

Visit

ATHELSTANEFORD

Birthplace of Scotland's Flag



The St Andrew's Cross, or Saltire, is Scotland's national flag. Tradition has it that the flag, the oldest in Europe and the Commonwealth, originated in a battle fought close by the East Lothian village of Athelstaneford in the dark ages. The date is believed to have been 832AD.

An army of Picts under King Angus, and aided by a contingent of Scots, was invading Lothians (at that time still Northumbrian territory), and found itself surrounded by a larger force of Saxons led by Athelstan.

Fearing the outcome of the encounter, Angus led prayers for deliverance and was rewarded by seeing a cloud formation of a white saltire (the diagonal cross on which St Andrew had been martyred) against the blue sky.

The king vowed that if, with the saint's help, he gained the victory, then Andrew would thereafter be the patron saint of Scotland. The Scots did win, and the Saltire became the flag of Scotland.

HOW TO GET THERE

Athelstaneford lies some 20 miles from Edinburgh and is easily accessed from the A1. The B1347 turn-off is a mile to the east of Haddington and signposted.



WHAT TO SEE

FLAG HERITAGE CENTRE: This occupies a lectern doocot built in 1583 by George Hepburn, father of Sir John Hepburn, the founder and first colonel of the Royal Scots.

Now available in seven languages at the touch of a button, visitors can enjoy a short audio visual dramatisation of the traditional origins of Scotland's flag. There are spectacular views northwards towards the battle site.

SALTIRE MEMORIAL: Erected in 1965, the granite panel shows the two armed hosts facing each other beneath the St Andrew's Cross in the sky. A large Saltire flies permanently, floodlit at night.

PARISH CHURCH: Visitors are encouraged to walk through the historic churchyard. Dating from 1780, the present church has a fine stained glass window of St Andrew, and an exhibition about writer Nigel Tranter.

WHEN TO VISIT

The Flag Heritage Centre is open daily between 9.00am and 6.00pm from 1 April to 31 October, and on St Andrew's Day 30 November. Admission is FREE. The Church and Saltire Memorial can be visited at any time.



Scottish Flag Trust, PO Box 84, Edinburgh, EH3 8LG, Scotland.

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 *La croix de Saint André, ou le sautoir, est le drapeau national de l'Ecosse. On dit que le drapeau, le plus ancien de l'Europe, a ses origines dans une bataille qui a eu lieu près du village Athelstaneford dans le East Lothian en 832.*

 *La croce di Sant'Andrea, o "Saltire", rappresenta la bandiera nazionale della Scozia. Secondo la tradizione la bandiera, la piu' antica d'Europa, apparve per la prima volta durante la battaglia di Athelstaneford, un villaggio nella regione dell'East Lothian, intorno all'anno 832D.C.*

 *Schottlands Fahne ist das Sankt Andreas Kreuz, auch "Saltire" genannt. Nacht alter Überlieferung hat die Fahne, die älteste in Europa, ihren Ursprung in einer Schlacht, die in der Nähe des Ortes Athelstaneford in East Lothian im Jahre 832A.D. stattfand.*

 *La cruz de San Andrés o "Saltire" es la bandera nacional de Escocia. Según la historia, la bandera, la más antigua de Europa, se originó en una batalla cerca del pueblo de Athelstaneford en la región de East Lothian en el año 832d.c.*

 *Krzyż Świętego Andrzeja lub szkocki Saltire – to nazwa narodowej flagi Szkocji. Według tradycji, jest to najstarsza flaga w Europie, jej pochodzenie wywodzi się z bitwy, która odbyła się w 832 w okolicach wioski Athelstaneford położonej na obszarze East Lothian.*



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Is i Bratach na Croise, neo Bratach an Naomh Anndra, bratach naiseanta na h-Alba. Tha seanachas ag innse gun d'fhainig a'bhhratach as aosda san Roinn Eorpa gu bith bho chath a ghabh aite faisg air baile Fadhal Athalsdain, neo Athelstaneford, ann an Lodainn an Ear sa bhliadhna 832AD.

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SALTIRE MEMORIAL: *Sited within the historic churchyard, the granite panel shows the two armed hosts facing each other beneath the cross in the sky.*

PARISH CHURCH: *Dating from 1780, the present church has a fine stained glass window of St Andrew, and an exhibition about writer/historian Nigel Tranter.*

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