

# **GRANHOLM GENEALOGY**

**BRITISH ROYAL ANCESTRY, BOOK 2**

**Kings of Mercia**

## INTRODUCTION

The British ancestry is very much a patchwork of various beginnings. Until King Alfred the Great established England various Kings ruled separate parts. In most cases the initial ruler came from the mainland. That time of the history is shrouded in myths, which turn into legends and subsequent into history.

Alfred the Great (849-901) was a very learned man and studied all available past history and especially biblical information. He came up with the concept that he was the 72<sup>nd</sup> generation descendant of Adam and Eve. Moreover he was a 17<sup>th</sup> generation descendant of Woden (Odin). Proponents of one theory claim that he was the descendant of Noah's son Sem (Shem) because he claimed to descend from Scaef, a marooned man who came to Britain on a boat after a flood. See the *Biblical Ancestry* and *Early Mythology Ancestry* books).

The book *British Mythical Royal Ancestry from King Brutus* shows the mythical kings including Shakespeare's King Lear. The lineages are from a common ancestor, Priam King of Troy. His one daughter Troana leads to us via Scaef, the descendants from his other daughter Creusa lead to the British lineage. No attempt has been made to connect these rulers with the historical ones.

Before Alfred the Great formed a unified England several Royal Houses ruled the various parts. Not all of them have any clear lineages to the present times, i.e. our ancestors, but some do. I have collected information which show these. These include

*British Royal Ancestry Book 1, Legendary Kings* from Brutus of Troy to including King Leir.

*British Royal Ancestry Book 2, Kings of Mercia*, from a mythical grandson of Woden (Odin) to Lady Godiva's granddaughter, who married King Harold II of England.

*British Royal Ancestry Book 3, Kings of Wessex*, from Cerdic, who came to Brittany in 495 to Harold II of England, my 27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather.

*British Royal Ancestry Book 4, Kings of Kent* from Hengest, who came from the mainland to Britain to King Alfred the Great and his sons.

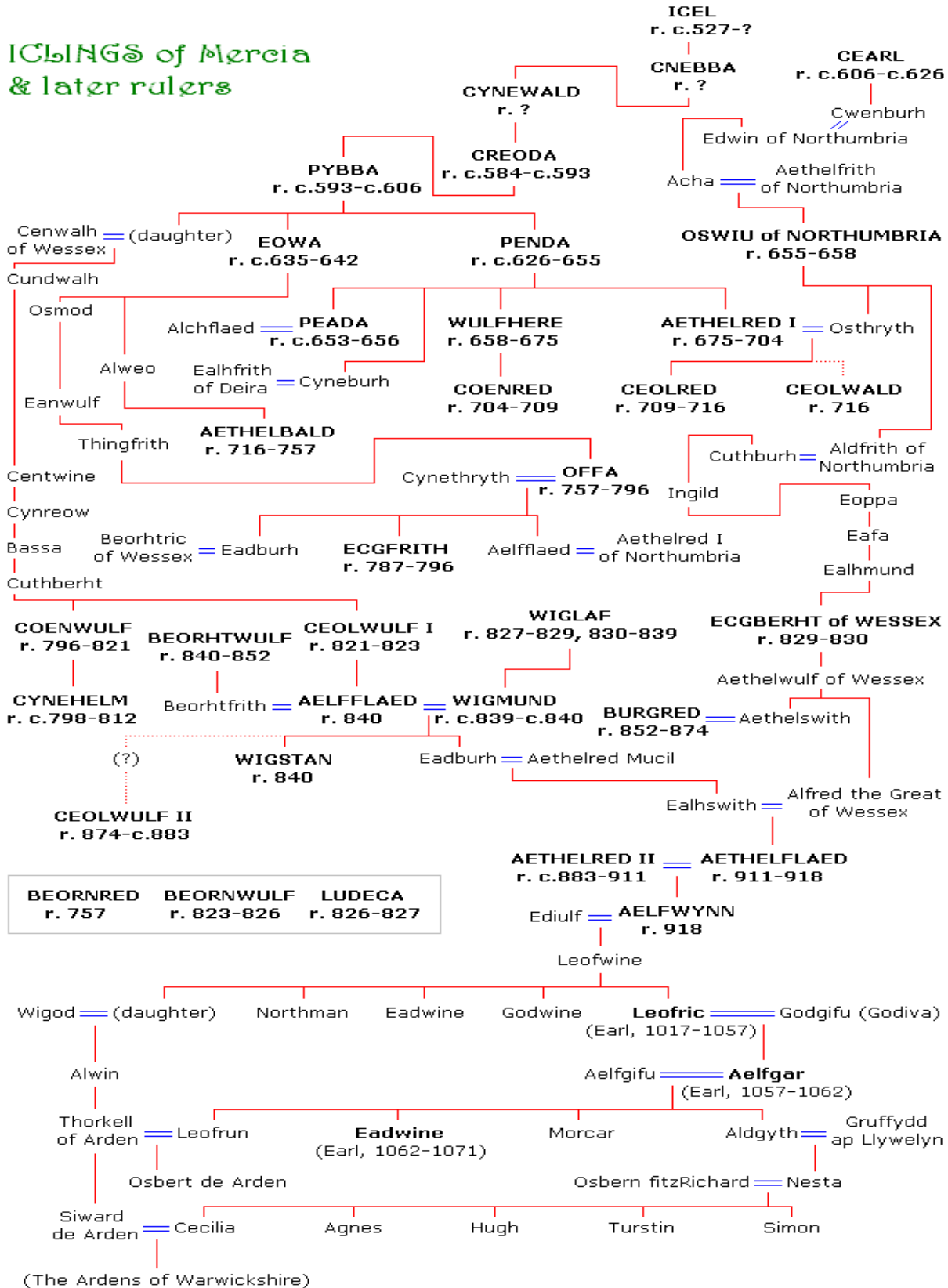
*British Royal Ancestry Book 5, Kings of Anglo-Saxons* from Hengest's son, Hartwaker of Saxony to Henry the Fowler, the Duke of Saxony who became the first German King of the Ottoman Dynasty.

*British Royal Ancestry Book 6, Kings of England* from King Alfred the great to present time.

The books include ancestral lineage list with names **highlighted** for which text has been included.

Woden — Wihthlaeg — Wermund — Offa — Angeltheow — Eomer

## ICINGS of Mercia & later rulers



## Descendants of: Wermund King of Mercia As Related to: Lars Erik Granholm

- 1 **Wermund King of Mercia** #17688 (52nd great grandfather)
- 2 **Offa King of Mercia** #17689 d. 796 (51st great grandfather)
- 3 **Angeltheow King of Mercia** #17690 (50th great grandfather)
- 4 **Eomer King of Mercia** #17691 (49th great grandfather)
- 5 **Icel King of Mercia** #17692 (48th great grandfather)
- 6 **Cnebba King of Mercia** #17693 (47th great grandfather)
- 7 **Cynewald King of Mercia** #17694 (46th great grandfather)
- 8 **Creoda King of Mercia** #17695 b. abt 540 d. 593 (45th great grandfather)
- 9 **Pybba King of Mercia** #17696 b. 570 d. 615 (44th great grandfather)
- 10 **Penda King of Mercia** #18140 d. 655 (44th great-uncle)
- 10 **Eowa King of Mercia** #18314 d. 655 (44th great-uncle)
- 10 **Daughter Pybba** #18148 (43rd great grandmother)
- m. **Cenwall King of Wessex** #18147 d. 647  
[son of Cynegils King of Wessex #18150]
- 11 **Cundwath of Mercia** #17705 b. abt 626 (42nd great grandfather)
- 12 **Centwine of Mercia** #17704 (41st great grandfather)
- 13 **Cynreow of Mercia** #17703 b. abt 682 (40th great grandfather)
- 14 **Bassa of Mercia** #17702 (39th great grandfather)
- 15 **Cuthbert of Mercia** #17701 b. abt 738 (38th great grandfather)
- 16 **Coenwulf King of Mercia** #18153 d. 821 (38th great-uncle)
- m. **Aelfhryth** #18154
- 17 **Saint Cynehelm Prince of Mercia** #18155 (first cousin, 38 times removed)
- 16 **Cynefrith Princess of Mercia** #17700 (37th great grandmother)
- m. **Wiglaf King of Mercia** #17699 d. 839
- 17 **Wigmund King of Mercia** #17697 d. 840 (36th great grandfather)
- m. **Aelfleda Princess of Mercia** #17698  
[daughter of Ceolwulf I King of Mercia #18141]
- 18 **Eadburga Princess of Mercia** #17590 (35th great grandmother)
- m. **Ethelred Mucil Ealdorman of the Gaini** #17588
- 19 **Ealhswith (Ethelbirth) Queen Of England** #15681 b. abt 852 d. 5 Dec 905 (34th great grandmother)
- m. **Alfred "The Great" King Of England** #15680 m. 868 b. 849 Bershire, England d. 26 Oct 901 Hampshire  
[son of Aethelwulf King of England #15830 and Osburh (Osburga) of Wright Queen of England #15831]
- 20 **Ethelfled Ruler of Mercia** #17642 b. 870 d. 918 (34th great-aunt)
- m. **Aethelred Ealdorman of Mercia** #17643 d. 911 Battle of Tettenhall
- 21 **Aelfwynn (Elfwina) Ruler of Mercia** #17686 b. 888 d. aft 919 (first cousin, 34 times removed)
- m. **Edulph** #17707
- 22 **Leofwine Earl Of Mercia** #17708 b. 950 d. 1028 (second cousin, 33 times removed)
- m. **Alwara Countess Of Mercia** #17709
- 23 **Leofric III Earl Mercia** #17710 b. 968 d. 1057 Bromlay (third cousin, 32 times removed)
- m. **Lady Godiva Countess of Mercia** #17711 b. 980 d. 1067
- 24 **Aelfgar Earl of Mercia** #18315 d. 1062 m. Aelfgifu #18316 (4th cousin, 31 times removed)
- 25 **Edwin Earl of Mercia** #18317 d. 1071 (5th cousin, 30 times removed)
- 25 **Aldgyth (Edith) of Mercia Queen of England** #16134 d. aft 1070 (5th cousin, 30 times removed)
- m. **Harold II Godwinson King of England** #15288 b. abt 1022 d. 14 Oct 1066 (27<sup>th</sup> great grandfather)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wermund>

# Wermund

*Wermund runs to embrace his victorious son Offa. Illustration by the Danish Lorenz Frølich in a 19th century book.*



**Wermund** or *Garmund* is an ancestor of the Mercian royal family, a son of [Wihthlaeg](#) and father of [Offa](#). Mythology claims him to be a grandson of [Woden](#),

He appears to have reigned in [Angel](#). According to these traditions, his reign was long and happy, though its prosperity was eventually marred by the raids of a warlike king named [Athislus](#), who slew [Frowinus](#), the governor of [Schleswig](#), in battle. Frowinus's death was avenged by his two sons, [Keto](#) and [Wigo](#), but their conduct in fighting together against a single man was thought to constitute a national disgrace, which was only reconciled by the subsequent single combat of Offa.

It has been suggested that Athislus, though called king of the Swedes by Saxo, was really identical with the [Eadgils](#), king of the [Myrgings](#), mentioned in [Widsith](#). Frowinus and Wigo are doubtless to be identified with the [Freawine](#) (17593, 52<sup>nd</sup> ggf) and his son [Wig](#) who figure among the ancestors of the kings of [Wessex](#).

*Ket and Wig talk with their father's slayer, illustration by Louis Moe*

He is mentioned the Anglo-Saxon epic [Beowulf](#) as Garmund the father of [Offa of Angel](#) and grandfather of [Eomer](#).

...Hence Offa was praised  
for his fighting and feeing by far-off men,  
the spear-bold warrior; wisely he ruled  
over his empire. Eomer woke to him,  
help of heroes, Hemming's kinsman,  
Grandson of Garmund, grim in war

**Ket** and **Wig** are the sons of [Frowin](#), the governor of [Schleswig](#). Their father Frowin/Freawine was challenged to combat by the Swedish king [Athisl](#), and killed. King Wermund who liked their father subsequently raised Ket and Wig as his own. They later avenged their father, but they fought against Athisl two against one, a national disgrace that was redeemed by their brother-in-law, King Wermund's son [Offa](#), when he killed two Saxons at the same time, in "single combat".

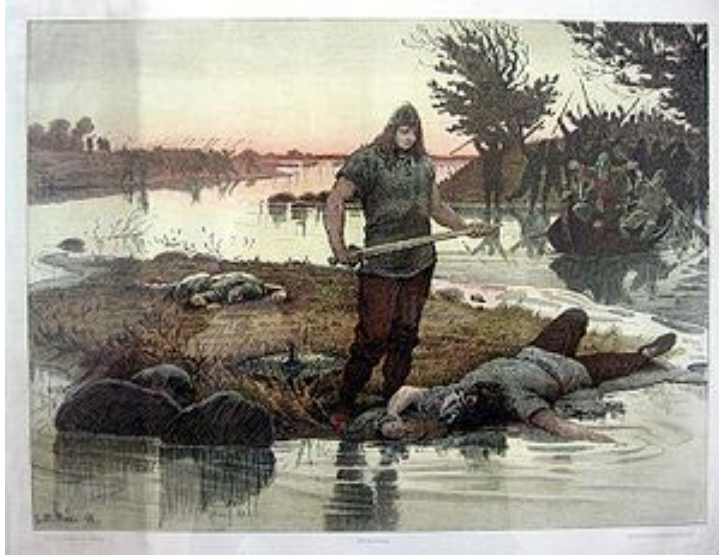




[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offa\\_of\\_Angel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offa_of_Angel)

# Offa of Angel

*Uffe den Spake*, by Peter Nicolai Arbo.



**Offa** (*fl.* c.450), also **Uffo** or **Uffe**, was the (possibly mythical) 4th-great-grandfather of [Creoda of Mercia](#), and was reputed to be a great-grandson of [Woden](#). Whether historical or mythical, Offa was the son of [Wermund](#), and the father of [Angeltheow](#).

He was the most famous hero of the early [Angles](#). He is said by the Old English poem [Widsith](#) to have ruled over [Angel](#), and the poem refers briefly to his victorious single combat, a story which is related at length by the Danish historians [Saxo](#) and [Svend Aagesen](#).

Offa also successfully conquered the [Myrgings](#) a clan of [Saxon](#) origin by slaying two Myrging princes in combat and installing himself as their king. The Myrgings were then absorbed by the Angles within a century though this new title as 'King' was soon abolished by [Angeltheow](#) a son of Offa.

Offa is said to have been dumb or silent during his early years. His aged and blind father, King [Wermund](#) believed him to be a simpleton and in order to preserve his son's position as king had him marry the daughter of [Freawine](#) (a neighbouring warlord/king) so that Freawine would assist Offa when he became king. However, the plans did not come to pass, as Freawine was killed by a marauding Viking warlord (a Swede called [Atisl](#)). Wermund subsequently raised Freawine's sons [Ket and Wig](#) as his own. The two would eventually cause great dishonour to the Angles when they ambushed Atisl in a forest as he walked alone and slew him. The surrounding peoples began to mock the Angles, accusing them of cowardice and dishonour. Eventually the neighbouring Saxons decided that Wermund was too weak to resist their requests for him to surrender his kingdom, and they sent their emissaries to Wermund's court. There they proceeded to mock the blind man, prompting Wermund to challenge their king to a duel — but the king stated that he would not fight a blind man. It was then that Offa regained his speech, and revealed that his silence had been caused by the great dishonour involved in Atisl's death. He promptly challenged the prince of the Saxons and one of his champions to a duel in order to regain the honour of the Angles.

Offa's combat took place at [Rendsburg](#) on an island in the [Eider River](#), and Offa succeeded in killing both his opponents. According to [Widsith](#), Offa's opponents belonged to a tribe or dynasty called [Myrgingas](#), but both accounts state that he won a great kingdom as the result of his victory.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angeltheow>

## Angeltheow

**Angeltheow**, also spelled **Angletheow**, **Engengenthe**, or **Angenwit** was the great-great-great-grandfather of [Creoda of Mercia](#) and the son of [Offa of Angel](#).

Angeltheow's son was [Eomer](#). According to the [Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#), Angeltheow is a fourth-generation descendant of [Woden](#), the same generation as [Hengest and Horsa](#).

It is claimed by some that Angeltheow may also be the Swedish king [Ongentheow](#) (as mentioned in [Beowulf](#)) killed at the [Battle of Ravenswood](#), although the battle is said to have taken place some time after the former is reported to have died.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eomer>

## Eomer

**Eomer**, also spelt **Eomaer**, was (according to the [Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#)) the great-great-grandfather of [Creoda](#), the first King of [Mercia](#). He is considered the ancestor to the [Kings of Mercia](#). Eomer himself was the son of [Angeltheow](#). Eomer's son was [Icel](#).

He is mentioned in lines 1958-1963 of the Anglo-Saxon epic [Beowulf](#) as the son of [Offa of Angel](#) and grandson of [Garmund](#).

...Hence Offa was praised  
for his fighting and feeing by far-off men,  
the spear-bold warrior; wisely he ruled  
over his empire. Eomer woke to him,  
help of heroes, Hemming's kinsman,  
Grandson of Garmund, grim in war.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icel\\_\(person\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icel_(person))

## Icel of Mercia

**Icel** (or **Icil**) was an early king of [Mercia](#), according to an eighth-century life of [St Guthlac](#). Early genealogies record him as the great-grandfather of [Creoda of Mercia](#) and the son of [Eomer](#), last King of the [Angles](#) in [Angeln](#). Icel led his people across the [North Sea](#) to [Britain](#), and gave his name to the Iclings (or [Icelingas](#)), the ruling dynasty of Mercia. He was probably active in the period 510-535 which corresponds to a date given in the *Flores Historiarum* of [Roger of Wendover](#) and [Matthew Paris](#), namely 527, under which is reported, "...pagans came from Germany and occupied East Anglia... some of whom invaded Mercia and fought many battles with the British..." This date, however, should perhaps be amended to 515. Icel's son was [Cnebba](#).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creoda\\_of\\_Mercia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creoda_of_Mercia)

## Creoda of Mercia

*Imaginary depiction of Creoda from John Speed's 1611 Saxon Heptarchy*



**Creoda** (or **Crida**) (c. 540 - 593) was the first monarch of [Mercia](#) (584 - 593).

Creoda is recorded as having been the son of [Cynewald](#), the grandson of [Cnebba](#), and the great-grandson of [Icel](#); consequently, members of the Mercian royal line were known as [Iclingas](#). Although this suggests that Creoda was only a fourth-generation descendant of the first [Angles](#) in [England](#), the sources nevertheless record him as having been the first ruler of the Kingdom of Mercia. One explanation for

this is that the Mercians had initially settled further east and only moved into the area of what became known as Mercia in the time of Creoda.

Like most of the early [Anglo-Saxon](#) kings, very little is known about his life. The [Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#) records his death in the year 593.



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pybba\\_of\\_Mercia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pybba_of_Mercia)

# Pybba of Mercia

**Pybba** (570?–606/615) (also **Pibba**, **Wibba**, **Wybba**) was an early [King](#) of [Mercia](#). He was the son of [Creoda](#) and father of [Penda](#) and [Eowa](#).

His dates are sometimes given in genealogies as birth in 570, the beginning of his reign in 593, and death in either 606 or 615, but with no apparent evidence; the *[Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#)* just mentions him as father of Penda, with no further detail.

Pybba is said by the *[Historia Brittonum](#)* to have had 12 sons. [Cearl](#), another Mercian king, is mentioned by [Bede](#), and may have been Pybba's successor, but his relationship to Pybba, if any, is unknown. Pybba's son Penda eventually became king; the *Chronicle* gives the date of this as 626, although Bede suggests it was not until after the [battle of Hatfield Chase](#) in 633.

Besides Penda and Eowa (who the author of the *Historia Brittonum* said were the sons of Pybba who were the best known to him), Pybba also apparently had a son named Coenwalh. Every king from Penda until [Ceolwulf](#), who was deposed in 823, was said to be a descendant of Pybba, either through Penda, Eowa, or Coenwalh (perhaps excluding [Beornrad](#), who ruled briefly and whose background is unknown).

Pybba also is said to have had a daughter. Though un-named, she was possibly the first wife of [Cenwalh](#), King of Wessex (648-674).

# Penda of Mercia

*Stained glass window from the cloister of Worcester Cathedral showing the death of Penda of Mercia*



**Penda** (died November 15, 655) was a 7th-century [King of Mercia](#), the [Anglo-Saxon kingdom](#) in what is today the [English Midlands](#). A [pagan](#) at a time when [Christianity](#) was taking hold in many of the [Anglo-Saxon](#) kingdoms, Penda participated in the defeat of the powerful [Northumbrian king Edwin](#) at the [Battle of Hatfield Chase](#) in 633. Nine years later, he defeated and killed Edwin's eventual successor, [Oswald](#), at the [Battle of Maserfield](#); from this point he was probably the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon rulers of the time, laying the foundations for the [Mercian supremacy](#) over the Anglo-Saxon [Heptarchy](#). He defeated the [East Angles](#), drove the king of [Wessex](#) into exile for three years, and continued to wage war against the [Bernicians](#) of Northumbria. Thirteen years after Maserfield, he suffered a crushing defeat and was killed at the [Battle of the Winwaed](#) in the course of a final campaign against the Bernicians.

Penda was a son of [Pybba](#) and said to be a descendant of [Icel](#), with a lineage purportedly extending back to [Woden](#).

The *[Historia Brittonum](#)* says that Pybba had 12 sons, including Penda, but that Penda and [Eowa](#) were those best known to its author. Besides Eowa, apparently Penda also had a brother named Coenwalh, from whom two later kings were descended.

With the defeat at the Winwaed, Oswiu came to briefly dominate Mercia, permitting Penda's son Peada to rule its southern portion. Two of Penda's other sons, [Wulfhere](#) and [Aethelred](#), later ruled Mercia in succession after the overthrow of Northumbrian control in the late 650s. The period of rule by Penda's descendants came to an end with his grandson [Ceolred](#)'s death in 716, after which power passed to descendants of Eowa for most of the remainder of the 8th century.

Penda was the last great pagan warrior-king among the Anglo-Saxons. Higham wrote that "his destruction sounded the death-knell of English paganism as a political ideology and public religion." After Penda's death, the Mercians were converted to Christianity, and all three of Penda's reigning sons ruled as Christians. His daughters [Cyneburh](#) and [Cyneswith](#) became Christian and were saintly figures who according to some accounts retained their virginity through their marriages.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eowa\\_of\\_Mercia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eowa_of_Mercia)

## Eowa of Mercia

**Eowa** (or **Eawa**) was a son of the [Mercian](#) king [Pybba](#) and a brother of the Mercian king [Penda](#); according to the *[Historia Brittonum](#)*<sup>1</sup> and the *[Annales Cambriae](#)*. These two sources state that Eowa was a king of the Mercians himself at the time of the [Battle of Maserfield](#) (or Cogwy), in which he was killed, on August 5 of what was probably the year 642. The later Mercian kings [Ethelbald](#), [Offa](#) and [Ecgrith](#) were descended from Eowa; the period of their rule began in 716 following the death of Penda's grandson [Ceolred](#) and ended with Ecgrith's death in December 796.

It was in the battle of Maserfield that [Oswald of Northumbria](#) was defeated and killed by the Mercians under Penda. Eowa also died in this battle, although little is known about this. It has been suggested that Eowa may have been a co-ruler of the Mercians alongside Penda, or possibly even superior in status to Penda at this time (if so, this could explain why the *Historia Brittonum* seems to date Penda's reign from the battle of Maserfield), and that he may have been subject to Oswald and fighting as his ally in the battle. It is possible that it was customary among the Mercians until this time for there to be more than one king, and Penda and Eowa may have ruled over the southern and northern Mercians respectively.

## Coenwulf of Mercia

**Coenwulf** (or **Cenwulf**) (died 821) was King of [Mercia](#) from December 796 to 821. He was a descendant of a brother of King [Penda](#), who had ruled Mercia in the middle of the 7th century. He succeeded [Ecgfrith](#), the son of [Offa](#); Ecgfrith only reigned for five months, with Coenwulf coming to the throne in the same year that Offa died. In the early years of Coenwulf's reign he had to deal with a revolt in Kent, which had been under Offa's control. [Eadberht Præn](#) returned from exile in Francia to claim the Kentish throne and Coenwulf was forced to wait for papal support before he could intervene. When [Pope Leo](#) agreed to anathematize Eadberht, Coenwulf invaded and retook the kingdom; Eadberht was taken prisoner, and was blinded and had his hands cut off.

*Coenwulf depicted on an early ninth century gold mancus*



He was succeeded by his brother, Ceolwulf; a post-[Conquest](#) legend claims that his son [Cynehelm](#) was murdered to gain the succession. Within two years Ceolwulf had been deposed and the kingship passed permanently out of Coenwulf's family. Coenwulf was the last king of Mercia to exercise substantial dominance over other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Within a decade of his death, the rise of Wessex had begun,

under King Egbert, and Mercia never recovered its former position of power.

For most of the eighth century, Mercia was dominant among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms south of the river Humber. [Aethelbald](#), who came to the throne in 716, had established himself as the overlord of the southern Anglo-Saxons by 731. He was assassinated in 757, and was briefly succeeded by [Beornred](#), but within a year [Offa](#) ousted Beornred and took the throne for himself. Offa's daughter [Eadburh](#) married [Beorhtric of Wessex](#) in 789, and Beorhtric became an ally



thereafter.<sup>[2]</sup> In Kent, Offa intervened decisively in the 780s and at some point became the overlord of [East Anglia](#), whose king, [Aethelred](#), was beheaded at Offa's orders in 794.

Coenwulf was the last of a series of Mercian kings, beginning with Penda in the early 7th century, to exercise dominance over most or all of southern England. The years after his death saw Mercia's position weaken, however; and the [battle of Ellendun](#) in 825 firmly established [Egbert of Wessex](#) as the dominant king south of the Humber.

*Southern England during Coenwulf's reign*

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynehelm>

# Cynehelm

**Saint Kenelm** (or **Cynehelm**) was an [Anglo-Saxon saint](#), venerated throughout medieval [England](#), and mentioned in the [Canterbury Tales](#) (the [Nun's Priest's Tale](#), 290-299).

In legend, St Cynehelm was a member of the royal family of [Mercia](#), a boy king and [martyr](#), murdered by an ambitious relative. His body, after being concealed, was discovered by miraculous intervention, and transported by the Monks of Winchcombe to a major [shrine](#). There it remained for several hundred years. The two locales most closely linked to this legend are the [Clent Hills](#), south of [Birmingham](#), identified as the scene of his murder, and the small [Gloucestershire](#) town of [Winchcombe](#), near [Cheltenham](#), where his body was interred. The small church of St Cynehelm, dating from the 1400s in a village called Kenelstowe, now stands with a handful of houses within the larger village of [Romsley](#) in the Clent Hills. For many years, villagers celebrated St Cynehelm's Day (July 17) with a village fair and the ancient custom of "crabbing the parson" - bombarding the unfortunate cleric with a volley of crab apples.

## *The Legend of St Cynehelm*

The earliest account of St Cynehelm's legend lies in a manuscript copy from the 12th century at [Winchcombe Abbey](#), which claims to be derived from an account given by a Worcester monk named Wilfin. Other accounts in chronicles are evidently derived from the same source. The story told by that manuscript is summarised below:

In AD 819, [King Kenwulph](#) of Mercia died leaving two daughters, Quendryda and Burgenhilda, and a son, a child of seven years old, named Cynehelm who was chosen to succeed him. Quendryda envied her little brother and thought that, if he were killed, she might reign as Queen. She therefore conspired with her lover, Askobert, her brother's tutor and guardian, and gave him money, saying, 'Slay my brother for me, that I may reign'. In the Forests of Worcestershire, on a hunting trip, the opportunity arose.

The night before the hunting trip, Cynehelm had a dream in which he climbed a large tree decorated with flowers and lanterns. From on high, he saw all four quarters of his kingdom. Three bowed down before him, but the fourth began to chop away at the tree until it fell. Then Cynehelm transformed into a white bird and flew away to safety. On waking, the young king related his dream to his nanny, a wise old woman gifted in interpreting dreams. She wept, for she knew that the boy was destined to die.

In the middle of the hunt's first day, young Cynehelm, tired and hot, decided to lie down beneath a tree to rest. Askobert began to dig a grave, in preparation for the murder, but the boy suddenly awoke and admonished him, 'You think to kill me here in vain, for I shall be slain in another spot. In token, thereof, see this rod blossom'. As he thrust his stick into the ground, it instantly took root and began to flower. It grew, in years after, to be a great ash tree, which was known as St Kenelm's Ash. Unperturbed by this turn of events, Askobert took the little King up to the



Clent Hills, and as the child began to sing the 'Te Deum', the assassin smote his head clean off and buried him where he fell.

Kenelm's soul rose in the form of a dove carrying a scroll, and flew away to Rome where it dropped the scroll at the feet of the Pope. The message on the scroll read: 'Low in a mead of kine under a thorn, of head bereft, lieth poor Kenelm king-born'.

Accordingly, the Pope wrote to the [Archbishop of Canterbury](#), who commissioned a party from the Mercian capital, Winchcombe, to seek the body. As they walked, they saw a pillar of light shining over a thicket in Worcestershire and beneath it the body of Kenelm. As it was taken up, a rushing fountain burst out of the ground, and flowed away into a stream, which brought health to anyone who drank from it. The body was then solemnly carried towards Winchcombe, but at the ford called Pyriford over the [River Avon](#), the burial party was met by an armed band from [Worcester Abbey](#) who also claimed title to the remains. The dispute was settled as follows: whichever party woke first on the following morning could take the prize. This proved to be the monks from Winchcombe. Despite their agreement, however, they were closely pursued by the Worcester party. Exhausted from their rapid march, they stopped just within sight of Winchcombe Abbey. As they struck their staffs into the ground, a spring burst forth, and this refreshed them so that they were able to press on to the Royal Mercian Abbey at Winchcombe, where the bells sounded and rang without the hand of man.

*Worcester Abbey first built in 1084*

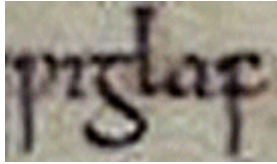


Then Quendryda asked what all this ringing meant and was told her how her brother's body was brought in procession into the abbey. 'If that be true,' said she, 'may both my eyes fall upon this book', and then both her eyes fell out of her head upon the Psalter she was reading. Soon after both she and her lover died wretchedly, and their bodies were cast out into a ditch. The remains of Saint Kenelm were buried with all honour and he has since been revered as a martyr. His [feast day](#) is celebrated on July 17, the date of his translation to Winchcombe.



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiglaf\\_of\\_Mercia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiglaf_of_Mercia)

# Wiglaf of Mercia



**Wiglaf** (died 839) was King of [Mercia](#) from 827 to 829 and again from 830 until his death.. Wigstan, his grandson, was recorded as a descendant of [Penda of Mercia](#), so it is possible that Wiglaf was descended from Penda, one of the most powerful seventh-century kings of Mercia.

Wiglaf's name in the 825 entry of the [C] manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

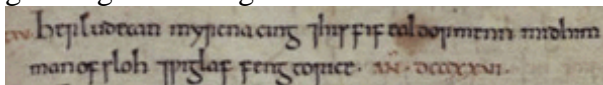
Wiglaf succeeded [Ludeca](#), who was killed campaigning against [East Anglia](#). His first reign coincided with the continued rise of the rival [Anglo-Saxon](#) kingdom of [Wessex](#) under [Egbert](#). Egbert drove Wiglaf from the throne in 829, and ruled Mercia directly for a year. Wiglaf recovered the kingdom in 830, probably by force although it may be that Wiglaf remained subject to Egbert's overlordship. Although Wiglaf appears to have restored Mercia's independence, the recovery was short-lived, and later in the century Mercia was divided between Wessex and the Vikings.

Wiglaf died in about 839, and was probably succeeded by [Beorhtwulf](#), though one tradition records his son, [Wigmund](#) as having reigned briefly. Wiglaf is buried at [Repton](#), near [Derby](#).

*A map of what is now England during Wiglaf's reigns; the remnants of Offa's Dyke are shown, running roughly along the modern border between England and Wales.*



Mercia had been the dominant Anglo-Saxon kingdom for most of the 8th century, with [Offa](#), who died in 796, the most powerful king of his time. [Coenwulf](#), who took the Mercian throne shortly after Offa's death, was able to retain Mercian influence in the kingdoms of [Kent](#), [East Anglia](#) and [Essex](#), and made frequent incursions across [Offa's Dyke](#) into what is now [Wales](#). However, Coenwulf's death, in 821, marked the beginning of a period in which the political map of England was dramatically redrawn. Although one eleventh-century source claims that Coenwulf's son, [Cynehelm](#), briefly succeeded to the throne, it is more likely that [Ceolwulf](#), Coenwulf's brother, was the next king. He reigned for only two years before being deposed. Outside Mercia, the power of the kingdom of Wessex, to the south, was strong and growing when Wiglaf came to the throne.



*The entry for 825 in the [C] manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, recording Wiglaf's accession.*

The [Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#) records Wiglaf's accession in the entry for 827. The entry reads "Here Ludeca, King of Mercia, was killed, and his five ealdormen with him, and Wiglaf succeeded to the kingdom". In 829, Egbert of Wessex successfully invaded Mercia and drove Wiglaf from his throne.

Egbert remained in control of Wessex until some time in 830. He was in power there long enough to issue coins (struck in London) bearing the title "Rex M", for "Rex Merciorum", or "King of Mercia".

A charter of 831, which Wiglaf calls "the first year of my second reign", was issued at [Wychbold](#) near [Droitwich](#); it is significant that Wiglaf makes no reference to any overlordship of Egbert's in this charter, issued within a year of his recovery of power,<sup>[28]</sup> and that he acknowledges his temporary deposition. In East Anglia, King [Aethelstan](#) minted coins, possibly as early as 827, but more likely c. 830 after Egbert's influence was reduced with Wiglaf's return to power in Mercia. This demonstration of independence on East Anglia's part is not surprising, as it was probably Aethelstan who was responsible for the defeat and death of both Beornwulf and Ludeca.

Both Wessex's sudden rise to power in the late 820s, and the subsequent failure to retain this dominant position, have been examined by historians looking for underlying causes. Dynastic uncertainty has been suggested as the reason for Mercia's collapse; the 820s were certainly years of instability in the royal line. The lack of detailed information about Mercian and Wessex administration makes other theories hard to evaluate: for example it has been suggested that the West Saxons had a stable tributary system that contributed to its success, or that Wessex's mixed Saxon and British population, natural frontiers, and capable administrators were key factors.

## **Succession**

*A 19th century engraving of the crypt at Repton where Wiglaf was interred.*



The date of Wiglaf's death is not given directly in any of the primary sources, but it can be determined from the known chronology of his successors. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that [Burgred](#) was driven out of Mercia by the Vikings in 874, after a reign of twenty-two years, and charter evidence indicates that Burgred succeeded in the first half of 852. A regnal list credits his predecessor, Beorhtwulf, with a reign of thirteen years, which is consistent with date references in his charters. Hence it would appear that Wiglaf's reign ended in 839. A tradition records the death of Wigstan in 849, and refers to Wigstan's father, Wigmund, the son of Wiglaf, as having been king, but this is the only evidence for Wigmund having reigned and must be regarded with suspicion. The descent of Beorhtwulf is not known, but it appears that dynastic tension was a continuing factor in the Mercian succession, in contrast to Wessex, where Egbert established a dynasty that lasted with little disturbance throughout the 9th century.

Wiglaf was buried at [Repton](#), in a crypt which still can be seen. The monastery church on the site at that time was probably constructed by [Aethelbald of Mercia](#) to house the royal mausoleum; other burials there include that of Wigstan, Wiglaf's grandson

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ealhswith>

# Ealhswith

**Ealhswith**, or **Ealswitha**, (born c. 852 in [Mercia](#), died 905) of the [Gaini](#) was the daughter of Aethelred Mucil, [Ealdorman](#) of the Gaini. She was married in 868, to [Alfred the Great](#), [king](#) of [Wessex](#). The [children](#) of Alfred and Ealhswith included :

- [Edward the Elder](#), later king of Wessex,
- [Aelfthryth](#), who married [Baldwin II, Count of Flanders](#),
- [Aethelflaed](#), who ruled as Lady of the Mercians.

After Alfred's death in 899, Ealhswith became a [nun](#). She died on 5 December 905, and is buried in [St. Mary's Abbey](#), [Winchester](#), [Hampshire](#).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred\\_the\\_Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_the_Great)

# Alfred the Great

**Alfred the Great** (849 – 26 October 899), was King of [Wessex](#) from 871 to 899. Alfred is noted for his defence of the [Anglo-Saxon](#) kingdoms of southern England against the [Vikings](#), becoming the only [English](#) king to be accorded the [epithet](#) "the Great". Alfred was the first [King of the West Saxons](#) to style himself "King of the Anglo-Saxons". Details of his life are described in a work by the [Welsh](#) scholar and bishop, [Asser](#). Alfred was a learned man who encouraged education and improved his kingdom's [legal](#) system and [military](#) structure. Alfred is a [Catholic](#) and an [Eastern Orthodox Church saint](#) and is commonly regarded as a [hero of the Christian Church](#) in the [Anglican Communion](#), with a [feast day](#) of 26 October.

*Statue of Alfred the Great, Winchester*



## Childhood

Further information: [House of Wessex family tree](#)

Alfred was born in the village of Wanating, now [Wantage, Oxfordshire](#) (in the [historic county](#) of [Berkshire](#)). He was the youngest son of King [Aethelwulf of Wessex](#), by his first wife, [Osburga](#). In 868 Alfred married [Ealhswith](#), daughter of Aethelred Mucil

At the age of five years, Alfred is said to have been sent to Rome where, according to the [Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#),<sup>[4]</sup> he was confirmed by [Pope Leo IV](#) who "anointed him as king". [Victorian](#) writers interpreted this as an anticipatory [coronation](#) in preparation for his ultimate succession to the throne of Wessex. However, his succession could not have been foreseen at the time, as Alfred had three living elder brothers. A letter of Leo IV shows that Alfred was made a "[consul](#)"; a misinterpretation of this investiture, deliberate or accidental, could explain later confusion.<sup>[5]</sup> It may also be based on Alfred's later having accompanied his father on a pilgrimage to Rome where he spent some time at the court of [Charles the Bald, King of the Franks](#), around 854–855. On their return from Rome in 856, Aethelwulf was deposed by his son Aethelbald. With civil war looming,

the magnates of the realm met in council to hammer out a compromise. Aethelbald would retain the western shires (i.e., traditional Wessex), and Aethelwulf would rule in the east. King Aethelwulf died in 858; meanwhile Wessex was ruled by three of Alfred's brothers in succession.

Bishop Asser tells the story of how as a child Alfred won a prize of a volume of poetry in English, offered by his mother to the first of her children able to memorise it. This story may be true, or it may be a myth intended to illustrate the young Alfred's love of learning.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%86thelfl%C3%A6d>

# Aethelflaed

**Aethelflaed** (in earlier history works also **Ethelfled** or **Ethelfleda**) (869 / 870–918), was the eldest daughter of King [Alfred the Great](#) of [Wessex](#) and [Ealhswith](#), wife of [Aethelred, ealdorman of Mercia](#), and after his death, ruler of Mercia (911–918).

Aethelflaed is mentioned by King Alfred's biographer [Asser](#), who calls her the first-born child of Alfred and Ealhswith and a sister to [Edward](#), [Aethelgifu](#), [Aelfthryth](#) and [Aethelweard](#). By the time he wrote, roughly about the year 890, she was already married to [Aethelred](#), then [ealdorman of Mercia](#). They had one daughter, [Aelfwynn](#).

## *Mercia and the Vikings*

During a sustained campaign of repeated attack between 865 and 878 the [Danish Vikings](#) overran most of the [English Kingdoms](#) such as [Northumbria](#), Eastern [Mercia](#), [East Anglia](#) and even threatened the very existence of Wessex. [Alfred](#) and his descendants reconquered these lands from the Danes by [937](#)<sup>[2]</sup>. The aid given him in this by Mercia had to be acknowledged. Instead of making the dominion of Wessex over Mercia seem like a [conquest](#), Alfred married Aethelflaed to Aethelred of Mercia and gave his son-in-law the title Ealdorman or Earl of Mercia, thus allowing some ongoing autonomy. Since much of Western Mercia was never under the control of the Danes, and remained strong, this was a prudent move. Further prudence prevailed when the kingdoms were finally absorbed; they were not absorbed into Wessex or greater Wessex but into England. The term [Anglo-Saxon](#) thus reflects King Alfred's diplomatic integration of the Mercians [Angles](#) and the Saxons.

## *Lady of the Mercians (911–918)*

While her husband was alive, she signed agreements, leading some to think that she was the real leader. On her husband's death in 911 after the [Battle of Tettenhall](#), she was elevated to the status of "Lady of the Mercians". This title was not a nominal position; she was a formidable military leader and tactician. Aethelflaed ruled for approximately eight years (according to the [Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#)) from the newly fortified capital at [Stafford](#), it is likely that the [English](#) county of [Staffordshire](#) first came into being during her reign. She fortified her existing borders and retook [Derby](#). She died at [Tamworth](#) in 918, and was buried at St Peter's Church (now St Oswald's priory) in [Gloucester](#), a city she had reconstructed from Roman ruins, and laid out the core street plan, which is still in existence today. She was joint lady of the Mercians along with her young daughter Aelfwynn.



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%86lfwynn>

## Aelfwynn

**Aelfwynn** (c. 888–after 919) was the daughter of [Aethelred](#), ruler of English [Mercia](#), and [Aethelflaed](#), daughter of King [Alfred the Great](#) and herself ruler of Mercia after her husband's death. Following the death of her mother on 12 June 918, Aelfwynn too was for a short time ruler of Mercia. The *[Anglo-Saxon Chronicle](#)* states that she was "deprived of all control in Mercia, and was led into [Wessex](#) three weeks before [Christmas](#)".

Aelfwynn's parents may have married as early as 882 and not later than 887. According to [William of Malmesbury](#), Aelfwynn was the only child of Aethelflaed and Aethelred. The date of her birth is nowhere recorded, but it is presumed that she was born soon after her parent's marriage, perhaps around 888. William's account states that her birth was a difficult one, and that this led her mother to abstain from further sexual relations.

Aelfwynn's father spent much of the decade after her birth on campaign with his father-in-law King Alfred and brother-in-law Edward Aetheling (later King [Edward the Elder](#)). By 902 his health was poor and Aethelflaed was from then onwards the effective ruler of Mercia. William of Malmesbury states that Alfred sent his eldest grandson, [Aethelstan](#) son of Edward, to be educated at the court of Aethelflaed. William's panegyric on Aethelstan claims that he received a first-class education in Mercia, and it is thought likely that Aelfwynn will have been equally well educated.

Aelfwynn is sometimes considered the last ruler of Mercia, but that kingdom was not entirely absorbed into the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons, later the [kingdom of England](#), until much later. Her cousin Aethelstan was ruler of Mercia only before becoming king of the Anglo-Saxons, and so too was King [Edgar](#) ruler of the Mercians under his elder brother King [Eadwig](#).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leofwine,\\_Ealdorman\\_of\\_the\\_Hwicce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leofwine,_Ealdorman_of_the_Hwicce)

## Leofwine, Ealdorman of the Hwicce

**Leofwine** (c. 950 – 1028), was an [ealdorman](#) of the [Hwicce](#) in [Mercia](#). He is mentioned as *Wicciarum Prouinciarum dux* Ealdorman of Hwicce in 997.

Leofwine may have been related by marriage to the family of [Aelfgifu of Northampton](#). The chronicles mention four children of Leofwine, their order of birth is unknown:

- [Northman](#), killed in 1017
- Eadwine, killed in battle in 1039
- Godwine, died some time before 1056
- [Leofric, Earl of Mercia](#).



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leofric,\\_Earl\\_of\\_Mercia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leofric,_Earl_of_Mercia)

# Leofric, Earl of Mercia

**Leofric** (died 31 August or 30 September 1057) was the Earl of [Mercia](#) and founded [monasteries](#) at [Coventry](#) and [Much Wenlock](#). Leofric is remembered as the husband of [Lady Godiva](#).

## *Life and political influence*

Leofric was the son of Ealdorman [Leofwine](#) of the [Hwicce](#), who died c. 1023. Leofric's elder brother [Northman](#) was killed in 1017, in the losing battles against [Cnut](#).

The victorious Cnut divided England into four great provinces: [Wessex](#), [East Anglia](#), [Mercia](#) and [Northumbria](#) each of which he eventually placed under the control of an [earl](#) (a title new to the English, replacing the Anglo-Saxon "[ealdorman](#)"). Mercia he initially left in the hands of [Eadric Streona](#), who had been Ealdorman of Mercia since 1007, but Eadric was killed later in the same year of 1017.<sup>[2]</sup>

Mercia may have been given to Leofric immediately after that. He had certainly become Earl of [Mercia](#) by the 1030s. This made him one of the most powerful men in the land, second only to [Earl Godwin](#) of Wessex among the mighty earls. He may have had some connection by marriage with [Aelfifu of Northampton](#), the first wife of Cnut. That might help to explain why he supported her son [Harold Harefoot](#) against [Harthacanute](#), Cnut's son by [Emma](#), when Cnut died in 1035.

However Harold died in 1040 and was succeeded by Harthacanute, who made himself unpopular with heavy taxation in his short reign. Two of his tax-collectors were killed at [Worcester](#) by angry locals. The king was so enraged by this that in 1041 he ordered Leofric and his other earls to plunder and burn the city, and lay waste the whole area. This command must have sorely tested Leofric. Worcester was the cathedral city of the Hwicce, his people.

When Harthacanute died suddenly in 1042, he was succeeded by his half-brother [Edward the Confessor](#). Leofric loyally supported Edward when he came under threat at [Gloucester](#) from Earl Godwin in 1051. Leofric and [Earl Siward](#) of Northumbria gathered a great army to meet that of Godwin. Wise heads counselled that battle would be folly, with the flower of England on both sides. Their loss would leave England open to its enemies. So the issue was resolved by less bloody means. Earl Godwin and his family were outlawed for a time.

Earl Leofric's power was then at its height. But in 1055 his son [Aelfgar](#) was outlawed, "without any fault", says the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. He raised an army in Ireland and Wales and brought it to [Hereford](#), where he clashed with the army of [Earl Ralph of Herefordshire](#) and severely damaged the town. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* wryly comments "And then when they had done most harm, it was decided to reinstate Earl Aelfgar".

Leofric died "at a good old age" in 1057 at his estate at [Kings Bromley](#) in [Staffordshire](#). According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, he died on 30 September, but the chronicler of Worcester gives the date as 31 August. Both agree that he was buried at Coventry.

Leofric used a double-headed eagle as his personal device, and this has been adopted by various units of the British Army as a symbol for Mercia.

### ***Religious works***

Earl Leofric and Godiva were noted for great generosity to religious houses. In 1043 he founded and endowed a [Benedictine monastery](#) at Coventry.<sup>[8]</sup> John of Worcester tells us that "He and his wife, the noble Countess Godgifu, a worshipper of God and devout lover of St Mary ever-virgin, built the monastery there from the foundations out of their own patrimony, and endowed it adequately with lands and made it so rich in various ornaments that in no monastery in England might be found the abundance of gold, silver, gems and precious stones that was at that time in its possession."

In the 1050s Leofric and Godiva appear jointly in the grant of land to the monastery of St Mary, [Worcester](#), and the endowment of the minister at Stow St Mary, [Lincolnshire](#). She and her husband are commemorated as benefactors of other monasteries at [Leominster](#), [Chester](#), [Much Wenlock](#), and [Evesham](#).

### ***Family***

Apart from Northman, killed in 1017, Leofric had at least two other brothers. Edwin was killed in battle by [Gruffydd ap Llywelyn](#) in 1039. Godwine died some time before 1057.

Leofric may have married more than once. His famous wife [Godiva](#) survived him and may have been a second or later wife. Since there is some question about the date of marriage for Leofric and Godgifu, it is not clear that she was the mother of Aelfgar, Leofric's only known child. If Godiva was married to Earl Leofric only in 1040, she could not have been the mother of Aelfgar (whose own children were born in that decade or earlier). If she was married earlier (as early as 1017, as some sources claim), she could have been Aelfgar's mother.

[Aelfgar](#) succeeded Leofric as Earl of Mercia.

### ***In popular culture***

On screen, Leofric has been portrayed by [Roy Travers](#) in the British silent short *Lady Godiva* (1928), [George Nader](#) in the film *Lady Godiva of Coventry* (1955), and [Tony Steedman](#) in the [BBC](#) TV series *Hereward the Wake* (1965).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady\\_Godiva](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Godiva)

# Lady Godiva

*Lady Godiva* by [John Collier](#), c. 1897



19th century [equestrian statue](#) of the legendary ride, by [John Thomas](#) Maidstone Museum, Kent.



**Godiva** ([Old English](#): *Godgifu*, "god gift"), often referred to as **Lady Godiva** ([fl.](#) 1040–1080), was an [Anglo-Saxon](#) noblewoman who, according to [legend](#), rode naked through the streets of [Coventry](#), in [England](#), in order to gain a remission of the oppressive [taxation](#) imposed by her husband on his tenants. The name "[Peeping Tom](#)" for a [voyeur](#) originates from later versions of this legend in which a man named Tom had watched her ride and was struck blind or dead.

Lady Godiva was the wife of [Leofric](#), Earl of [Mercia](#). Her name occurs in charters and the [Domesday survey](#), though the spelling varies. The [Old English](#) name Godgifu or Godgyfu meant "gift of God"; Godiva was the Latinised version. Since the name was a popular one, there are contemporaries of the same name.

If she was the same Godgifu who appears in the history of [Ely Abbey](#), the *[Liber Eliensis](#)*, written at the end of 12th century, then she was a widow when Leofric married her. Both Leofric and Godiva were generous benefactors to religious houses. In 1043 Leofric founded and endowed a [Benedictine monastery](#) at Coventry. Writing in the 12th century, [Roger of Wendover](#) credits Godiva as the persuasive force behind this act. In the 1050s, her name is coupled with that of her husband on a grant of land to the monastery of St Mary, [Worcester](#) and the endowment of the [minster](#) at Stow St Mary, [Lincolnshire](#). She and her husband are commemorated as benefactors of other monasteries at [Leominster](#), [Chester](#), [Much Wenlock](#) and [Evesham](#). She gave Coventry a number of works in precious metal made for the purpose by the famous goldsmith Mannig, and bequeathed a necklace valued at 100 [marks](#) of silver. Another necklace went to Evesham, to be hung around the figure of the Virgin accompanying the life-size gold and silver [rood](#) she and her husband gave, and [St Paul's Cathedral, London](#) received a gold-fringed [chasuble](#). She and her husband were among the most munificent of the several large Anglo-Saxon donors of the last

decades before the Conquest; the early Norman bishops made short work of their gifts, carrying them off to Normandy or melting them down for bullion.

After Leofric's death in 1057, his widow lived on until sometime between the [Norman Conquest](#) of 1066 and 1086. She is mentioned in the Domesday survey as one of the few Anglo-Saxons and the only woman to remain a major landholder shortly after the conquest. By the time of this great survey in 1086, Godiva had died, but her former lands are listed, although now held by others. Thus, Godiva apparently died between 1066 and 1086.

*Lady Godiva statue by Sir William Reid Dick*



According to the popular story, Lady Godiva took pity on the people of Coventry, who were suffering grievously under her husband's oppressive taxation. Lady Godiva appealed again and again to her husband, who obstinately refused to remit the tolls. At last, weary of her entreaties, he said he would grant her request if she would strip naked and ride through the streets of the town. Lady Godiva took him at his word and, after issuing a proclamation that all persons should stay indoors and shut their windows, she rode through the town, clothed only in her long hair. Only one person in the town, a tailor ever afterwards known as [Peeping Tom](#), disobeyed her proclamation in one of the most famous instances of [voyeurism](#). In the story, Tom bores a hole in his shutters so that he might see Godiva pass, and is struck blind. In the end, Godiva's husband keeps his word and abolishes the onerous taxes.

*Lady Godiva: Edmund Blair Leighton depicts the moment of decision (1892)*



At the time, it was customary for penitents to make a public procession in only their [shift](#), a sleeveless white garment similar to a [slip](#) today and one which was certainly considered "underwear." Thus, some scholars speculate, Godiva may have actually travelled through town as a penitent, in her shift. Godiva's story may have passed into folk history to be recorded in a romanticised version. Another theory has it that Lady Godiva's "nakedness" may refer to her riding through the streets stripped of her jewellery, the trademark of her [upper class](#) rank. However, both these attempts to reconcile known facts with legend are

weak; there is no known use of the word "naked" in the era of the earliest accounts to mean anything other than "without any clothing whatsoever."



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%86lfg%C4%81r,\\_Earl\\_of\\_Mercia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%86lfg%C4%81r,_Earl_of_Mercia)

## Aelfgar, Earl of Mercia

**Aelfgar** (died c.1062) was son of [Leofric, Earl of Mercia](#), possibly by his well-known wife Godgifu ([Lady Godiva](#)). He succeeded to his father's title and responsibilities on the latter's death in 1057.

Aelfgar gained from the exile of [Earl Godwin](#) of Wessex and his sons in 1051. He was given the Earldom of [East Anglia](#), which had been that of [Harold](#), son of Godwin. Earl Godwin and King [Edward](#) were reconciled the following year, so Harold was restored to his earldom - but not for long. At [Easter](#) 1053 Godwin died, so Harold became Earl of Wessex, and the earldom of East Anglia returned to Aelfgar.

Aelfgar seems to have learned from the tactics Godwin used to put pressure on King Edward. When he was himself exiled in 1055, he raised a fleet of 18 ships in [Ireland](#) and then turned to [Wales](#), where King [Gruffydd](#) agreed to join forces with him against King Edward. Two miles from [Hereford](#), on 24 October, they clashed with the army of the Earl of [Herefordshire](#), [Ralph the Timid](#). The Earl and his men eventually took flight, and Gruffydd and Aelfgar pursued them, killing and wounding as they went, and enacting savage reprisals on Hereford. They despoiled and burnt the town, killing many of its citizens. King Edward ordered an army mustered and put Earl Harold in charge of it. This was more formidable opposition, and Aelfgar and Gruffydd fled to South Wales. However the issue was resolved by diplomacy and Earl Aelfgar was reinstated.

He married Aelfgifu, and was succeeded as Earl of Mercia by his eldest son by her, [Edwin](#) (also called Eadwine). His second son, [Morcar](#) (also called Morkere) was elected Earl of [Northumbria](#) when [Tostig Godwinson](#) was ejected by the Northumbrians. His daughter, [Edith \(Aldgyth\)](#) married firstly the Welsh prince [Gruffydd](#) (kd. 1063), by whom she had three children, and secondly 1064 [Harold Godwinson](#) (kd 1066 Hastings), by whom she had a posthumous son, Harold (died 1098).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin,\\_Earl\\_of\\_Mercia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin,_Earl_of_Mercia)

## Edwin, Earl of Mercia 18317

**Edwin** (died 1071; [Old English](#): [Ēadwine](#)) was the elder brother of [Morcar, Earl of Northumbria](#), son of [Aelfgār, Earl of Mercia](#) and grandson of [Leofric, Earl of Mercia](#). He succeeded to his father's title and responsibilities on Aelfgār's death in 1062. He appears as Earl Edwin (*Eduin comes*) in the [Domesday Book](#).

His younger brother, [Morcar](#) was elected Earl of [Northumbria](#) when [Tostig Godwinson](#) was ejected by the Northumbrians (October 3, 1065). In 1066 Tostig raided in Mercia but was repulsed by Edwin and Morcar and fled to [Scotland](#). Later in the year he returned, accompanied by King [Harald Hardrada](#) of Norway at the head of a huge Norwegian army, which defeated Edwin and Morcar at the [Battle of Fulford](#) near [York](#) (September 20). Harald and Tostig were in turn defeated and slain by [Harold Godwinson's](#) army, five days later at the [Battle of Stamford Bridge](#) (September 25). After Harold's death at the [Battle of Hastings](#), Edwin and Morcar were the principal supporters of a new regime under [Edgar the Atheling](#), but failed to take effective steps against the invading [Normans](#) and soon submitted to [Duke William](#).



*Painting of the Battle of Stamford Bridge by Peter Nicolai Arbo, depicting King Harald Hardrada hit in the neck by an arrow*

In 1068, Edwin and Morcar attempted to raise a rebellion in Mercia but swiftly submitted when William moved against them. In 1071 they again sought to rebel but Edwin was soon betrayed to the Normans by his own retinue and killed. Edwin's sister, [Edith](#), had been married to Harold Godwinson until the latter's death at [Hastings](#) on 14 October 1066.



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edith\\_of\\_Mercia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edith_of_Mercia)

## Edith of Mercia

**Edith of Mercia** or **Aldgyth of Mercia** or **Ealdgyth**, (died after 1070), was a [Queen consort](#) first of Wales and then of England. She was the daughter of Elfgar, Earl of [Mercia](#), the wife of [Gruffydd ap Llywelyn](#), ruler of [Wales](#), and following the latter's death, she married King [Harold II of England](#). Edith is described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as having been a "woman of great beauty".

Edith or Aldgyth was born in England to [Elfgar](#), Earl of Mercia (died c.1062), and his wife Aelfifu. She had two brothers, [Edwin, Earl of Mercia](#) and [Morcar, Earl of Northumbria](#). Her paternal grandparents were [Leofric, Earl of Mercia](#), and the legendary [Lady Godiva](#),

*Silver penny depicting King Harold II of England, the second husband of Edith of Mercia*



In 1058, Edith married her first husband [Gruffydd ap Llywelyn](#) of Wales, King of Gwynedd, Powys, Gwent, Glywysing, and Deheubarth (1007- 5 August 1063), an ally of her father, Elfgar who had been deprived of his Earldom of [East Anglia](#) by [Harold Godwinson](#), Earl of [Wessex](#) and his brothers. Elfgar had been banished in 1055 by the orders of King [Edward the Confessor](#) and went first to Ireland, accompanied by his family, including Edith, and afterwards, Wales, where he formed an alliance with Gruffydd. With the help of the army they raised in Ireland and Wales, Gruffydd and Elgar attacked [Hereford](#), clashed with the forces of [Ralph the Timid](#), Earl of Hereford and soundly defeated them. Elfgar was reinstated as Earl. In 1057, upon the death of his father, Leofric, Elfgar succeeded to the Earldom of Mercia.

On 5 August 1063, Edith's husband Gruffydd was killed at [Snowdonia](#) by his own men after fleeing from the invading army of [Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex](#).

In 1064, at [York](#), England, she married the enemy of her father and murdered husband, the aforementioned Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex (c.1022- 14 October 1066), who on [Ephiphany](#) 6 January 1066 would be crowned King Harold II of England. Although Edith was his lawful wife and Queen Consort, Harold Godwinson had had a common-law wife, [Edith Swannesha](#), (27<sup>th</sup> great grandmother) for over 20 years by whom he had several children, including [Gytha of Wessex](#). Gytha later married [Vladimir II Monomakh](#), Grand Duke of [Kiev](#), by whom she had issue. Edith was the mother of Harold's son, Harold Haroldson.

On 14 October 1066, King Harold II was killed at the [Battle of Hastings](#), by the Norman forces led by William the Conqueror, who would subsequently ascend the throne as King [William I of England](#). She died sometime after 1070.