

SAUNDERSFOOT AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At its February meeting the Society welcomed over fifty members and guests to hear Dr Toby Driver of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales speak on 'Exploring Climate Change in Pembrokeshire.'

The background to the illustrated presentation was the Cherish Project, a joint Welsh and Irish initiative to map and explore the effect of climate change on the coastal heritage of the two countries. A particular focus would be placed on those headlands, islands, coasts and reefs that had up to now been largely unstudied and upon comparisons between new and any former investigations. Aerial photographs taken during drought conditions often revealed features overlain by later land usage, for example, views of Carew airfield showed clearly First World War operations alongside later Second World War developments, as well as the ruins of buildings on St Margaret's Island near Caldey.

The Cherish Project involved a cross-disciplinary approach with an integrated methodology to understand better the effects of climate change on the coasts. This would combine both new technologies and complimentary marine and aerial studies: Ireland, it seems, have the ships and divers and Wales the aircraft and drones. Digital surveys, archaeological trenches and underwater mapping would allow for the reconstruction of past environments when allied to 3D surveys and modelling, and future baseline studies would offer comparisons between the past and present.

Climate change offered both threats and opportunities. Increasing acidity of the seas would damage underwater wrecks and droughts and floods the coastal heritage, particularly promontory forts and settlements. Conversely, storms could and do uncover long buried structures, such as the recent discovery of a wrecked ship at Marros sands.

Dr Driver was warmly thanked by Mrs Rosemary Hayes for his thought-provoking lecture and to wish the Cherish Project every success. The next meeting of the Society will be on Wednesday 21 March at 7.30 when Edward Perkins will speak on 'The Story of Milford Haven.' Lectures are held in the Regency Hall, Saundersfoot and non-members are as ever welcome to attend on the night.