

Economist & Sun • Stouffville Tribune

ETCETERA

FORGOTTEN but not lost

From jousting to jewelry, history comes to life, thanks to these enthusiasts of the lost arts

BY AMY WEST
Staff Writer

Shane Adams grew up dreaming of knights and ladies, battles and tournaments. Robin Hood was his idol, the Black Knight from *Ivanhoe* his inspiration. As a child on his parents' horse farm, he honed his riding skills and fed his imagination.

Then, in 1993, after a trip to Medieval Times in Toronto, Adams got a chance to live his dream.

He was hired as a knight with the popular dining attraction and spent the next 2-1/2 years battling for the Queen's favour.

"It turned me into that daydreaming kid again," Adams said.

But, a fall from a horse and dislocated hip forced Adams to leave Medieval Times and strike out on his own.

Along with wife Cassandra, he started Dragons Valour farm in Guelph, where he trains jousting horses, as well as riders.

For \$35 an hour, anyone who dreams of glory can come to Dragons Valour and be trained in the lost art of jousting. The farm also became the home base for his touring show, The Knights of Valour.

"While I was at Medieval Times, I had the idea of putting together a travelling road show that could bring the sport of jousting to the general population. So, when it came time to leave the show, I took my idea with me."

The Knights of Valour competes at tournaments and fairs, thrilling audiences with displays of horsemanship, chivalry and bravery.

But it isn't all a show. Many of the members, including Adams, compete

in national and international jousting competitions.

In 1997, Adams entered his first competitive tournament in Colorado. On a borrowed horse and with unfamiliar equipment, he rose to the challenge and brought home a gold medal for Canada.

Since its inception, the Knights of Valour jousting team has grown from one member to six and continues to represent Canada on the competitive tournament field.

"Jousting is an art that had all but faded out of existence in this country," Adams said.

"It's very popular in England and the United States but relatively unknown in Canada.

"With movies like *A Knight's Tale* coming out now, jousting is starting to gather momentum again, but as an extreme sport. I mean, we're basically talking about a sport that knights used to do - and die doing."

A fully armoured knight can carry up to 175 pounds of armour into modern competition.

Each match is watched over by four judges and a field marshal. Points are awarded to competitors based on established criteria: one point for a hit, three points for a solid hit that shakes a knight, five points for unseating your opponent and 10 points for unhorsing them.

Penalties are deducted for striking outside of the target areas or for holding on to your horse for balance.

"In all my years of competing, I've never seen a horse get hurt," Adams said.

"If one ever did, the guilty party would probably be flogged, beaten and



STAFF PHOTOS/AMY WEST

Shane Adams (above) and his Percheron stallion, Dragon, delight crowds with displays of horsemanship, chivalry and bravery. At Adams' farm, Dragons Valour, wanna-be knights can get a few lessons in the bone-crunching sport (below).

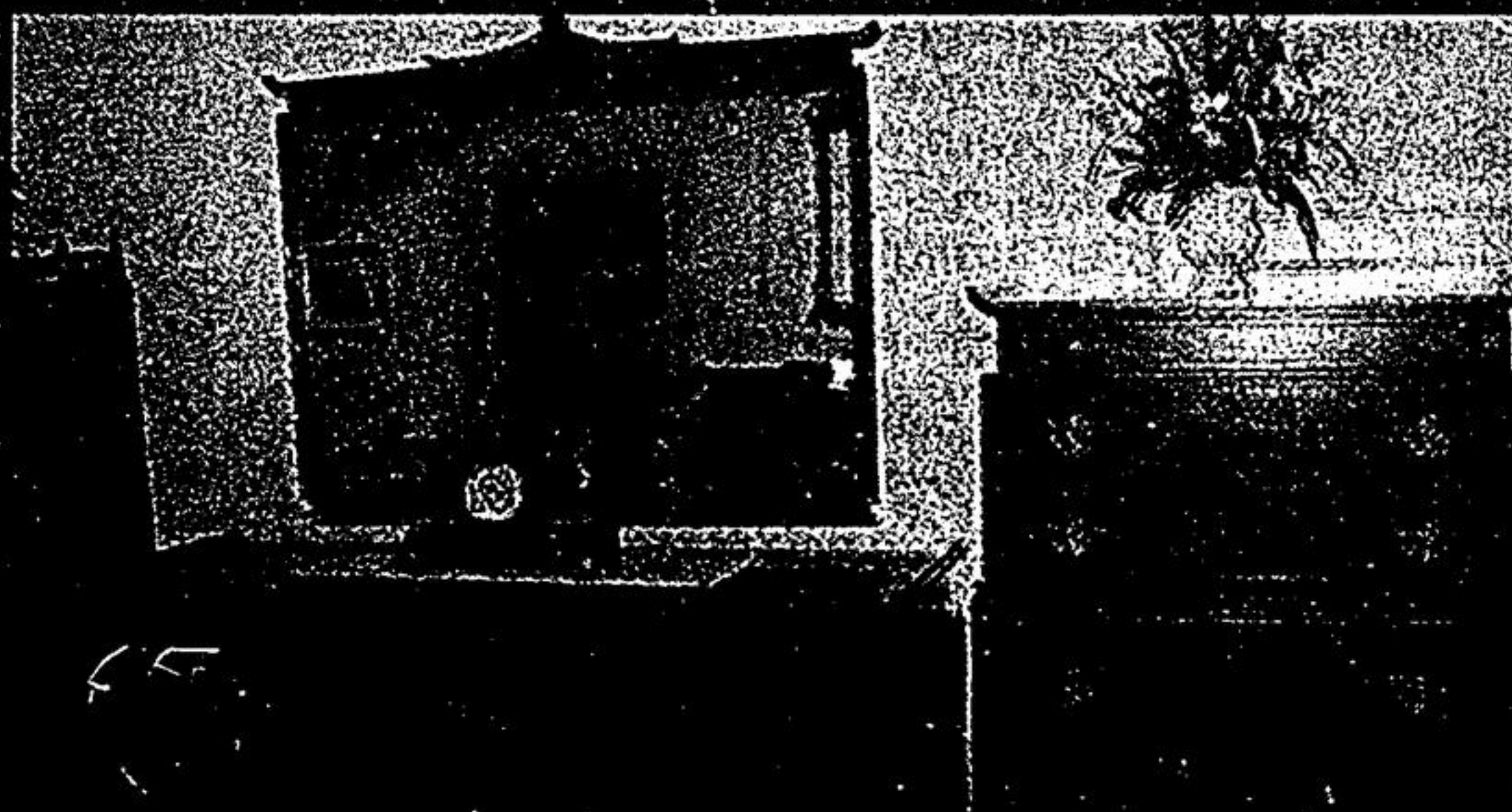


STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

George Duncan is an architectural historian.

See JEWELLER, page 33.

6 MONTHS
NO INTEREST
NO PAYMENTS
NO FEES



Visit our Showroom

Sheraton
ANTIQUES
REFINISHED BEYOND COMPARE

158 MAIN STREET
UNIONVILLE
(905) 474-9677

6 piece Chippendale bedroom suite includes: Triple ladies dresser, 2 night stands, mens chest on chest, queen size headboard. Circa 1930's.

Was \$8,995

Sale Price **\$7,995**