” said committee spokesman Steve Forward.

Ideally, they say, the day will include hands-on activities, talks and demonstrations and contemporary market stalls as well as some level of historical reenactment. They are hoping to end the day with a Saxon style banquet including the type of entertainment that would have accompanied such an event.

But there is also a serious side to the current proposals with the eventual aim of encouraging - and potentially sponsoring - an academic review or thesis that will provide an authoritative account of the battle and its historical context as well as encouraging academic and archaeological activity to further investigate and, hopefully, pinpoint the actual location of the battle and, if possible, document that location onto battlefield maps and OS materials.

“We’re hoping to provide an engaging, entertaining, educational and fun experience, on the day and to extend the concept into local schools and relevant organisation,” said Mr Forward.

The group meets once a month at the Three Daggers and is keen to hear from organisations, groups or individuals who may be able to contribute to the process as well as potential sponsors with the eventual aim of marking the anniversary of the battle a regular event.

For further information please email: parishcouncil.edington@outlook.com