

SAUNDERSFOOT AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At its February meeting the Society welcomed Martin Roberts whose subject was Castell Henllys near Newport in the north of our county. Today the site is administered by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and forms part of an important group for the study of pre-history in north Pembrokeshire, along with Caer Bwdy near Solva, Oriell y Parc at St. David's and Pentre Ifan, Brynberian, an ancient monument older than the pyramids.

Castell Henllys is an Iron Age inland promontory fort dating from around 2,500 years ago. The area continues to be a training ground for archaeologists from the University of York and the reconstructed round houses built some thirty five years ago are positioned accurately above original post holes. When in use the fort would have been home to around eighty people, from high status freemen to bondsmen and slaves, and was heavily defended by a complex system of ditches, ramparts and gates. The Iron Age inhabitants clearly expected attack from time to time and a hoard of over two thousand slingshots has been unearthed.

Castell Henllys is unique as both a public site and an Iron Age settlement in which archaeological investigation continues to be undertaken. It is not only a popular attraction welcoming visitors from around the world but a vibrant educational resource. Themed events for school pupils involve bread and basket making, role playing as warriors and the building of walls using natural substances. In 2015 some 6,000 pupils from across Wales and the Marches visited the fort and the attraction last year won the coveted Sandford Award for heritage education in the UK.

The speaker was warmly thanked by the chair, Mrs. Mary Cavell, who reminded members the Society would be arranging a visit to Castell Henllys in June. The next lecture, on the 16th of March at 7.30 in the Regency Hall, would be 'Introducing Archives' given by David Llewellyn, an archivist at the Pembrokeshire Record Office in Haverfordwest. Non members are as ever welcome to attend.