

**FREE**  
performances  
in Tamworth  
Castle gardens!

# FORGING THE KING

Opening show of Athelstan1100  
Spectacular open-air dance-circus, Tamworth Castle gardens

**Sat 20 July at 11am & 2pm**



Motionhouse



Supported through public funding by  
ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND



# WELCOME TO FORGING THE KING

I am absolutely delighted to have been invited by Tamworth Castle to make Forging the King here in the heart of Tamworth.

When I was asked to make the show to kick-off Athelstan1100, I started thinking about the rich history of Tamworth and the fascinating story of how Æthelstan became King of England.

The show tells the story of Æthelstan's arrival in Tamworth and how the guidance from Mercian warrior Queen Æthelflæda shaped him into the great king he became. With Tamworth Castle as the dramatic backdrop to the show, I hope that Forging the King will thrill and engage our audiences, and that it will remind people from the local area just how proud they can be of their rich history.

I am very lucky to have been given the opportunity to make this show. Huge thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to bring Forging the King to life with me.

I hope you enjoy the show!

**Kevin Finnan, Creator and Director of Forging the King and Artistic Director of Motionhouse**



## **Kevin Finnan MBE**

### **Creator and Director of Forging the King**

Kevin is known for his dynamic, highly visual productions integrating dance, circus and digital technology. He is responsible for the distinctive style that Motionhouse is renowned for. Kevin co-founded Motionhouse with Louise Richards in 1988.

He is passionate about exploring and questioning the traditional use of space in performance, which has led to the creation of an extensive body of work developed over more than three decades. He is regularly commissioned to create extraordinary dance spectacles, most notably as Choreographer and Movement Director of the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

Kevin has created major productions celebrated globally, including more than 45 theatre and outdoor festival productions and large-scale outdoor spectacles, bespoke performance events to mark Capital of Culture celebrations across Europe, the launch of the London 2012 Festival in the Midlands with The Voyage, the opening of the Birmingham 2022 Festival with Wondrous Stories and The National Lottery's Big Eurovision Welcome in Liverpool 2023.

Kevin holds an MA in Contemporary Performing Arts from University College Bretton Hall and a PhD in Theatre from Warwick University. He was made an MBE in 2013 for services to dance.

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# Motionhouse

Motionhouse has been creating inspirational performances in the West Midlands and touring across the globe for more than 35 years. The company is a leader in the field of outdoor performance and large-scale spectacle, celebrated for ambitious experimentation with performance environments.

Motionhouse has created work for sites, for celebrations, for festivals and for ceremonies, including four EU Capital of Culture events, as well as being commissioned to celebrate the London 2012 Olympic Games from bid success through launch to opening. From beaches to stately homes and from animating a working harbour to bringing an inner-city wasteland to life, commissions have featured pyrotechnics, giant sandcastles, hot air balloons, huge fairy-tale ball gowns and a life size ocean liner. The company has a reputation for artistic innovation, and a mission to make world-class dance accessible to all.

Founding directors Executive Director Louise Richards and Artistic Director Kevin Finnan MBE still lead the company. With an ethos that dance is for everyone, Motionhouse creates and tours a repertoire of powerful dance-circus productions to theatres, festivals and outdoor spaces in the UK and internationally, and delivers a wide range of inspirational participatory activities with diverse groups. The company's accessible dance-circus style attracts large audiences, performing to 110,000–120,000 people every year.

Motionhouse is supported using public funding by Arts Council England, with additional support from Warwick District Council and is a Birmingham Hippodrome Associate Company.



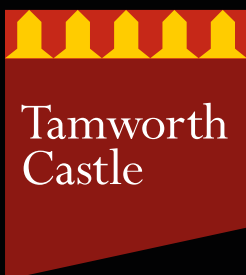


# Athelstan 1100

2024 marks the 1,100th anniversary of the accession of Æthelstan, King of Mercia, who is considered by many historians as the first King of England. Æthelstan was also the nephew and ward of Our Lady of the Mercians, Æthelflæda. During the Anglo-Saxon times, Tamworth was the capital of the Kingdom of Mercia, and one of the most powerful kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England.

Tamworth Castle, St Editha's Church and The Tamworth and District Civic Society will deliver a whole week of festivities including Anglo-Saxon living history, community archaeology, talks and lectures, demonstrations, Forging the King and live music.

**[Find out more about Athelstan1100 events this week](#)**



## About Tamworth Castle

Step back in time through 900 years of history in Tamworth Castle. Wander the chambers and hallways of this unique building and get a real sense of how the Saxons, Normans, Tudors and Victorians spent their time in the castle.

There are more than 15 fully furnished rooms to discover at the castle and everything is clearly signposted. The castle is packed with information and displays matching the era of the room.

Relax in the Day Parlour used by the Ferrers family to gather in before dining then step into the Tudor Dining Room with large, colourful tapestries decorating the walls. Sit at the table in front of the large, log fireplace to really get a feel of this marvellous room.

The new Battle & Tribute exhibition houses a display of the Staffordshire Hoard, where you can see the Saxon weapons and a range of real and replica items found as part of the Staffordshire Hoard.

# Creative Team and Cast



## **Daniel Massarella**

### **Assistant Director of Motionhouse**

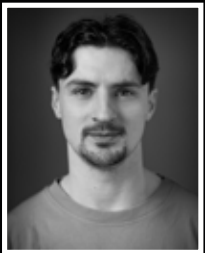
Daniel is from Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, in the UK. After 10 years as a Motionhouse performer, Daniel is now the company's Assistant Director, supporting Artistic Director Kevin Finnan in the delivery of all aspects of our artistic programme.



## **Alex De La Bastide**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

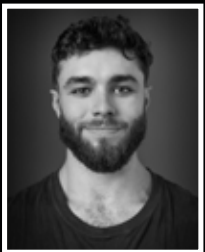
Alex is originally from Northwich in Cheshire, UK. She trained at the Lowry CAT scheme and Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. She joined Motionhouse in June 2021.



## **Olly Bell**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

Olly was born in Leeds, UK. He trained at the Northern Ballet CAT Scheme, Northern School of Contemporary Dance CAT scheme and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Olly joined Motionhouse in 2020.



## **Llewelyn Brown**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

Llewelyn is from Wick, South Wales, UK. He trained at the National Dance Company of Wales Associates Programme and Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. He joined Motionhouse in June 2021.



## **Dylan Davies**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

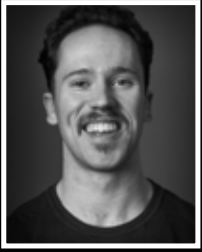
Raised in Shropshire in the UK, Dylan trained at DanceXchange CAT scheme, 2Faced Dance Youth and Northern School of Contemporary Dance. He joined Motionhouse in June 2023.



## **Brima Fullah**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

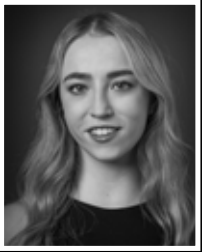
Brima grew up in Cambridge, UK. He trained at National Youth Dance Company in 2014 before furthering his training at London Contemporary Dance School. He joined Motionhouse in January 2024.



## **Blair Moore**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

Originally from the Lake District in the UK, Blair trained at Northern School of Contemporary Dance before training at Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. He joined Motionhouse in summer 2023.



## **Sophie O'Leary**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

Sophie is originally from Cork in Ireland. She trained at Barcelona Dance Centre, Area Jeune Ballet in Geneva and Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. She joined Motionhouse in summer 2023.



## **Beth Pattison**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

Born in Durham, UK, Beth trained at the CAT Programme in Dance City and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. She joined Motionhouse as an apprentice in 2017 before joining full time in 2018.



## **Bethan Probert**

### **Motionhouse dance-circus artist**

Originally from Oxford, UK, Bethan trained at the Trinity Laban CAT scheme before joining the London Contemporary Dance School. Bethan has worked regularly with Motionhouse since 2022.



## **Lil Rice**

### **Soloist Singer**

Lil Rice is a uk-based singer and circus artist. She trained in singing Cyr wheel at the national Centre for circus arts, graduating in 2015 and went on to perform, produce and direct circus. She also has an album with co-writer Ollie Clark. She is based in Oxfordshire with her baby boy and a new circus show called Fools Delight Circus.

The roles of young Æthelstan and Ælfwynn are performed by Sean Andrews and Ebony Chin from Motionhouse Youth.

## **Sophy Smith**

### **Original Score**

Sophy has been working with Motionhouse since composing the soundtrack for Volatile in 2001 and has collaborated with Motionhouse on virtually every production since. In addition to Motionhouse, she has collaborated on a wide range of projects from touring dance and theatre performances to TV and radio commercials, short films, TV documentaries and solo music projects.

## **Andy Hammond**

### **Technical Manager**

Andy's background is in lighting design. Before joining Motionhouse in 2016, he worked with Hofesh Shechter, Joss Arnott, Zoi Dimitriou, Ricochet Dance, Rafael Bonachela & Marie Gabrielle-Rotie. He was also Production Manager for Transitions Dance Company at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.

## **George Pamplin**

### **Technician**

George joined Motionhouse in 2019 and has been part of the technical team for Nobody and Starchitects. He studied Sound Engineering and Production at Birmingham City University and is currently studying for an MSc in Acoustics part time at the University of Salford.

## **Motionhouse Team**

Executive Director Louise Richards  
Programme Producer Victoria Collins  
Programme Manager Tom Ball  
Communications and Development Director Jane Bailey  
Audience Engagement Manager Ellen Dainty  
Head of Creative Learning Hannah Lockyer  
Creative Learning Dance Artist Camilla Lloyd  
Administrator Eileen Liptrot  
Programme Assistant Work Placement Holly Brennan

## **Tamworth Castle Team**

Castle, Museum and Archive Manager Lara Rowe  
Education, Events and Heritage Officer Linda Baker  
Heritage Engagement Co-ordinator Emma Carter  
Communications Officer Anna Toone

## **For All the Small Things**

Heather Jack, Mercian Flag craft activities

# Community Cast

## Motionhouse Youth

Sean Andrews  
Ebony Chin  
Isobel Jo Barber  
Amber Ross  
Indiana Kandola  
Marley Wright  
Scarlet Luisa Burkitt  
Heidi Pearl Rippon

Gracie Pearce  
Ruby Compton  
Evgen Lysenko  
Rubi Russell  
Alfie Williams  
Natalie Thomas  
Indya Ashburn

## Participants from Friary School, Liberty Jamboree and the local community

Jessica Aspley (group leader)  
Lucy Atkins  
Sophie Butler (group Leader)  
Maisie Campbell-Innes  
Roxy Clarke  
Paige Dempster  
Holly Greensill  
Ellie Halden  
Samuel Hammond  
Katie Hammonds  
Chris Hardwick  
Natalie Haslam (group leader)  
Sophia Hill

Olivia Howard-Calder  
Maggie Huckfield (group leader)  
Caroline Humphries  
Evie Jelfs  
Sam Lane (group leader)  
Callie Meakin  
Joshua Orchard  
Ami Radcliffe (group leader)  
Rebekah Smith  
Megan Smith  
Edward Waldron  
Hollie Weston  
Lucianne Williams

## Chess Players from Tamworth Chess Club

Alfie  
Alaric

Dale  
Mircea-Marius

Tamworth Chess Club, the current Cannock League champions, meet every Thursday from 7.30pm at Tamworth Rugby Club. New members are always welcome. For further information, see the website: [tamworthchess.co.uk](http://tamworthchess.co.uk) or contact the Secretary, Peter Oliver on [pjroliver@btinternet.com](mailto:pjroliver@btinternet.com)

A special thank you to St Editha's Parish Church for providing the tables for the chess games.



# Mercian Flag Makers

The giant Mercian flag has been created by 14 local community groups in Tamworth, led by the brilliant Missfit Creations and is made entirely from fabric that was on the way to landfill.

A special shout out to Andy Deeley of Tweedle Entertainments and 6th Tamworth Scout Group for the incredible fabric donation. Also to Heide Goody, Samantha Monarch, John Murphy, Rosie Bell and Kaden Bell for all their help!

## Debbie Murphy of Missfit Creations Flag Creative Co-ordinator

### Flag contributors

Tamworth Wellbeing and Cancer Support Centre  
Tamworth Soroptomists  
UpCreative CIC  
Community Together CIC  
Cohort 4 Women  
Dementia Caring Time Out Club  
The Mending Circle  
Tamworth Auxilliary  
Tamworth Guides, Brownies and Rainbows  
Coton Green Women's Group  
St Andrew's Methodis Church  
Sacred Heart Craft Group  
The Crafty Tappers  
Gather & Stitch



# Rehearsal Photos





# Community cast rehearsals





# Tell us what you thought of the show!

If you watch Forging the King, we'd love to know what you thought! We'd be really grateful if you could spare a couple of minutes to fill in our quick and easy online survey!

[Tap here to tell us what you thought](#)



Forging the King is supported by Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership and Tamworth Borough Council.







**Motionhouse**



**Tamworth**  
Borough Council

[www.motionhouse.co.uk](http://www.motionhouse.co.uk)

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