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SJU Update

ST. JEROME'S MAGAZINE

FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

A Merry
Olde Time
In England

Faculty In
The Policy
Arena

Scott & Sherry
Vanstone:
An SJU Donor
Profile

6 SWEENEY AWARD WINNER
FRANK CLIFFORD SR.

18 THE BRIDGES
LECTURE SERIES

20 SJU
READS

SJS STUDENT LIFE



A Merry Olde Time In England

Herstmonceux Castle, located in East Sussex in southern England, has a rich history barely surviving beyond 1777 when the castle was in such poor condition that the wood panelling was taken down, interior walls destroyed and bricks were removed to be used in a new mansion on the north-west corner of the estate. In 1910 extensive renovations were done to transform the southern half of the castle back to its former glory and in 1933 the northern half of the restoration was complete. The castle changed hands many times since the 12th century, surviving civil and world wars and in 1989 was nearly turned into a hotel and golf resort. Local residents fought to stop the development and won. Four years later, Drs. Alfred and Isabel Bader purchased the castle and donated it to Queen's University, with the intent to establish it as a centre of international education. Rooms were converted to classrooms and offices and after extensive renovations; the first students of the Queen's International Study Centre arrived.

Now, through the guidance and perseverance of St. Jerome's University Professor Steven Bednarski, an exciting relationship between Herstmonceux Castle and St. Jerome's Medieval Studies program has been established. Each summer, SJU students have the opportunity to participate in the Summer Field School in British Archaeology. Currently, two of our students are living and studying at the Castle! There, they earn credits in Roman and Medieval Archaeology toward their UW degrees, and explore the rich archaeological history of England. This opportunity to travel abroad is part of the Medieval Studies program, but any qualified undergraduate student may apply.

SJU's Co-Director of Medieval Studies, Dr. Steven Bednarski, has also launched an international research project at Herstmonceux to engage SJU and UW students. While on sabbatical in the

fall of 2012, Dr. Bednarski worked as Scholar in Residence at the Castle. Last April and May, he returned there with two of his MA students, Zack MacDonald and Andrew Moore. Both students are writing MA theses on the Castle's medieval history. As part of their research, they visited archives in Lewes and London. At London, they uncovered the original scroll that allowed Herstmonceux Castle to be built! On it, they found the medieval license to crenellate, bestowed by King Henry VI upon Sir Roger Fenys (Fiennes), on 5 February 1441. Fiennes was royal treasurer and sought a house befitting his station. Henry's license granted Fiennes permission to expand his old wooden manor house and to build a stately deer park. Instead of expanding the old manor, however, Fiennes tore it down and built a large brick house: the current Herstmonceux Castle.

Locating and deciphering this medieval document required a feat of genuine detective work. The scroll containing the document is well over 150 feet long. It took quite a lot of digging to read through the various Latin documents sewn together around it before Dr. Bednarski's team identified the license.

