

# Hernen 1544

## Objectives



The Hernen estate was in 1940 the catalyst for founding Vrienden der Geldersche Kasteelen. Together with Geldersch Landschap it is now known as the Gelderland Trust. Hernen is an almost 700 year old castle in the river aerea in Gelderland. It has relatively unharmed survived the centuries, never being damaged by

warfare. It still has the characteristics of a medieval castle with thick walls with its stairs and galleries. The most dramatic incident was the collapse of the so called donjon at the end of the 18th century. The original castle was struck by a storm after the inhabitants had tried to make it more comfortable by opening

the walls for doors and windows.

Since restoration in 1957 the castle has been partly open to the public. Recent discoveries of field ovens and new historical evidence generated the wish for an updated presentation and a stronger participation of the visitor, with a more active atmosphere as a result.

## Approach

### Special points of interest:

- Focus on medieval period
- Open access
- Public consultation

Inspired by the newly found ovens research was undertaken as to the use of the manufactured stones, and the different phases of construction. Choosing the date of the current ground plan, the year 1544 became the focus in the new presentation. At that time Reyner van Wijhe and Margareta van Egeren inherited the estate, and extended and refurbished the house.

The medieval character of the castle was reinforced by removing modern

fittings and furniture as much as possible. The visitors walk through the building with the light of a lantern and with a voice that also lights up writing on the floor or object to explain the meaning. Connection was made with experimental medieval building sites like Schaesberg in the Netherlands and Guedelon in France. Everything brought in is produced according to late medieval period, so it may be touched, used, sat on etc. Everyone is invited to watch and participate

whenever craftsmen and women are at work.

Further participation was evoked by publicly asking the question about the donjon that some 250 years ago fell in ruins. Last century after the war there was no priority in rebuilding it. Especially after finding the ovens and making the stones, one wonders if rebuilding is should be a realistic option. A scientific symposium was organised and the public was invited to participate through Facebook and Twitter.

## IONT Involvement



Our purpose is to bring our properties closer to people. With incidental little budget and a relatively small staff we rely on the impressive and very experienced National Trust as our great inspiration.

'Atmospheres' has influenced our way of thinking of new presentations and we strive for "Open arms" conservation'.

## Progress



The publicity around the Jubilee of 75 Years Vrienden der Geldersche Kasteelen was this spring focused on castle Hernen with:

- Bringing back the medieval atmosphere
- Individual visit with a lantern
- Introducing passive and active medieval techniques
- Publicity campaign around donjon (n.b. 'trending topic')
- Reinforce relation with village and inhabitants
- After half opening season more visitors than in whole 2014



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