

# **Alfred the Great and Late Anglo-Saxon England**

**by Dr. Eric Boston**

**Sat. 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Trinity Methodist Church, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2XB.**

**Visitors and prospective members warmly welcomed – £5.**

## **Resume of talk:-**

“The founder of the kingdom and nation” - a phrase which, being inscribed at the base of Alfred’s statue at Winchester has represented the most common perception of the Alfredian legacy to Britain particularly by those in the 19th century who commissioned the statue in 1901 at the peak of “Victorian Alfredianism”. Indeed, the debate as to whether this commemoration is justified is one that has gone on for centuries with different historians adopting views that generally reflect the context of their times. The intersection of nineteenth century British politics with the “cult of Alfred” was as a result of the perception that the era was a mirror image of Alfred’s Wessex which was a nation undergoing immense cultural change as was Queen Victoria’s nineteenth century Britain. Modern historians generally look positively on Alfred’s “greatness”.

How far is this accurate? Was Alfred the strong and successful ‘all rounder’ king? Does he deserve to be identified as ‘the Great? The talk will consider his context, his military skills, his political power, his political thought, his cultural and educational interests, and his legacy.

## **Background:-**

Since 1999, Dr. Eric Boston is Director of History and Academic Support at C.A.T.S. College, Cambridge. He has undertaken research in a number of projects including; France & England 1420-1700, Britain & Empire, 1660-1837, the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the European World 1500-1800, the Court of Louis XIII, the Bourbons, Louis XIV, French Absolutism, 1598-1661, Unity & Diversity in European Culture, Food in World History and London’s Plague Years. He is currently working on his Ph D thesis for publication.