

# Redlynch & District Local History Society

## Penruddock's Rebellion in 1655 by Ruth Butler

On the 6th October we had our first on line presentation since the start of the Covid 19 restrictions on meetings. This talk by Ruth Butler of the Wiltshire History Centre at Chippenham took a not inconsiderable effort to set up in these new circumstances.

Ruth told us about Penruddock's Rebellion in 1655, part of a national unrest by the Royalist Sealed Knot, however only the Penruddock revolt actually developed as intended. At the time Oliver Cromwell was ruling the country following the end of the Civil Wars in 1651. Col. John Penruddock (right) was a large land owner at Compton Chamberlayne.



On the 11 March about 200 royalist men marched upon the Market Place in the largely Puritan Salisbury in the late evening. Their target was a number of top judges and other high officials staying in Salisbury for trials. They comprised 60 horsemen from Clarendon, 40 men from Mompesson, and 100 from Blandford. They comprised small land holders, servants, tradesmen and gentry; amongst their numbers were John Thorpe the jailer and Edmund Mack, the apothecary. They seized the judges and released prisoners, however there was no support from the populace of Salisbury and the judges were saved from hanging. Government soldiers were despatched to Salisbury immediately on the news reaching Winchester, so the Penruddock followers travelled to Downton and thence to Shaftsbury with the High Sherriff as a hostage, with the intention of collecting more followers. At Yeovil, this hostage was freed and the now diminishing band fled toward Exeter where less than a hundred Government troopers under Captain Upton Clarke caught them "without injury" in a fight at South Molton.

Judge Hugh Wyndham was appointed to try the case and Major General Desborough was given Carte Blanche to put down the West Country Rebellion under the "Rule of the Major Generals" for a year. The insurrectionists were tried and many were banished to Barbados, however a few were hung and the two ring leaders Penruddock and Hugh Grove were beheaded, having originally been sentenced to hanging, drawing and quartering. John Penruddock's body was buried in Compton Chamberlayne's churchyard after execution in Exeter. His wife Arundel Freke was also heavily taxed. Standlynch Church, founded in 1146 was rebuilt in 1677 by Maurice Buckland's wife, Joan, in memory of her father, Col. John Penruddock.

Bob Inns, Secretary

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020