

Section 4

For my presentation today, I'm going to talk about the Ceide Fields (1)
, one of the largest Neolithic sites in the world. I recently visited this site
 and observed the work that is currently being done by (2)
 The site was (3) by a local teacher, Patrick Caulfield. He
 noticed that when local people (4), they were constantly hitting
 against what seemed to be rows of stones. He realised that these must be walls and that
 they (5) for them to predate the bog which subsequently grew
 over them.

He wrote to the National Museum in Dublin to (6), but no one
 took him seriously. It wasn't until 40 years later, when Patrick Caulfield's son Seamus,
 who (7) by then, began to explore further. He inserted iron
 probes into the bog to map the formation of the stones, a traditional method which local
 people had always used for (8) for thousands of
 years. Carbon dating later proved that the site was over 5,000 years old and
 (9) in Ireland.

Thanks to the bog which covers the area, the remains of the settlement at Ceide Fields,
 which is over 5,000 years old, (10) A bog is 90 percent water;
 its soil is so saturated that when the grasses and heathers that grow on its surface die,
 they don't fully decay (11) Objects remain so well preserved
 in these conditions because of the acidity of the peat and (12)
 At least 175 days of rain a year are required for this to happen; this part of Ireland gets
 (13)

The Neolithic farmers at Ceide would have enjoyed several centuries of
 (14) Neolithic farmers generally lived in larger
 communities than their predecessors, with a number of houses built around a
 community building. As (15), Neolithic farmers were
 able to build bigger houses. These weren't round as people often assume, but rectangular
 with a small hole in the roof that (16) This is one of many
 innovations and indicates that the Neolithic farmers were the first people to cook

indoors. Another new technology that (17) brought to Ireland was pottery. Fragments of Neolithic pots have been found in Ceide and elsewhere in Ireland. The pots were used for many things; (18), pots were filled with a small amount of fat and when this was set alight, (19)

It's thought that the Ceide Fields were mainly used as (20) Evidence from the Ceide Fields suggests that each plot of land was of a suitable size to (21) They may have used a system of rotational grazing in order to prevent over-grazing and to allow for (22) This must have been a year-round activity as no structures have been found which would have been used to (23)

However, archaeologists believe that this way of life at Ceide (24), Why was this? Well, several factors may have contributed to the changing circumstances. The soil (25) and led to the abandonment of farming. (26) was partly responsible for this as it would have been very intensive and was not sustainable. But there were also climatic pressures too. The farmers at Ceide would have enjoyed (27), but this began to change and the conditions became wetter as there was a lot more rain. It was these conditions that encouraged the bog to (28) which survives today. So now I'd like to show you some ...