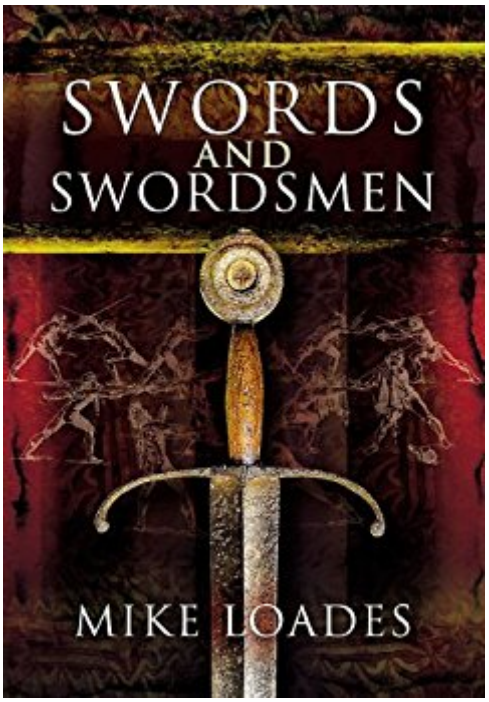
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Swords And Swordsmen



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Synopsis

This magnificent book tells the story of the evolution of swords, how they were made, how they were used, and the people that used them. It doesn't claim to give comprehensive coverage but instead takes certain surviving examples as landmarks on a fascinating journey through the history of swords. Each is selected because it can be linked to a specific individual, thus telling their story too and giving a human interest. So the journey starts with the sword of Tutankhamun and ends with the swords of J E B Stuart and George Custer. Along the way we take in Henry V, Cromwell and Uesugi Kenshin, and there is the most detailed discussion you'll find anywhere of all of George Washington's swords. The chapters on these specific swords and swordsmen are alternated with more general chapters on the changing technical developments and fashions in swords and their use. The reader's guide on this historical tour is Mike Loades. Mike has been handling swords most of his life, as a fight arranger, stuntman and historical weapons expert for TV and stage. He considers the sword as a functional weapon, work of art, fashion statement and cultural icon. As much as his profound knowledge of the subject, it is his lifelong passion for swords that comes through on every page. His fascinating text is supported by a lavish wealth of images, many previously unpublished and taken specifically for this book.

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Customer Reviews

First, a warning, this is my first review of a book. There are bound to be spelling errors, grammar issues and other such nonsense but I'm going to give it a go none-the-less.I've been a fan of Mike Loades since finding his Weapons That Made Britain series. I've been sick and tired of seeing videos, movies, TV and other such media talking pure bunk about the weapons, armour and people of the past. Mike took time to actually do REAL research, to learn, to experiment and do as much as possible to recreate even a little piece of the past which taught me quite a few things I simply didn't know.And that's exactly what this book did as well. I've always been focused on 1350-1430 or so in the European Martial Arts, and 1500-1650 in the Japanese Marital Arts world, so this book, opened up a whole new number of worlds for me, one where the sword was pivotal to survival, to countries, to wealth. And that says a lot right there.The ability for Mike to really put aside all the stuff we THINK we knew about how swords were used and more importantly show us WHY they were used is simply invaluable to anyone who has even a passing interest in the history of not just the blade, but the man (or woman) behind the blade.I spend most of my summer inside a suit of early 15th century armour, helping correct some of horrible things media has done in its view of the sword and armour, and Mike's book is yet another treasure trove of information I can use to better educate not just my students, but people with only a passing interest in the sword.The book is well written, laid out in a chronological order, so the development of the sword, from its axe-like proto-history, to the cutlasses and sabers of the more modern era are all clear, concise and contain concrete examples of the people that used them. The illustrations and photographs are very well done, and do not distract the reader.Well done Mike, well done.

Superlative treatise of the queen of weapons. It takes its place among historic fight books.Well written, scholarly, authoritative, backed by evidence and generative of understanding. With an approach that grounds the story of the sword with its context in history and the wielder, we see where and why the weapon was a product of both the highest craftsmanship and artistic aspirations of its society.We also come to appreciate the unique spirit of each blade and its warrior. Mike Loades is a warrior-poet, not an armchair philosopher, writing in a tradition of combat pedagogy dating back centuries, engaged by men & women who aspired to this ideal.This was practical

wisdom, inseparable from art & life. Mr Loades has woven that into a rich story.

I can’t add a lot more to what other reviewers have already written about this book - except to say I have ALWAYS found Mike Loades’ work erudite, insightful and entertaining, and I dearly hope he will write and film more and leave us a larger legacy to be thankful for. In an age of electronic entertainment and massively reduced physical activity his continuing active experimental archaeology and scholarship with reenactment contribute so very much to our understanding of the past.Like Oakeshott, Hugh Soar, and so many wonderful writers I will acquire anything I can produced by the man.I just wish more of what he has done in the past was available. Some of these men spend a lifetime exploring every aspect of their specialities and suddenly expire before they finish their works, although sometimes someone else is able to finish some of it for them.I’ve personally been involved in various reenactment groups for more than 3 decades, and being very obsessive/compulsive about also learning about how so much of past daily life, technology, warfare and artisanry was accomplished we have some 8,000 non-fiction books from around fifty countries in our library and having been involved in archery (Society of Archer-Antiquaries for the last good while, once the NAA and NFAA) and a university-trained Industrial Arts Ed. craftsman who has made thousands of things professionally and privately in many skilled trades and crafts since the 1960s I know quality when I see it, and I know what it means and contributes to our lives and how much it can engage our intellect. In his way Mike is a Master of many disciplines with a nearly encyclopedic knowledge of the past which he brings to life again proving the truths and fallacies of past military technologies.(I’m also a member of the MWTCA.org - a tool collectors/users/scholars organization, whose sister organisation is the Early American Industries Associaton or EAIA.org. The craftmen writers of the past few centuries taught me so much that I can thankfully give them credit for making me a far better craftsman. I can also recommend ABANA - the Artists/Blacksmiths’ Organization of North America.)Mike Loades is an international treasure - a rare individual who we need to hear more from.I sincerely hope he contributes much more in the time we both have left because I want to enjoy it.I don’t want to learn one day he has expired having published only two of five planned scholarly tomes like one terrific archaeologist in Holland I admire. I want him to be a Ewart Oakeshott and now that he has begun writing never stop."Please, Sir, I want some more." - Actually ALL I CAN GET - would a shelffull be possible?.A Grateful reader.Da Chipmunk’s old husband.

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