

# Storm the Castle

Second edition

**A reading/spelling board game  
set in medieval times.**

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Jeanne Wherrett, 1996

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Jeanne Wherrett, 2010

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# 1. Introduction

**Storm the Castle** is a reading/spelling trivia game set in medieval England. It is part of a series of books, games and computer programs designed to teach and/or reinforce basic skills in reading and spelling.

Finding an enjoyable way to practise basic skills is very important. With an approach based on comic strips (e.g. *Take Off with Reading*), games, interactive computer programs and short, enjoyable books, children can master these key skills, enjoying both the learning process and the competence that it gives them. (See Rationale.) Older students who have difficulties with reading and spelling also enjoy playing **Storm the Castle**. It is an ideal resource for a teacher's aide or volunteer to use with a small group of students.

As well as teaching and practising reading and spelling skills, **Storm the Castle** gives a lot of interesting information about life in Europe, particularly Britain, in the Middle Ages (about AD 400 to the 1500s, including the Anglo-Saxon Period in Britain). Playing **Storm the Castle** also involves the use of strategy and logic.

The pictures on the password cards vary from simplified line drawings (black and white or coloured) based on authentic medieval art, to sections of the art itself (see the appendix on copyright information). Some are original line drawings (2010).

## Rationale

Lack of knowledge of vowel sounds is a very common cause of reading and spelling difficulties. Children who have problems with reading often only look at the first and last letters of a word and guess the middle part. This frequently causes them to lose the meaning of what they are reading. Also, some students may have trouble actually hearing, or at least identifying, the vowel sound in the middle of a word.

**Storm the Castle** concentrates on this area of difficulty with vowel sounds, teaching and practising the most usual sounds made by common combinations of letters. Once children are comfortable with the usual sounds made by these letters, they will be better able to notice and tackle exceptions.

It is very important for older students who are experiencing difficulties with reading and spelling to have methods of practising key skills in a way that is not seen as childish. **Storm the Castle** was designed specifically to meet this need.

**Storm the Castle** practises the common sounds made by single vowels, a vowel and a silent "e" and vowel sounds made by combinations of two or three letters. This, and the ability to blend letters keeping the sounds in order, are fundamental skills in learning to read and spell correctly. They are skills which are very hard to teach older students, particularly in a socially acceptable way, if they have missed acquiring them at the critical early stage of learning to read and spell. **Storm the Castle** provides a means to do this which older students enjoy.

## **A note to parents and teachers**

Over time, as you play the game with your children or students, you will be able to check that they know the usual sounds made by all of the combinations of letters used; see page 9 and/or the sheet "Words on Cards". Often students will know "er" but will not realise that "ir" and "ur" make the same sound. Similarly, they may know "or" but not "aw" and "au". They may not realise the difference that adding a silent "e" makes to a vowel sound.

Make sure that both you and your students say the sound (short sound) for any vowel, not its name, when it occurs on its own and without a silent "e". E.g., for hat, talk about the "a" sound, not "A" as in hate.

When you talk about the combinations of letters used in this game **always** talk about the sound made by the letters, do not spell them out. E.g., talk about the sound "oy" (as in boy); do not say the names of the letters "O", "Y".

Sometimes there may be variation in the way words are pronounced, e.g. dance. The "a" in dance can have the same sound as "a" in cat or "ar" in cart. If this causes a problem, just explain that many people say "dance" with an "a" sound as in cat.

When students play **Storm the Castle** they learn and/or practise how to read and spell vowel sounds. They also pick up other phonic skills, such as blending sounds together, keeping them in order, incidentally in an enjoyable way.

For younger children, you may like to remove some cards, e.g. murder and flames/stake, and perhaps bed.

## 2. Rules of the Game

**Storm the Castle** is a reading/spelling trivia game set in medieval England - a time of chivalry and adventure, kings, lords and peasants, of legends, dragons and noble deeds.

Two, three or four players may play this game.

### **Aim:**

In **Storm the Castle** each player tries to capture the flag from the castle and return to one of the starting points before someone else captures the flag from him or her.

### **Equipment:**

From the material provided you should have, or be able to make up, the game board, five playing pieces, the flag, four packs of coloured password cards, eight barter tokens, eight boards on which to keep your cards organised, one copy of the list "Words on Cards" and a book of instructions and interesting information. You will need to supply a die.

### **Getting started:**

Stand the flag in the black playing piece and place this on the yellow square in the centre of the castle. This part of the castle is called the "keep". Each player chooses a playing piece and places it on the starting circle with the matching colour around it.

Each player also has two "barter tokens" (or one token for the short game) and two organising boards (boards 1 and 2). There is a copy of the sheet "Words on Cards" to share.

Shuffle the packs of password cards and place each pack **face up** on the game board.

Everyone throws the die. The player with the highest score starts. The player to his or her left goes next ...

### **Sheriff's checkpoints:**

The sheriff has his men guarding the roads. The sheriff's checkpoints are squares with coloured borders with a letter or letters in them. These letters match the sounds on the cards.

### **Picking up cards:**

If you land on a yellow square (or white, blue or pink), pick up the top yellow (white, ...) card from the pile.

### **Identifying a card:**

A clue is given on each card. The ☆ shows where a **sound** is missing. You must identify the sound.

The missing sound may be made by:

- (a) one letter, e.g. fl☆g
- (b) two or three letters together,  
e.g. m☆t = moat, f☆t = fight
- (c) one letter and a silent "e",  
e.g. g☆t = gate

If you are not sure what the picture on a yellow card is, look at the yellow checkpoints or your organising boards to see what sound could be missing.

If you still cannot work it out, look at the list of words for the yellow cards on "Words on Cards". To help you, the words for each sound are in alphabetical order.

All passwords must be on the list of "Words on Cards". Check if someone challenges your word.

### **Organise !**

Each time you pick up a card put it in the right place on one of your organising boards and keep it there until you need it. Check that the colour of the card matches the colour shown on the organising board.

### **Information about cards:**

Extra information about some of the cards (an unusual word, story or activity from medieval times) is given in chapter 4, "Life in Medieval Times. Information about some of the password cards."

### **Starting circles:**

If you land back on a starting circle, pick up a white card. You can go through the starting circles if you wish.

### **Throwing a six:**

If you throw a six, do not have another turn.

### **Same square:**

Two or more players may land on the same square. Their playing pieces are stacked on top of each other. Each player moves off individually on his or her next turn.

### **Going through a checkpoint:**

If you want to go through, or land on, one of the sheriff's checkpoints (a square with a letter or letters), **you must have a card with the right password.** Any card with a picture that contains the sound shown on the checkpoint is all right. E.g. either "throne" or "roast" would let you go through the "o\_e/oa" checkpoint.

Be careful! To go through a yellow (blue, ...) checkpoint you must have a yellow (blue, ...) card. E.g., you may not go through the "u" checkpoint (white) with a "u\_e" card (yellow).

As you go through a checkpoint, return the password card to the bottom of its pile.

### **If you do not go through a checkpoint:**

You do not have to go through a checkpoint if you do not want to.

You may not go through the checkpoint if you do not have the right password card.

If you are not going through a checkpoint, you may move up to it and back away again on your turn. You may move up to and away from more than one checkpoint on your turn if you are able to.

### **Landing on a checkpoint:**

If you land directly on a pink (or white, ...) checkpoint, pick up a pink (white, ...) card. You may use this immediately as your password card if it contains the sound shown on the checkpoint. Otherwise, keep this card and return a correct password card to the bottom of the pink (white, ...) pile.

## **Capturing the flag:**

If you throw the exact number to land directly on the flag you capture it. Remove the black playing piece from the board and stand the flag in your playing piece. Once you have the flag you must try to get back to any one of the starting circles with it.

You can only get into or out of the castle across the drawbridges (yellow "squares"). The moat is too deep and the walls too high to get in any other way. You may land on a drawbridge if you wish.

If another player throws the **exact** number to land on you, he captures the flag. You must then try to recapture the flag from him or her before he or she gets back to a starting circle ...

If more than one playing piece is on any square, the player who possesses the flag has his or her piece on the top of the stack of playing pieces.

## **Bartering:**

At various times during the Middle Ages bartering was common. This involved exchanging goods instead of using money.

In **Storm the Castle** players sometimes get trapped. They find they cannot get the right password card to proceed. If this happens to you, you may like to do some bartering.

If you have a "barter token" you may use it and any **four other cards** instead of the card you need to go through a checkpoint. Place the four cards on the bottom of their appropriate piles and take the barter token out of play. E.g., you may go through an "oy/oi" checkpoint using any four cards and a barter token instead of an "oy/oi" card. Alternatively, you may negotiate a smaller number, or no other cards, with younger children.

You are **not allowed** to barter to go through an "ow/ou" checkpoint to get **into the castle**, but there is a friendly guard who will let you get out that way.

Also, you are **not allowed** to barter to go through the **last checkpoint** to finish the game. E.g., you may not barter to go through the "u" or "a" checkpoints to get back to the red starting circle to finish the game.

## The winner:

The first player to get back to **any** of the starting circles with the flag is the winner. You do not need to throw the exact number to land on a starting circle to finish the game. In the **short game** the first player to capture the flag wins.

## Hint:

“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread”. It may be wise to plan your escape route before entering the castle. Perhaps you need to collect enough pink cards to get away from the castle before you enter it.

## Storm the Castle **Cooperative Game:**

You will need

- an extra die with four colour sides and two flags
- only one set of organising boards

Aim

All players work as a team to try to capture the flag. The flag is captured, and the players win, when any of the players lands on the flag. The castle wins if the flag bearer (black playing piece with the flag) escapes to one of the starting corners.

How to play

Most rules are the same as the regular game, but with the following variations.

Players take turns to roll the two dice. If a colour square is rolled on the colour/flag die, the player moves his or her playing piece the number of squares shown on the number die. Pick up the top blue card if the playing piece lands on a blue square, etc. Put this card in the appropriate place on the communal organising boards.

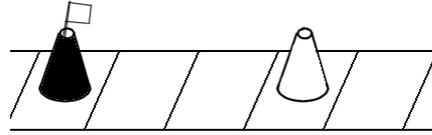
When two playing pieces reach the circle around the castle (the path with the “oo” and “oy/oi” checkpoints) the flag bearer is allowed to join the play.

If a “flag” is rolled before the flag bearer is allowed to move, the player must retreat the number of squares shown.

If a “flag” is rolled after the flag bearer is allowed to move, move the flag playing piece (the flag bearer) the appropriate number of squares. The flag bearer must leave the castle as soon as possible.

The flag bearer cannot land on top of another playing piece, but it can jump over it.

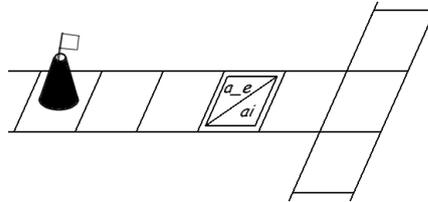
E.g., the flag bearer cannot move if a 3 is thrown. He misses a turn. If a 4 is thrown, the flag bearer may jump over the other player's piece and land one square past it.



Once the flag bearer has left the castle, he must move towards the nearest corner if that is possible. Alternatively, coopt a passing adult to choose which direction the flag moves.

The flag bearer does not need to use password cards to get through the sheriff's checkpoints because the sheriff owns the castle, but he must stop to identify himself.

E.g., if a "flag" and a 3, 4, 5 or 6 is thrown, the flag bearer only moves to the checkpoint on that turn.



### Some notes about the checkpoints:

(1) A single vowel on its own **must** say the (short) sound of the vowel not its name.

E.g., "a" in "hat".

(2) Only **one sound** is written at each checkpoint even though it may be spelled in more than one way.

E.g., the "EE" sound in "queen" and "team".

However, the two different sounds made by "oo" are both used, e.g. in "food" and "wood". Also, "u\_e" can make two slightly different sounds, e.g. in "tune" and "plume".

(3) A dash means that a letter is missing.

E.g., "a\_e" says the name of the letter "A" as in "gate".

### Some notes about the password cards:

(1) Clues are given on the cards. A star means that one of the sounds on the sheriff's checkpoints is missing. You need to look at the picture, the colour and the clue to check that you have the right answer. Check the list of "Words on Cards" if necessary.

(2) Remember that if the word contains a silent "e", the silent "e" is not written on the password card.

E.g., g☆t = gate.

The silent "e" is written on both the game board and the organising board and it is part of the spelling of the sound that you have to work out.

## **A summary of vowel sounds used in Storm the Castle**

### **White cards:**

One vowel on its own usually says its (short) sound.

E.g., "a" in hat, "e" in tent, "i" in fish, "o" in lock, "u" in cut.

### **Yellow cards:**

To make a vowel say its name you usually have to do something special to it:

(1) Add a second vowel.

E.g., "ai" in aim, "ay" in play, "ee" in queen, "ea" in team, "oa" in boat. (Remember that "y" can be a vowel, eg. in fly and funny but not in yes.)

(2) Add a silent "e" to the end of the word.

E.g., "a\_e" in gate, "i\_e" in ride, "o\_e" in rope, "u\_e" in cube or prune.

(3) Add a silent "gh" to the "i", e.g., "igh" in light.

### **Blue cards:**

(1) "er" in herd, "ir" in stir, "ur" in church

(2) "ar" in farm

(3) "or" in fork, "aw" in saw, "au" in gauntlet

### **Pink cards:**

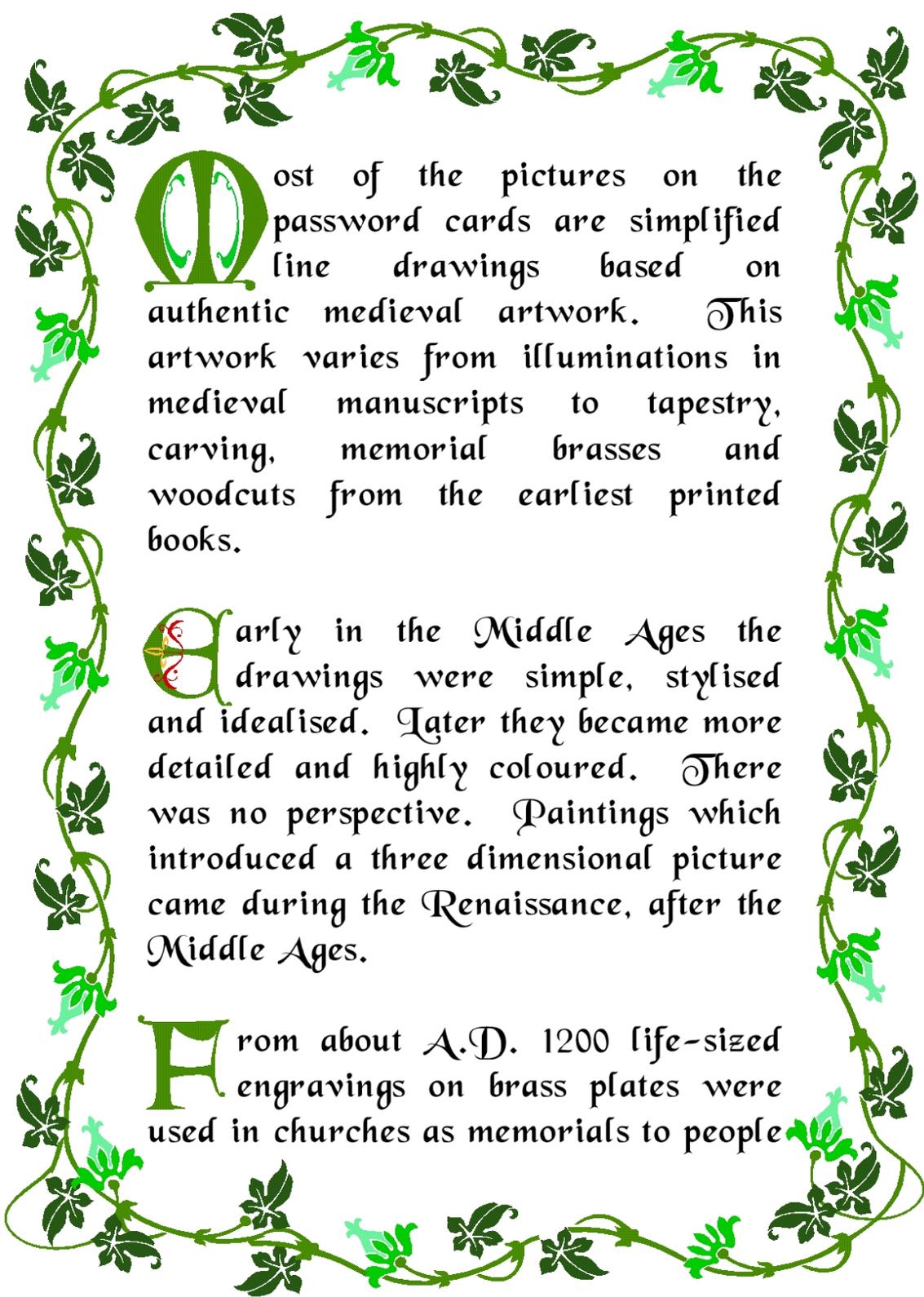
(1) "oo" in book or food

(2) "oy" in toy, "oi" in noise

(3) "ow" in town, "ou" in house

**Note:** Some cards also contain silent letters: kneel, knife, knight, write

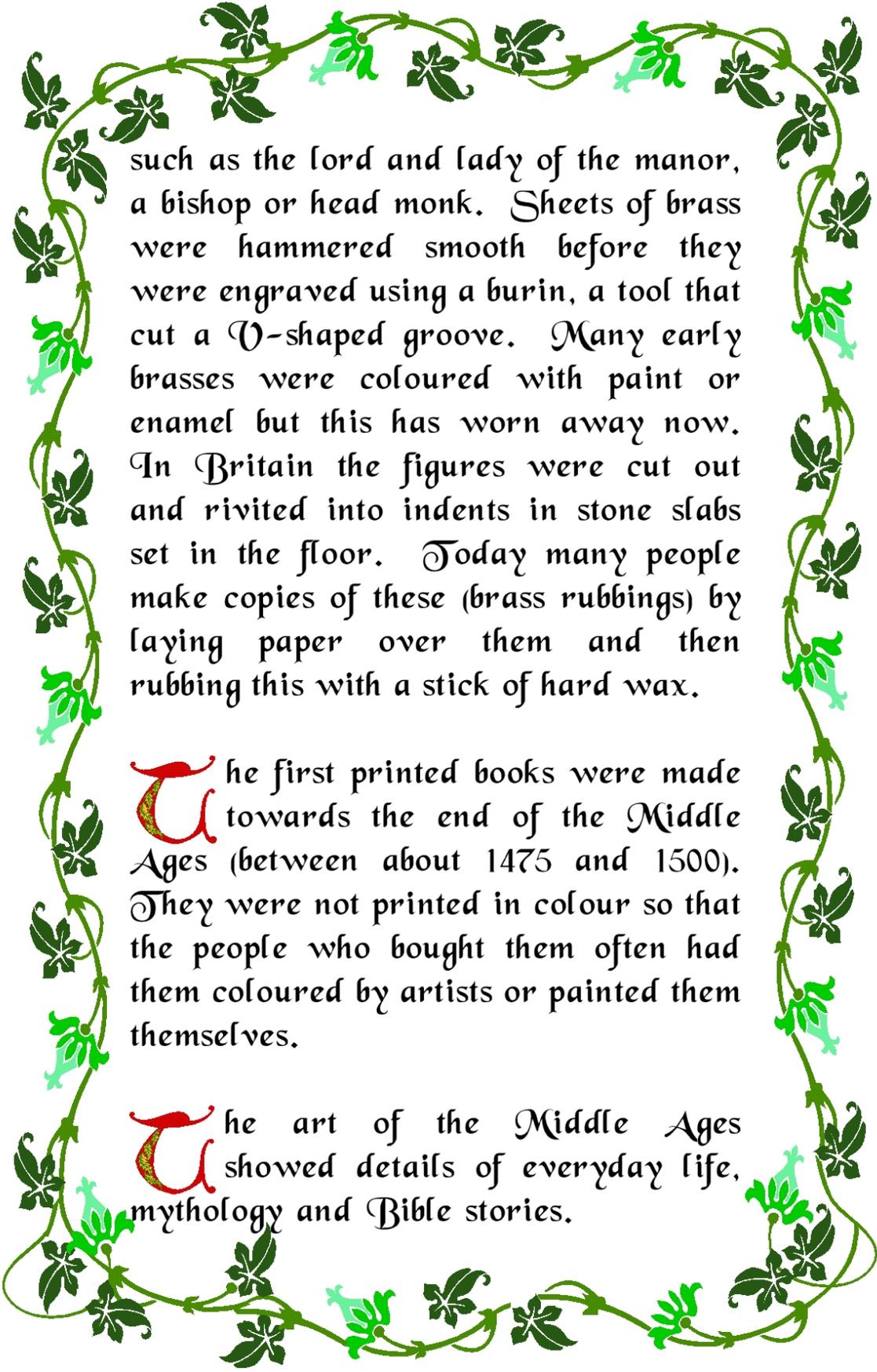
### 3. Medieval Artwork



**M**ost of the pictures on the password cards are simplified line drawings based on authentic medieval artwork. This artwork varies from illuminations in medieval manuscripts to tapestry, carving, memorial brasses and woodcuts from the earliest printed books.

**E**arly in the Middle Ages the drawings were simple, stylised and idealised. Later they became more detailed and highly coloured. There was no perspective. Paintings which introduced a three dimensional picture came during the Renaissance, after the Middle Ages.

**F**rom about A.D. 1200 life-sized engravings on brass plates were used in churches as memorials to people



such as the lord and lady of the manor, a bishop or head monk. Sheets of brass were hammered smooth before they were engraved using a burin, a tool that cut a U-shaped groove. Many early brasses were coloured with paint or enamel but this has worn away now. In Britain the figures were cut out and riveted into indents in stone slabs set in the floor. Today many people make copies of these (brass rubbings) by laying paper over them and then rubbing this with a stick of hard wax.

**T**he first printed books were made towards the end of the Middle Ages (between about 1475 and 1500). They were not printed in colour so that the people who bought them often had them coloured by artists or painted them themselves.

**T**he art of the Middle Ages showed details of everyday life, mythology and Bible stories.

## **4. Life in Medieval Times.**

### **Information about some of the password cards.**

#### **Aim:**

The English longbow was as tall as a man. The arrow was about half that length and was usually fletched with goose feathers. The bowman had to be very strong to pull the string so that the arrow came back to his ear.

Archery practice and competition at the "butts" was popular from the thirteenth century. English longbowmen became the best archers in Europe.

During the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) the English longbowmen could shoot four or five arrows while the French crossbowmen were loading and shooting one bolt with their crossbows.

#### **Archers:**

This picture is from the Bayeux Tapestry which depicts the invasion of England by William of Normandy in 1066. (For more information about the Bayeux Tapestry see "church", "fight" and "torch". For more information about the longbow see "aim".)

#### **Army:**

Ludovico il Moro was regent of Milan (a city in Northern Italy). He was responsible for starting the war between Italy and France. At another northern Italian city, Novara, in 1500, the Italian and French armies both had many Swiss mercenaries (soldiers who were paid to fight). The Swiss refused to fight each other. The French king agreed to let Ludovico's Swiss soldiers go. They tried to disguise Ludovico and smuggle him out with them, but he was recognised. Ludovico's Swiss mercenaries are shown on the left handing him over to the French army on the right.

**Bagpipes:**

The picture shows a bagpipe player leading an army of Irish fighters.

**Barn:**

Peasants had to give some of their produce to the lord of the manor as rent for their land. They also had to give some to the church.

Tithe barns were huge barns used for storing the tithes. A tenth of every farmer's produce had to be given to the church. This was very unpopular – it made the church very rich and a lot of the grain would have been eaten by rats and wasted.

**Bed:**

Castles and manor houses were cold and draughty. The lord and lady's bed had a curtain around it to help keep them warm.

The picture of the bed on the card shows the birth of King Louis the 8<sup>th</sup> of France.

**Bees:**

It was important to catch bees when they swarmed. Honey was the only sweetener that most people had in the Middle Ages. (See also "hive".)

**Bell:**

In the Middle Ages people did not understand what caused leprosy. They were very frightened of it because it caused permanent disfigurement and physical disabilities. People who had leprosy had to wear special clothes, ring a bell or shake clappers to warn people to keep away, not touch other people and live in special colonies called leprosaria. They were not allowed to touch food in the marketplace, but had to point to what they wanted with a staff.

**Bird:**

Falcons were trained to kill small birds and animals and return to their owners with them. Each falconer wore a leather glove to protect himself from the falcon's sharp claws. He covered his falcon's head with a small leather hood so that it could not see anything until the right time.

**Blacksmith:**

The village that belonged to each manor had its own blacksmith with his forge. The blacksmith put a piece of metal in the fire and blew air on the fire with bellows to make it very hot. The red hot metal was then put on an anvil and beaten into shape with a hammer.

The blacksmith made and repaired tools, horseshoes, nails and other metal things for everyday use. Putting shoes on horses was very important during the Middle Ages. William the Conqueror introduced this into England.

**Boat:**

The coracle was a small oval-shaped boat made in Ireland, Wales and western England. It had a frame like a basket which was covered with skins and tallow (the fat from meat). Coracles are still used today but are covered with canvas and tar.

**Book:**

In 1086, William the Conqueror ordered a survey to be made of all of England. He wanted to find out how much tax he should be paid and how many knights he had to fight for him.

His men made a list of the amount of land held by each lord, how it was used, the number of ploughs, oxen and sheep and how the land was shared among the villagers.

This was recorded in the Domesday Book. It was called the Domesday Book because the information was supposed to be as accurate as the information that would be used at the Last Judgement on Doomsday or Domesday.

**Bridge:**

The drawbridge over the moat around a castle could be pulled up to make it harder for attackers to get into the castle.

**Candle:**

In the Middle Ages only rich people could afford wax candles. Poor people used tallow candles or rushlights. Rushlights were made by stripping reeds to the pith and soaking them in oil.

Tallow candles were called "dips". Tallow was beef or mutton fat separated from the meat scraps by heating. Strands of yarn were dipped in the melted fat and allowed to cool. This was repeated until the candle was thick enough to use.

Wax candles were made by pouring melted beeswax over a wick that was hanging up. This was done many times and then the candle was rolled on a hard surface to get rid of any bumps.

**Cards:**

By the fourteenth century card games were played in Europe for gambling. Cards were also used for fortune telling.

**Carve:**

Stone-carvers carved decorations for the tops of stone pillars in churches. Other stone carvings on churches told of the life of Christ and the saints. They were the poor man's bible. Churches were like encyclopaedias, as well as Bibles, because there were also many carvings of events and ideas of the times. There were many wood carvings in churches too. Wooden screens, benches and choir stalls were covered in carvings of saints and lacy patterns.

Scenes and stories about everyday life were carved on the underneath of the hinged choir stalls called "misericords". The name came from the Latin word *misericordia* which meant "pity". People had pity on the priests who had to stand for hours through the long services. They could lean against the edge of the seats above the carvings when the seats were up.

## **Chain mail:**

Chain mail, also known just as mail, was used to make armour. (See also “coil”.) It was very expensive because it took a long time to make. A mail shirt that came down to the knees was called a “hauberk”, a hood was called a “coif” and mittens were called “mitons”.

The small coloured picture is from the Morgan Bible (see also “tent”) and shows King David rejecting King Saul’s armour before he fought Goliath. David, from the Bible story, is pictured wearing medieval style clothes. It also shows how hard it was to take off a “hauberk”.

## **Charge:**

This picture is from the Bayeux Tapestry which depicts the invasion of England by William of Normandy in 1066. (For more information about the Bayeux Tapestry see “church”, “fight” and “torch”.)

## **Chess:**

During the Middle Ages people often played board games. It was part of the duties of a squire (knight in training) to entertain the ladies in the noble's family. He would often play chess, backgammon, draughts or dice with them.

Chess probably started in India. The Arabs introduced it to Europe. "Check mate" sounds like the Arabic words for "the king is dead". Men played chess during the crusades but it had been introduced into Europe before that. Chess was played in Italy as early as the eleventh century. It spread all over Europe. The Vikings probably learned chess in Constantinople (now Istanbul in present-day Turkey) and then took it wherever they went.

**Church:**

Edward the Confessor, who was king of England, had Westminster Abbey built. On the Bayeux Tapestry the "finger of God" is pointing at the church to show that it had been consecrated. Edward died a week after the church was consecrated. (For more about the Bayeux Tapestry see "fight" and "torch".)

Edward did not have any children, so his brother-in-law, Harold, became king. William, Duke of Normandy (in present-day France), thought that he should be king so he invaded England. William defeated Harold at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and became William 1 (William the Conqueror) of England.

**Churn:**

Butter was made in wooden churns. Women used the cream that rose to the top of the milk when it was left standing.

**Claws or paw:**

Bear-baiting was a cruel sport but it was very popular. A bear was chained to a stake and attacked by dogs. Men liked to gamble on this and many other games and sports in the Middle Ages. Bull-baiting was also popular.

**Cloister:**

Monks gave up all of their possessions and promised never to marry and to obey the rules of the order. They lived in monasteries which were self-contained with their own bakery, brewery, fish ponds, kitchen garden, herb garden, etc.

The cloister was the covered walkway next to the church. It usually ran around the side of an open court and was the centre of monastery life. The monks walked and read in the cloister. Manuscripts were slowly and carefully copied and beautifully illustrated and the novices were taught there. On saints' days slow processions moved along the cloister.

## **Coat of arms:**

When knights were dressed in their armour they all looked the same, so each knight had a special picture or pattern of his own called his coat of arms. It was painted on his shield and stitched on his tunic and flags and on his horse's protective covering.

Many colours, patterns, symbols, real or imaginary animals, birds, flowers, leaves, sun, moon, stars, castles, ... , were used in the complicated system of coats of arms called heraldry.

During the crusades knights often just used a cross on their shields and tunics. "Crusade" means "war of the cross". The crusades were fought to try to win back the Holy Land (Palestine) from the Saracens (Muslims). The First Crusade started in 1096 and the Eighth Crusade ended in 1271.

## **Coil:**

Mail armour was made by winding thick iron wire around an instrument called a mandril. This made a coil which was cut into rings using a sharp chisel. The ends of the rings were overlapped and then flattened and holes put in them. Each ring was linked to four other rings and the ends joined together with a rivet.

There could be 100,000 rings in a mail shirt. The armourer used a pattern like a knitting pattern, increasing and decreasing to get the right shape. Hoods, mittens and leg coverings were also made. (See also "chain mail".)

Mail armour was comfortable and easy to move in but it did not give enough protection from spears, arrows or a mace (a war club with a spiked metal head). It was used until about 1350 when it was gradually replaced by plate armour.

## **Coin:**

To make a coin a blank piece of metal was put between two metal "dies" which had the pattern engraved on them. The top die was then struck with a hammer so the pattern came out on the coin. Coins were made of gold or silver.

After the Norman Conquest in 1066, there were about 70 mints (places where coins were made) in different towns in Britain. Edward I, who was king from 1272 to 1307, set up the Royal Mint in the Tower of London. There were still six mints in Britain by the end of the fifteenth century.

This penny could have been struck during the reign of any of the first three Edwards (1272-1377) because practically the same die was used for all of them.

### **Cooper:**

Barrels were made by coopers. Coopers had to be very skilful to make barrels that did not leak or let any air in. They heated and steamed the oak boards to bend them into shape. Then they hammered iron hoops around the boards to hold them in place.

### **Crook:**

This figure of a bishop holding his crook is a chess piece made from ivory or walrus tooth in the Middle Ages. (See also "chess".)

Shepherds have a crook to rescue sheep. A bishop has a crook to show that he is to be a shepherd to his flock (his people).

### **Cross:**

In early Saxon times, travelling monks prayed and taught the scriptures at a large stone cross in the village. These crosses were covered with relief carvings of Christian symbols and scenes from Bible stories. Later on, churches were built.

### **Crowd:**

The Black Death (plague) killed over a third of all the people in England. Because there were not as many peasants to work the land, some people offered higher wages. Laws that stopped the peasants from moving to other places to earn these higher wages made them very unhappy.

In 1380 King Richard II made everyone in England pay another tax. This was the last straw that caused the Peasants' Revolt. In

1381 more than 100,000 angry peasants marched on London. They killed many people and destroyed many buildings.

The peasants demanded to meet the king. The king promised to make serfs free. Their leader, Wat Tyler, demanded more rights and was killed. The king did not keep his promise but serfdom died out naturally over the next 150 years anyway because landlords found it was better to set their serfs free and hire men to work for them.

The idea that all men were created equal was also taught during the Peasants' Revolt. For centuries before that people had believed that some people were born to rule.

The medieval artist showed the crowd wearing armour because this was symbolic of an army. The peasants would really have been wearing their rough clothes.

### **Crown:**

This picture shows the coronation of Charlemagne.

Charlemagne, whose name means Charles the Great, lived from AD 742 to 814. He was the most famous ruler in Europe in the Middle Ages. He conquered much of western and central Europe and he helped revive art, religion and culture.

### **Crutch:**

In the Middle Ages people accepted poverty and disease as a normal part of life. Beggars were common. Town councils usually tried to stop them from coming into the towns but the church asked people to give to the poor.

### **Cube:**

Huge blocks of stone were split and sawn into cubes and similar shapes by stone-masons. The blocks were used to build churches, castles, rich people's houses and town walls.

**Cut:**

When a man became a monk or a friar, the bishop or the abbot, who was the head of the abbey (monastery), cut his hair in a "tonsure". His head was shaved except for a fringe all around. This reminded him of the crown of thorns on Jesus Christ's head when he was crucified. Also slaves in Roman times had their heads shaved, so shaving his head showed that a man was giving up his freedom and all of his possessions when he became a monk.

**Dance:**

William Kempe was a famous English comic actor and dancer who morris danced from London to Norwich (over 100 miles / 161 kilometres). It took him nine days spread over several weeks. He wrote a book about this called *Nine Days Wonder* published in 1600. The picture is the frontispiece for that book.

Morris dancing is a very vigorous type of English folk dancing that goes back at least to the mid 1400s, in which a group of men (nowadays also women) waved handkerchiefs, ribbons or brightly coloured scarves and/or clapped sticks as they danced. They had bells tied to their legs, below their knees, which they played by stamping their feet and kicking energetically. Originally the music was played by a pipe, a pipe and tabor, or the bagpipe. It was often part of the May Day celebrations (see "flowers").

**Destroy:**

Armies in the Middle Ages were not very well paid. When a town or village was captured, the soldiers looted it. They stole wine and anything valuable that could be taken away. They also destroyed many other things. This happened a lot in wars in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Also, in the early Middle Ages, the Vikings had come in their longships to kill, steal and destroy. These "Northmen" came from Scandinavia. They conquered much of England, Scotland and Ireland; Iceland and part of Greenland; Sicily and part of Italy and Normandy (in present-day France). (See also "rune stone".)

**Doctor:**

Doctors in the Middle Ages thought that impurities in the blood made people sick. They "bled" patients by cutting them and letting the blood run into a basin, or they put leaches on them, so that the impurities would come out with the blood. This only made people worse. Often barbers bled people.

Monks and "wise women" used herbs to make medicine for sick people.

**Drum:**

In the Middle Ages the pipe and tabor were commonly used together. The tabor was a small drum that was played with a single drumstick.

**Elephant:**

Henry I, who was king from 1100 to 1135, started a "menagerie", a collection of unusual animals. This was later moved to the Tower of London. In the thirteenth century the king of France gave Henry III an elephant. Henry also had three leopards and a polar bear that used to fish in the River Thames tied to a rope.

**Farm:**

Farm land was divided up into estates called manors. A manor was controlled by a lord and worked by peasants.

Some of the peasants had a share of the strips of land in the large open fields. These strips were in various parts of the fields so that everyone had a share of the good soil and the poor soil. The peasants did not own the land. They farmed the lord's land for two or three days a week, helped in the harvest and gave him some produce, as rent for their land. The strips were separated from each other by a mound of dirt thrown up by the plough.

The strips were usually about a "furlong" in length (220 yards, about 200 metres, a "furrow long"). This was as far as oxen would pull a plough without needing a rest.

Most manors had three large fields. Each year one field grew wheat (for bread), one grew barley (for ale) and one was left fallow (resting). Some oats, rye, beans, peas and vetches (a kind of pea fed to the animals) were also grown in the wheat and barley fields. The crops were rotated (grown in different fields each year) so that the soil would stay fertile. A temporary fence was put up around each field in summer to keep animals out of the crops. Peasants also had cottage gardens around their huts.

Animals grazed on the common land and the fallow field. The meadow land was cut for hay.

The king owned all of the land. He "gave" some to his barons in return for military service. Each baron had manors in many parts of the country so he "gave" some to knights who each had one manor. Each "lord of the manor" gave a few strips of land each to the villeins (peasants). This system in which every person had a duty to his overlord in return for the use of the land, as well as justice and protection, is called feudalism.

### **Fence:**

Fences were often made by weaving sticks called "wattles" around posts. The wattles were usually thin willow stems which could be bent easily.

### **Fight:**

In 1066 William the Conqueror came from Normandy, in present-day France, to England with his army. He defeated the English, who were led by King Harold, at the Battle of Hastings. (For more information see "church".)

The story is told on the Bayeux Tapestry. This "tapestry" is 231 feet (70.5 metres) long and 20 inches (50.8 cm) wide. It shows about seventy two scenes and is embroidered in eight colours.

**Flag:**

In 1337 Edward III "quartered" the English lions with the French lilies to show that he claimed to be the king of France as well as England. His flag had many lilies but later only three lilies were used.

**Flowers:**

May Day (1<sup>st</sup> of May) was a day of feasting, processions and dancing around the maypole to celebrate the end of winter. Girls picked flowers to make wreaths to put on their heads.

**Food:**

The peasants' main food and drink was rye bread, ale made from barley, pottage made from peas and beans, cheese, eggs and oat cakes. They grew peas, beans, cabbages, onions and leeks in their cottage gardens. They did not eat much meat because they could not afford to kill a pig very often and they would be severely punished for hunting rabbits.

The lord of the manor ate meat all the year. He could afford to buy salt to preserve it for the winter. The lord and his knights would also go hunting for fresh meat. They put their meat on day old slices of bread or wooden plates. They drank wine and also ate soup, fish, vegetables, cake, fruit and nuts.

**Friar Tuck:**

Friar Tuck was part of Robin Hood's "Merry Men". They were a band of outlaws in Sherwood Forest. Robin became a legendary hero who robbed the rich and gave to the poor.

According to one legend Robin Hood first met Friar Tuck at a river. Friar Tuck agreed to carry Robin over the river but he dropped him halfway across. Then he only joined Robin's band after a fight. Friars used to travel around preaching the gospel.

**Fumes:**

Alchemy was one of the earliest forms of chemistry. It combined science, religion, philosophy and magic. Alchemists tried to find a way of changing other metals into gold. They also tried to find an "elixir of life" that would give never-ending life and health.

Alchemists invented and used a lot of apparatus that is still used in science laboratories today like flasks, beakers, stills and furnaces.

**Fun:**

Entertainers such as jesters, minstrels, story-tellers, acrobats, jugglers and people with performing bears travelled around the country. They performed in taverns, market places and the great halls of castles.

**Fuse:**

The first guns (cannons) were made in the early fourteenth century. They were often wide in diameter and fired huge stones. First a charge of gunpowder was put in, then a wad of rags rammed in tightly, then the cannonball.

The fuse was formed by a narrow hole (the "touch hole") drilled into the powder chamber and filled with gunpowder. The cannon was fired by touching a hot iron rod, or a burning cord (the "match"), or tinder attached to a rod, to the touch hole.

For many centuries cannons were not very accurate or very safe. They often exploded. They were mainly used to knock down walls or gates of towns or castles under siege.

**Gate:**

If soldiers on the battlements of a castle saw enemies coming, the men in the gatehouse would close the heavy wooden gate, winch down a gate called the "portcullis" and winch up the drawbridge so that no one could get across the moat. The portcullis was a grille made of wood, or iron, or wood covered in iron.

## **Gauntlet:**

Gauntlets were protective gloves. They could be made from heavy leather covered with overlapping metal plates, chain mail or fully articulated plate armour. As well as being part of the armour, they could be used to issue a challenge.

When a knight thought that someone had insulted him or done something wrong to him he would throw his gauntlet down in front of the person. If the person picked up the gauntlet it meant that he accepted the challenge to fight a duel.

Nowadays, "to throw down the gauntlet" means to issue a challenge and "to take up the gauntlet" means to accept one.

## **Ground:**

It was very important to people in the Middle Ages that they be buried in the holy ground in a church yard.

## **Gun:**

The first cannons were made early in the fourteenth century. Smaller "hand gones" (hand guns) started to appear later in the fourteenth century (about 1350).

Early "hand gones" usually had a bronze or iron barrel attached to a piece of wood about a metre long which the soldier held under his arm or rested on the ground. A hot iron rod was held to the touch hole, which had been filled with gunpowder, to fire the gun (see "fuse").

The "slow match" was invented towards the end of the fourteenth century. It was a cord made of hemp which had been boiled in saltpetre and dried. A roll of slow match could be carried easily and would burn for several hours after being lit.

The "matchlock" was invented early in the fifteenth century. A long Z-shaped arm went through the wooden stock of the gun. The bottom part of this worked like a trigger. When this trigger was pulled, the burning match went down onto the touch hole to fire the gun. This meant that the gun could be aimed more accurately than

using a hot iron or slow match held in the hand and the soldier did not have to stay near his fire to heat his iron rod.

### **Hat:**

During most of the Middle Ages hats were simple. Towards the end of the Middle Ages rich people's clothes became very grand and wealthy women often wore very showy hats. These hats were often decorated with gold, silver and jewels and had long veils hanging from the back. Sometimes the hats were very tall and/or divided into two parts like horns.

### **Hay:**

Hay was cut using scythes which had long blades and handles.

### **Helmet:**

When the Normans invaded England in 1066, they wore mail armour and a helmet which sat on the top of the head and had a piece of metal that came down over the nose to protect it.

Later in the Middle Ages, helmets became big and heavy to give a lot of protection. The "helm" was the biggest and heaviest helmet. It was so heavy that a knight had to carry it on his saddle when he was not in battle. It was made as one solid piece with an eye slit and breathing holes.

Later still, helmets were made with a hinged visor. The visor protected the face but could be lifted up out of the way when the knight was not fighting.

### **Hit:**

Schoolmasters used the cane or birch in medieval times. A boy would be caned on the hand if he made a mistake when he was reading out loud or when he had learnt a lesson by heart. If he made a bigger mistake or misbehaved he would get a thrashing.

One teacher in Oxfordshire fell into the river and drowned when he was climbing a willow tree to cut canes.

**Hive:**

Bee keeping was very important in the Middle Ages because honey was the only sweetener until the crusades when the knights brought sugar back with them. Honey was also used to make a drink called mead.

Hives were woven from thin canes. Sometimes they were covered in clay to keep them warm in winter.

**Hoist:**

The Normans came from France and were led by William the Conqueror. They built magnificent cathedrals and large stone castles. The large stone blocks used to make them were hoisted up using pulleys and treadmills or hand winches (windlasses).

Other workers used line and plummet levels and plumb lines and made mortar in bowls. They also carved the decorated capitals for the tops of the stone pillars.

**Hood:**

Children used their hoods to play games. "Hoodman blind" was similar to blindman's buff. One child turned his hood around to make a blindfold. His friends tied a knot in their own hoods and hit him with them. The child who was blindfolded had to guess who hit him. If he guessed who it was, they changed places. Children also used their hoods to scare birds away and to catch butterflies.

The type of hood with such a long trailing point was common in Germany in the Middle Ages.

## Horn:

The picture shows a hunter with his horn and a stag (male deer) in the forest. The series of rectangles shows the notes that the hunter played on the horn.



## House:

A manor was a large estate that was controlled by a lord and worked by the peasants.

The lord and lady usually lived in a two-storey, stone manor house with a garden, orchards and farm buildings nearby and a wall and sometimes even a moat around them. There was not much furniture. The lord and lady had a bed. Most people sat on stools or benches. They stored all of their clothes, jewellery and blankets in wooden chests which were often covered in carvings. Glass and silverware were kept in a cabinet.

The peasants lived in smoky little huts called cotts. They often shared these with pigs or chickens. The walls were made from timber posts with "wattle and daub" filling the spaces between. The woven wattles (bent sticks) were daubed with a mixture of clay, chopped straw, ox hair and dung to keep out the draughts. The roofs were usually covered with thatch made from bundles of straw or reeds tied to the frame. Sometimes blocks of turf or bundles of brushwood were used.

## Hunt:

William the Conqueror declared that vast areas of land would become Royal forest. Only the king and his friends were allowed to hunt there. Other people were not even allowed to go into the forests. Often poachers would kill rabbits and sometimes deer but the punishment for poaching was severe.

**Jester:**

Jesters were employed by kings or noblemen to entertain them with music, dancing, mime or making jokes. They were sometimes the agents of change because they were one of the few people who had the right of free speech – they could make a joke about anything. Jesters who could not get a job working for a king or nobleman, wandered around the streets working as minstrels.

**Joust:**

Jousting was combat between two knights to practise for battle. The knights charged at each other with their lances and tried to knock each other off of their horses. In England this was just a sport and they used blunt lances. (See also “lance”.) Jousting was much safer than a *mêlée* where two opposing teams of knights staged a mock battle.

**Keep:**

The large tower in the centre of a castle was called the keep. The walls were up to twenty feet (six metres) thick.

Sometimes there was a dungeon underground where prisoners were kept. Above this or next to it was a storeroom for armour and food and often a well. The kitchen was there too.

The chapel and the guardroom were often in the front section that protected the entrance steps. The steps led to the first floor.

The great hall was on the first floor. The lord spent much of his time there and that was where the feasts were held. Most people slept there. It was a huge room, often with a fire on a large slab of stone in the centre and no chimneys so the smoke had to find its own way out through the few small windows. Sometimes there was a large stone fireplace with a flue cut into the wall to let the smoke escape. There was no glass in the windows so wooden shutters were closed if it were cold or windy.

Above the great hall were the sleeping rooms for the lord, his family and important visitors. Then, above these, came the battlements where soldiers kept a lookout over the country.

**Kick:**

Medieval football was played with a pig's bladder or a stuffed leather ball. It was more like a riot than a game. Any number of people could play and often people were injured or even killed.

A football game could last all day and be played over a large area of country or in the streets of a town. There were no rules. Football was often banned because it was so dangerous.

**Kneel:**

Sometimes a squire (a knight in training) was made a knight on the battlefield if he had been very brave, particularly if he had saved his master's life. He had to kneel in front of another knight who said, "Be worthy!" and gave him the *colée* or "accolade" – he hit him on the shoulder with the flat of his sword.

**Knight:**

The night before he was made a knight, a squire had a bath, dressed in white robes and spent all night praying in church with his sword and armour on the altar (keeping vigil).

In the ceremony, the knights who were sponsoring him strapped his belt and sword and his spurs on him and his banner, shield and helmet were presented (see "knight"). Sometimes the *colée* was given (see "kneel").

Knights promised to keep the "code of chivalry" – be Christian, defend the church, be brave and skilful in battle, be loyal to the king, defend the weak and treat women with honour.

**Ladders:**

Castles, towns and cities might be attacked and put under siege. The attackers used tall wooden siege towers as well as ladders to try to get over the walls. But this was dangerous. One large rock could knock off all the men on a ladder. So there were many other ways to attack a castle.

Several types of slings could throw rocks or burning missiles over the castle walls. Battering rams attacked doors and walls. Miners dug a tunnel under a wall or tower. They dug out a large chamber under the wall and held the top of it up with timber. Then they lit a fire in the chamber and the wall collapsed. Later cannons were used to breach (make a hole in) the walls or door.

**Lance:**

A lance was a long weapon used by knights on horseback when they charged at each other in a joust or in battle. They tried to knock each other off of their horses. They used to put on a tip with three points that would spread the force, so they did not hurt each other in jousts. (See also "joust".)

Some knights were known as "free lances". They spent all of their lives looking for adventure in tournaments or in battle, sometimes fighting for different countries.

**Light:**

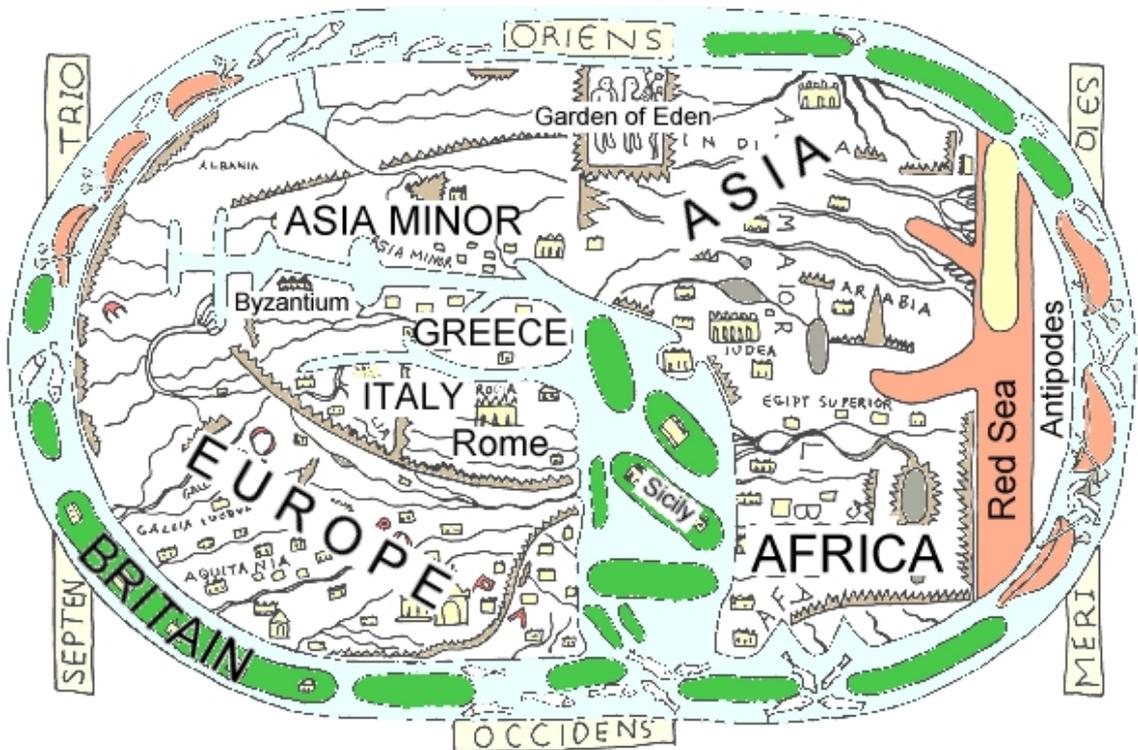
A thin panel of ox horn was put over the front of lanterns to let the light through and stop the candle being blown out.

**Lute:**

A travelling minstrel often accompanied his singing with a lute.

## Map:

Saint Beatus of Liébana was a Spanish monk, theologian and geographer who lived about from AD 730 to AD 798. He wrote a *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, published in AD 776, which contained one of the oldest Christian maps of the world. The original manuscript has been lost, but there are several copies still in existence. The one on which this drawing is based was made at the Abbey of Saint-Sever in about 1050.



East is at the top. "Oriens" is Latin for east, "occidens" = west, "septentrio" = north, "meridies" = south.

## Mill:

The peasant farmers had to take their grain to the lord's mill for it to be ground into flour. The miller rented the mill from the lord of the manor. Windmills and watermills were both common.

**Milk:**

Sheep's milk was sometimes used to make cheese. Sheep could live on land that was too poor for cows.

**Moat:**

A castle was often surrounded by a moat filled with water to keep their enemies out.

**Nails:**

Apprentice blacksmiths heated small pieces of iron in the fire. When they were red hot they took them out with tongs and hammered them into shape to make nails.

Master-craftsmen taught apprentices their trade. An apprentice lived with his master for seven years. He received free food and lodging and was taught the trade but he was not paid any money. After seven years the apprentice made his "masterpiece". If it were good enough, he could pay a large fee and become a master-craftsman. If he did not have enough money he could become a "journeyman" and be paid by the day until he had earned enough money to become a master. (The French word *journée* means a day's work.)

**Night:**

In the Middle Ages, an instrument called an "astrolabe" was used to study the position of the stars. It was also used to navigate at sea.

**Oil:**

The king was anointed with oil at his coronation. This came from the practice in the Bible of anointing the king with oil to show that God had chosen him to rule over the people.

**Organ:**

Many churches had organs to lead the singing. One or more men worked the bellows while the organist played.

This picture is based on a tapestry from a famous series of tapestries called "The Lady and the Unicorn". (See also "unicorn".) Each tapestry represents one of the senses. This one represents hearing.

Tapestries were very valuable. They were used as curtains, decorated the walls of castles and kept out the draughts.

### **Ox:**

Oxen were used to pull ploughs and carts in the Middle Ages.

### **Peacocks:**

Peacocks were served at rich people's banquets. The peacock was skinned with its feathers still in the skin. It was roasted on a spit, then the skin with the feathers was put back around it so that it looked like a live peacock when it was brought in to be served at the banquet.

### **Pen:**

Pens for sheep were made from woven sticks. (See "fence".) They did not always have a roof.

### **Pigs:**

In the Middle Ages pigs were skinnier than they are today. They were covered in bristles and had sharp backs and long legs.

In the autumn boys took their family's pigs into the woods. They would hit the trees with sticks so the acorns and nuts would fall down for the pigs to eat. The pigs were killed to give them bacon for the winter.

### **Play:**

Boys' games in the Middle Ages were often very rough. This helped prepare them for battle when they were older. In "fighting on horseback", two boys made the horse which was ridden by another boy. The riders both held a belt and tried to pull the other team out of an area marked on the ground. Other boys are playing leapfrog.

**Plume:**

Knights taking part in a tournament often had large painted models (crests) on top of their helmets. Sometimes they just had plumes of feathers instead.

Originally tournaments were used to train for battle. Later they became sporting events with a lot of pageantry and ceremony.

**Poach:**

Only the king and his friends were allowed to hunt in the forests. Often poachers would kill rabbits and sometimes deer, but the punishment for poaching was very severe. If a serf were caught killing a deer a second time he would be put to death. A freeman would be banished or sent to prison.

**Print:**

Printing was used in China from about AD 600 but it did not come to Europe. In 1430 Gutenberg invented a printing press in Germany. In 1476 William Caxton brought one to England.

The invention of the printing press, and using paper instead of expensive parchment or vellum (made from sheep or calf skin), allowed new ideas to be spread more easily. This was one of the factors that led to the end of the Middle Ages.

**Reap or wheat:**

Reaping wheat (cutting it to harvest it) was done with sickles. The sickle had a short handle and a curved blade. The wheat was tied in bundles called sheaves. Then it was taken to be threshed to separate the grain from the stems and husks.

The reeve gave the peasants directions when they were working in the lord's fields. He carried a horn to call them to work.

**Rope:**

To make a rope, first the yarn had to be spun. Then the yarns were spread out along a “rope walk” and twisted together using revolving hooks. They could make ropes up to about 300 yards (about 275 metres) long without having to have a splice to join the rope. This was necessary for sailing ships so that the ropes would run through the pulleys without getting stuck.

**Round table:**

King Arthur was probably really a leader who united many British kings to fight against the invading Saxons in the fifth and sixth centuries AD. He won a lot of battles and stopped the Saxons from overrunning parts of Britain for several years.

Numerous legends grew up about King Arthur. From about 1130 a number of long stories and poems were written which added magic, romance and a lot of imagination.

In the legends, Arthur and his knights, Sir Galahad, Lancelot, Gawain, Perceval, Bors, Bedivere, Kay, Tristan, Gareth, Mordred (the traitor) ... , sat at a round table (a wedding gift from Queen Guinevere's father) so that all the knights felt equal. They rode out from there to carry out noble deeds and search for the Holy Grail, the cup that Jesus Christ used at the Last Supper.

**Rule:**

The king wore a crown and held a sceptre and an orb to show that he ruled the country. The orb is a globe with a cross on top of it. It is a symbol to show that Jesus Christ rules the world.

## **Rune stone:**

The Vikings were a very fierce people who lived in what is now Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Between about AD 750 and 1150, they spread out and settled in parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Russia, Iceland and Greenland and even visited North America.

They erected large stones with runic writing on them. Often a snake was carved around the edge and the runes (letters of the runic alphabet) carved inside it. They were usually a memorial to someone who had died, sometimes recording something special that they had done. This one is from Sweden and says “Fullugi and Gunnarr had this stone raised in memory of Geirrøðr, their father. ... may God help his spirit.” There was often a symbol carved in the centre, such as a cross.

These rune stones also tell us how far the Vikings travelled – trading, raiding or settling.

## **Saint:**

This picture shows Saint Matthew with the gospel that he wrote. It is from the Egmond Gospels produced in about AD 900.

## **Saw:**

Carpenters used a double-handled saw to cut planks. Then they smoothed them with an adze which was shaped like a hoe with a sharp, slightly curved blade.

## **School:**

A few clever village boys could go to school at the monastery if their fathers could afford the fee to the lord. Some of them became novices and went on to become monks.

If a boy did not become a monk or a priest, he could become a clerk working for a lord or a merchant. This was the only way that a country boy could escape from working on the land, unless he ran away from home and was not caught for a year and a day.

Rich men's children were often taught at home by a tutor. The sons of noblemen often became pages and later squires in very important households. The boys would share a tutor to learn reading and writing. They would also learn manners, to wait on tables, sword fighting and jousting and they would learn to sing and play musical instruments.

In the later Middle Ages interest in law and medicine increased. Schools at some cathedrals became more important and developed into universities.

### **Seal:**

In the Middle Ages people used seals instead of signing their name. A seal usually had the name of the person around the outside and a design in the middle.

The seal was pressed into melted wax before it set. The royal seal was used to make documents official.

King John was such a bad king that his barons forced him to put his seal on the Magna Carta (Latin for Great Charter) in 1215. This put the king under the law. The Magna Carta was used in later centuries as the basis for democratic government and individual rights and justice for all people.

### **Seed:**

After a field had been ploughed and raked with a harrow, the seed was sown. The sower scattered the seed by hand. Then the harrow covered the seed before the birds could eat too much of it.

### **Serf:**

Serfs did not own land. They had some rights but were not much better than slaves. If the manor were sold they would have to work for the new lord. But the lord would make sure that they had food and shelter in exchange for their work.

**Sheep:**

Wool was very important and valuable in the Middle Ages.

Peasants spun it and used it at home to make coarse material to make their own clothes.

In the later part of the Middle Ages, wool was spun, dyed and woven in England. The fine finished cloth could be sold by the merchants for a bigger profit than they were able to get by selling raw wool. English people became the world's best cloth-makers. (See also "wool".)

**Ship:**

From about AD 700 the fierce Vikings in their long boats dominated the northern seas. Their ships were long and narrow, with one square sail, one row of oars on each side, a steering oar (at the back on the right-hand, "steerboard" or starboard side) and a dragon or serpent's head on the front, its tail on the back.

By the late 1000's the Vikings had lost control of the seas. This meant that there could be more trade between countries.

Small, deep, round boats called "cogs" developed to carry cargo. These boats could cope with rough seas and high winds. Cogs were clinker-built (made of overlapping planks like the Viking long boats) and had one square sail. They had a rudder at the back which made them easier to steer. "Castles" were built at the front and back so they could be used as warships.

In the Mediterranean Sea ships were narrower. They often had triangular sails, planks were nailed to a frame and they still used steering oars near the back of the boat.

**Shoot:**

By the early part of the sixteenth century (1500's) guns had improved so much that they had largely replaced the longbow.

## **Shops:**

In a medieval town, a merchant or craftsman usually displayed the goods he had for sale on a counter put across the front of his house. He made or prepared his goods downstairs and lived upstairs.

The shopkeeper would hang the sign of his trade outside his shop. Most people could not read so the signs were usually pictures such as a boot, a pair of scissors or a fish.

Shops that sold the same kind of things were usually in the same street. In England some street names today got their names from this - Fish Street, Cornmarket, Butchers Row (or The Shambles),

...

## **Slay:**

There were many legends about Saint George from as early as the sixth century. One legend said that he had to slay (kill) a dragon to rescue a princess.

Saint George was made the patron saint of England because crusaders returning to England from the Holy Land (Palestine) said they had seen a vision of Saint George helping them at the siege of Antioch in 1098. The crusades were wars in which the Christians from Europe tried to win back the Holy Land from the Saracens (Muslims) who had captured it. Crusade means "war of the cross".

## **Spin:**

First the wool was sorted, washed and carded (combed). Then it was spun using a spinning wheel or a stick called a distaff and a hand-held spindle. Spinning was usually done by women.

The spinning wheels were turned with a stick. They were faster than the older distaff and spindle.

**Spur:**

In battle a squire (a knight in training) wore silver coated spurs and knights wore gold coated ones. Spurs were a symbol of knighthood and were often highly decorated.

Usually when a squire became a knight his new spurs and his sword were strapped on him. Then he was given his shield, banner and helmet as part of the special ceremony. (For more information about being made a knight see "kneel" and "knight".)

Sometimes if a squire were very brave he would be made a knight on the battlefield. Then he would be allowed to wear gilded (gold coated) spurs. This is where the term "to win your spurs" came from.

Life-sized pictures in memory of important people were engraved on sheets of brass. Most engravings of knights on early memorial brasses showed an animal under their feet. A lion used as a footrest showed that the knight was brave enough to defeat lions.

**Stocks:**

One punishment for a minor crime was to be put in the stocks (with feet secured) or the pillory (with hands and neck held tight in a wooden frame). People going past would jeer at (make fun of), lecture or throw rubbish at the person in the stocks.

**Stone:**

According to one legend, King Arthur proved that he was the rightful king of Britain when he was the only person who could pull the magic sword Excalibur out of a block of stone. The sword was a symbol of justice and the stone symbolised Jesus Christ.

**Storm:**

People often travelled by sea to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Merchants also travelled by ship. Storms at sea were terrifying and there were many shipwrecks.

This picture shows the Bible story where Jesus was asleep in the boat while his friends were terrified by the storm. When they woke him up, Jesus calmed the storm.

**Sword:**

As part of the ceremony when a squire (knight in training) was made a knight, he was given his sword by an old and respected knight. It was very rare and a great honour for the king to present a young knight with his sword. (See also "knight".)

**Tent:**

This picture comes from the Morgan Bible made in the 1240s or 50s. It shows King David delivering provisions. The characters from the Bible story were shown wearing medieval clothes and the tents, flag and wagon also look medieval.

**Thresh:**

Peasants threshed the wheat or other grain that had been cut. They beat it with "flails" - two sticks joined together by a leather hinge. This separated the grain from the chaff. The chaff was lighter and could be blown away.

## **Throne:**

Edward I was king of England from 1272 to 1307. During his reign parliament came to represent all groups of people (except the poor):

- the lords

- the bishops and other church leaders

- the knights from each shire

- two citizens chosen from every city or borough town.

Edward I sat on the throne at the front of the parliament with Alexander III of Scotland on his left and Llewelyn of Wales on his right.

## **Tooth:**

People in the Middle Ages usually had very good teeth because they did not eat many sweet things. This was just as well.

There were dentists during the Middle Ages. However "dentists", like the one in the picture, had stalls at fairs. If someone had a toothache, he would pull the tooth out for a small fee. The "dentist" sometimes tied the teeth around his neck as an advertisement!

## **Torch:**

When William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066 many houses were "put to the torch" (burned) and people had to run for their lives. This is shown in the Bayeux Tapestry. (For more information about the Bayeux Tapestry see "fight" and "church".)

## **Tower:**

The "Tower of London" is really made up of many towers. The White Tower is the tallest and oldest one. It was built in 1078 by the Norman invaders. William the Conqueror (William I) ordered it to be built. Later kings had more towers and walls built.

The Tower of London was used as a castle and a prison. Bows and arrows, firearms and coins were all made there. King Henry III started a zoo there. Many famous people were kept prisoner in the Tower of London.

## **Town:**

As trading increased, towns grew up. They were usually near castles or monasteries for protection. They had strong walls and often a moat, a drawbridge and a portcullis (see "gate"), to stop entry by boat, wherever a river flowed into or out of a town.

Usually the local lord owned the town but if he needed money, the townspeople could buy their freedom. The lord would give them a charter, a document that let them govern themselves.

Towns were not safe or healthy. They were crowded and there was rubbish everywhere. Cooks threw offal and other waste into the streets and pigs often roamed around. The picture shows Galway in Ireland.

By 1666 London was still like a medieval city. Many houses were made of timber and were very close together. The streets were narrow. A fire began during the night in a baker's shop and burnt for five days. Much of London was destroyed. 13,200 houses, 89 churches, including St Paul's Cathedral, the Royal Exchange, the Guildhall (the administrative centre and law courts), four prisons and London Bridge were burnt. Only four people died in the flames but 100,000 were left homeless. When the city was rebuilt they used brick and stone instead of timber.

## **Toys:**

Children in the Middle Ages played with hoops that they hit with a stick, and spinning tops that they whipped with a string tied to a stick to keep them spinning. The boy on the hobbyhorse has his hat pulled down over his face like the visor on a helmet. They would also have played with balls and drums and made mud pies.

## **Travel or camels:**

Marco Polo's father was a merchant who had been on a long trading mission to Cathay (China). Kublai Khan, the ruler of Cathay, had invited him back. In 1271, when he was seventeen years old, Marco left Venice (in present-day Italy) to go to Cathay with his father and uncle. They sailed to Acre in Palestine, then walked or rode camels overland for three and a half years before they arrived at Kublai Khan's palace.

They served Kublai Khan for seventeen years. Marco could speak four languages and Kublai Khan sent him on many official tours of the kingdom. It was twenty five years after they left Venice before they were finally able to return home to tell stories of the marvellous things they had seen.

Venice was at war with Genoa (also in present-day Italy) when Marco returned and he was captured and put in prison. While he was in prison Marco wrote a book called *Description of the World*. In this he told of many different peoples, their customs and their way of life. He told of a black stone that burned, paper money and Chinese inventions such as the compass, papermaking and printing.

Printing was not known in Europe at that time so scholars copied Marco's book by hand. Many people read *Description of the World*. It probably encouraged many other people, including Christopher Columbus, to go exploring.

The network of trade routes across Asia from the Mediterranean area later became known as the Silk Road. When overland routes were cut off later in the Middle Ages, many alternative routes were opened up going via the sea. The trade in silk and spices along these routes was very important.

## **Tub:**

Grapes were crushed by people treading on them. The grape juice was then used to make wine. Only rich people could afford wine. Peasants drank ale made from barley.

## **Turn:**

A quintain was a target used to practise jousting. A squire (knight in training) would charge at it and try to hit the shield, or figure of a Saracen (Muslim), with his lance. The shield would turn and the weight hanging on the other end would swing out and hit the squire if he were not very fast and careful. This was a much safer way to practise for battle than jousting and safer still than a *mêlée* (a mock battle).

## **Unicorn:**

The unicorn was a mythological creature. It had one horn (*uni* is Latin for “one” and *cornu* is Latin for “horn”), a billy-goat beard, a lion’s tail and cloven hooves. It was always good and beautiful, but was fierce and lived alone. It could only be captured by unfair means but could be tamed by a young maiden. (See also “organ”.)

This picture is based on a tapestry from a famous series of tapestries called “The Lady and the Unicorn”. (See also “organ”.) Each tapestry represents one of the senses. This one represents sight.

## **Wagon:**

Because most people could not read or write, plays were used to teach them Bible stories. A group of short plays was called a “mystery play” (possibly from the Latin *ministerium* which meant service, because the mystery plays developed from drama used in church services).

Each guild (group of craftsmen) acted a play that was relevant to its craft:

- the ship builders - Noah and the ark
- the fishmongers - Jonah and the whale
- the carpenters - Joseph's workshop
- the goldsmiths - the three kings going to Bethlehem
- the bakers - the last supper ...

A cycle of about forty eight plays took the whole day and told the Bible story from creation to the end of the world. Humour was

used in the plays. Noah's wife nagged and argued with Noah and struggled as she was carried into the ark.

Each play had its own "pageant" wagon with two rooms on top of each other. The actors put on their costumes in the lower room and performed their play in the open room on the top.

The plays were performed one after the other to groups of people who waited at several places throughout a city. Each wagon stopped in turn to show the next part of the story.

### **Wine:**

In large monasteries some monks were given special responsibilities. The "cellarer" was a monk who kept the keys and was in put charge of the supplies and catering for the monks and their guests. Sometimes people accused the monks of being too fond of wine.

### **Wood:**

In the Middle Ages, the whole of a peasant family had to work together to get wood to keep warm in the winter.

### **Wool:**

Wool was the main export from England. The best cloth-makers in Europe wanted English wool. The lords, monks and peasants kept sheep wherever they could. (See also "sheep".)

### **Write or scribe:**

Before the printing press was invented in 1430, all manuscripts had to be copied by hand. They were often decorated and illustrated very beautifully. This was called "illumination" because gold or silver leaf was often used so that the book would look as though it were lit up. The first letter of a section was often enlarged and had a picture called a miniature painted in it.

Monks in the monasteries produced most of the books in the Middle Ages. They wrote on parchment (made from sheep skin) or vellum (from calf skin). They wrote with quill pens made from

feathers and used a knife to trim the quills. They made their own ink from charcoal and lampblack.

When the books were finished they stitched them together between wooden boards covered with leather and decorated with gold leaf. The books were so valuable that they were chained to the desks in libraries.

**Yoke:**

Oxen wore yokes to join them together when they were pulling a plough or a heavy cart. The crosspiece went across the top of each animal's neck and the bow-shaped piece (oxbow) went around its neck.

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