

INSIDE  STORY

# A MEDIEVAL CASTLE

FIONA MACDONALD MARK BERGIN

*Frederic R. Durgee Junior High School  
Baldwinsville, New York  
# 23755*



PETER BEDRICK BOOKS  
NEW YORK

1990

# THE MAKING OF A KNIGHT



Leaving home

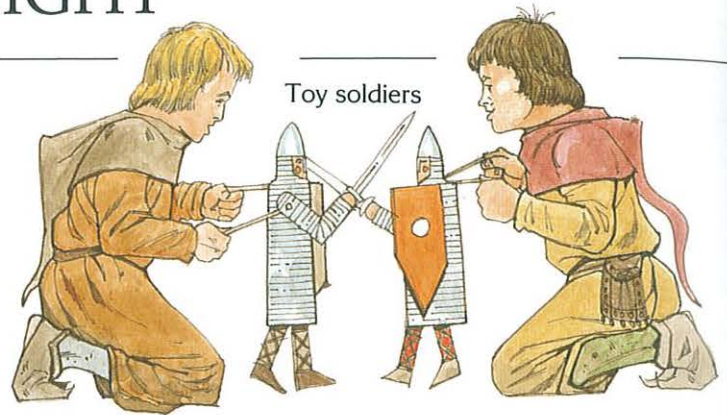
The skeleton of Sir Bartholomew Burghersh, who died in 1369, has been examined by archaeologists. They found that the bones of his right arm (his sword arm) were thicker and

longer than his left arm. He had also suffered minor injuries in his fighting career – cracked ribs, damaged elbows and a badly twisted ankle, but no serious injuries.

It took many years' training to become a knight. A young boy from a wealthy family might be sent away to serve as a page in a noble household when he was about eight years old. He would live in the castle with other boys, under the care of a schoolmaster. They would learn good manners and social skills including singing, dancing and playing chess. They would also be taught to read and write, and some French and Latin, too.

Soon after he arrived at the castle, the young page would learn how to ride, and how to move easily when weighed down by heavy armour. He played games like tag and wrestling to build up his strength. Later, he was taught how to strike blows with a real sword, and parry them with his shield, and how to handle a heavy, pointed lance.

While they were being educated at the castle, the boys would hear tales of famous knights,



Toy soldiers

Children from wealthy families were taught to read while they were living in the castle. Reading was often a shared activity, not a private one as it is today, since medieval people usually spoke the words out loud as they read them.

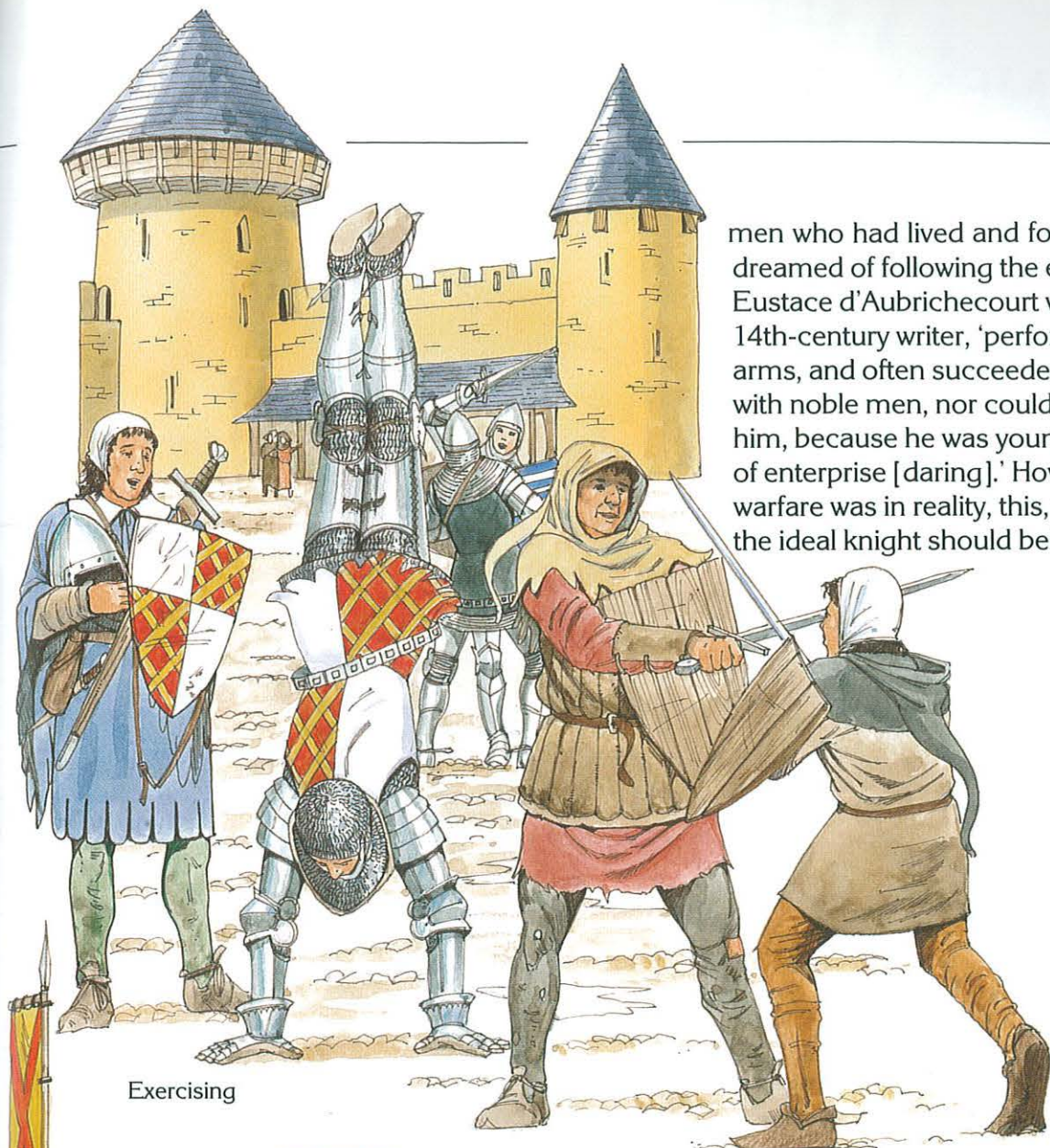
Below  
**Knights** tried to knock their enemies off their horses with a single blow from a lance. Boys practised using a lance by riding at a quintain, a shield and a straw filled sack fastened to opposite ends of a pivoted beam. If he did not hit the shield in the middle and get out of the way quickly the sack would hit him as it swung round.



Learning to read



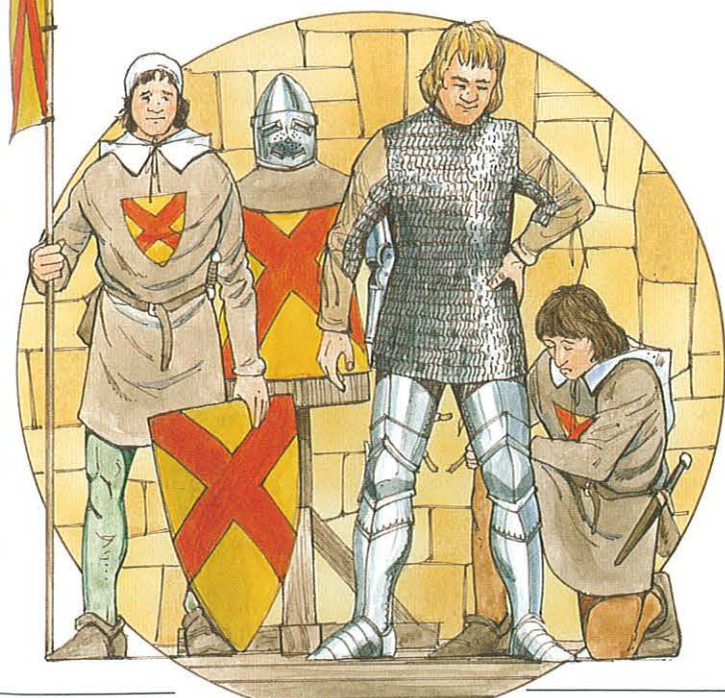
Quintain



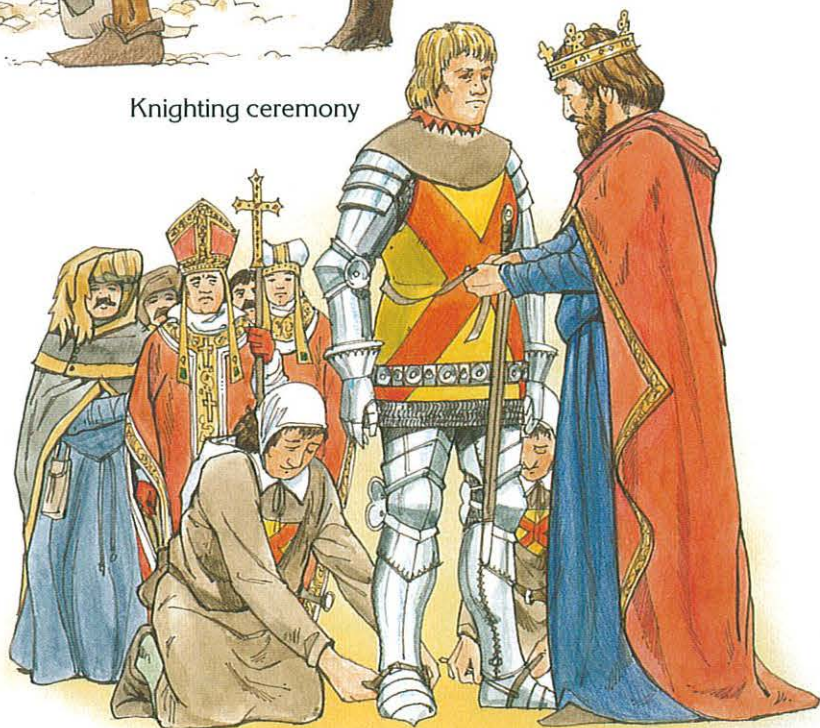
Exercising

men who had lived and fought years ago. They dreamed of following the example of heroes like Eustace d'Aubrichcourt who, in the words of one 14th-century writer, 'performed many fine feats of arms, and often succeeded in knightly combat with noble men, nor could any one stand up to him, because he was young, deeply in love and full of enterprise [daring].' However brutal medieval warfare was in reality, this, they believed, was how the ideal knight should behave.

Below  
**Knights** were created in different ways: a king might encourage his followers by knighting them before a battle, or sometimes afterwards, to reward men who had fought bravely. Young men who had been trained from childhood in a noble household could be created knights in a special ceremony, which included an overnight vigil, a ritual bath and an oath of loyalty to the new knight's lord and to his king.



Getting dressed for battle practice



Knighting ceremony