

# Discover Portencross Castle

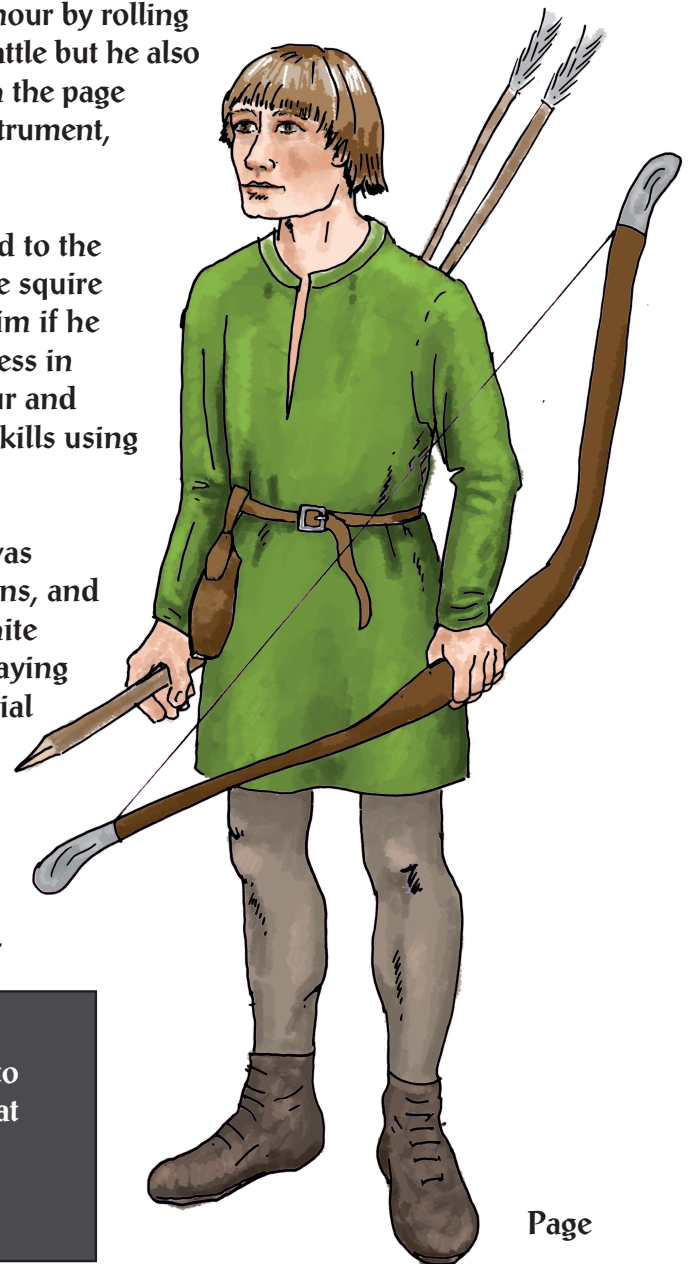
## Training for Knighthood

Boys were specially chosen and trained to become knights from the very young age of seven or eight years old. They began as pages, then became squires and finally knights.

The boy went to the Lord's castle to be trained firstly as a **page**. In his initial training he learned about horses, armour and weapons. Hunting was an important part of being a knight, so the page also learned how to handle falcons and hawks, and how to cut up a deer for food. A knight had to be strong and have lots of stamina, so the pages practised fighting with a sword against a wooden pole or stake. They also had to serve at the Lord's table, use a bow and arrow for hunting and clean the suits of armour by rolling them in sand. A knight had to be extremely brave in battle but he also had to be courteous. The Lady of the castle would teach the page social graces. The page also learned to sing, play an instrument, dance, read and write.

When the page was around 14 years old he progressed to the next stage of his training by becoming a **squire**. The squire had to accompany his knight into battle and protect him if he fell. He helped the knight to prepare for battle and dress in his armour. He had to take care of the knight's armour and weapons. The squire also practised his own jousting skills using a lance or spear.

The title of **knight** was given to the boy when he was around 18 or 20 years of age. He had to confess his sins, and take a cleansing bath and then he fasted. He wore white robes and guarded his weapons and armour while praying through the night. Next morning he dressed in a special outfit, red for blood, white for purity and brown for the earth. He attached spurs to his ankles and finally became a knight when he was tapped on each shoulder with a sword. It was possible for squires to become knights very quickly if the king needed more knights for a battle or if a squire was very courageous.



You may have heard that knights were 'Chivalrous'. With a partner, use the internet and reference books to see what you can find out about 'chivalry' - a code that showed the way that knights should behave. Write your own code of chivalry.

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