

Fleet Study Group

Minutes of the 65th meeting of the Fleet Study Group held at Ilchester Estate Office,
Abbotsbury on 26th March 1999

Present: A. Carr (Chairman), Carolyn Steele (Secretary, DERC), S. Cooke (DCC), K. Coombe, V. Copley (EN), P. Dyrinda (Swansea University), S. Eden, E. Green (Ilchester Estates), B. Loveday (DWT), E. Morris (Ilchester Estates), D. Moxom (Ilchester Estates), P. Sterling (DCC), D. Seaward, J. Whittaker (NHM)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

A. Howard, G. Poole, M. Tucker (EA) and S. Welton (DWT)

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

i) World Heritage Bid: S. Cooke reported that we are now waiting to hear whether the Dorset/Devon coast will be included in the government's submission.

ii) The environmental appraisal and risk analysis for the Fleet Lagoon produced by Portland Port has been circulated. E Green expressed concern over the motivation for the report's content. A. Carr was concerned that it focussed on possible minor problems in the Fleet rather than major problems that might originate in the harbour. P. Dyrinda said it inferred a time-lag before any pollution in the harbour would contaminate the Fleet. It also used a simplified model of flow in Portland Harbour. V. Copley said work was underway to produce a more detailed hydrological model. D. Seaward was concerned that there are no mentions of seepage springs and their specialist ecology. A Carr felt it also ignored different response times of different contaminants. The consultants had consulted the FSG Archive but D. Seaward felt their report was still short of references. P. Dyrinda did not consider it a risk assessment as it did not look at a worst case scenario. The report also inferred that the port could be used as a salvage port for leaking vessels. V. Copley reported that Portland Port will need to produce a risk analysis this year.

The SAC steering group would like comments from the FSG. A copy of the report is available from D. Moxom. Any comments should be sent to A. Carr who will respond on FSG's behalf at the end of April.

iii) The sound sculpture of Chesil Beach and the Fleet should be on display at the National Maritime Museum next week.

4. PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1993 SYMPOSIUM

D. Seaward, A. Carr and P. Sterling had met to review the text. There are a lot of inconsistencies and FSG must adopt a house-style before considering any future publications. It was considered too late to use this for the 3rd Symposium. A few figures still need formatting but all corrections should be ready for authors by end of April. P. Sterling thanked D. Seaward and A. Carr for their continued involvement.

5. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

EA and EN study of water quality. V. Copley has seen a draft. It suggests the current situation in the Fleet is stable but there are important changes in nitrates and phosphates through the year and across the Fleet. V. Copley will ask the author if she is prepared to do a presentation for the FSG. A copy of the report will be included in the archive.

E. Green reported on a new organic farming scheme in the fields above Abbotsbury.

D. Moxom reported on the annual meeting of the Fleet Management Committee which also serves as the SAC advisory group.

B. Loveday introduced herself as the Marine Conservation Officer for Dorset Wildlife Trust. Her key tasks are to organise a marine seminar on 8th June, and to set-up a central marine database for Dorset to be housed, eventually, at DERC. The database will hold information on publications (12,000 collected so far) and species. The FSG archive will be a data sub-set. Any additional references to B. Loveday.

6. FINANCING RESEARCH PROJECTS

Entrust is a private company established to provide a means of distributing landfill tax money to environmental causes. DWT had found them a good source of funding but projects must have geographical relevance to the area of waste disposal and be of environmental benefit. FSG would have to find 10% of funding. DCC may be able to contribute. Send any ideas to A. Carr. Possible projects to be discussed at the next meeting.

S. Cooke suggested there may be funding from the European Union, but projects would need to involve at least two member states.

D. Seaward cautioned against rushing into projects without proper planning. In the past FSG has acted as a catalyst for people to do their own work

7. RESEARCH PROJECTS

J. Whittaker reported that A. Bruce's work is continuing and he hopes to finish his PhD this year. He is still working on carbon-dating the cores, and following-up on known historical events including 1824 flooding and the Lisbon earthquake

D. Seaman has been working with the Estate transcribing medieval documents about the Manor of Abbotsbury.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Web sites: P. Dyrinda had been investigating. The best site was from Ian West (West's Geology Directory) at Southampton University, which includes a section on the Fleet. A copy will be provided for the archive.
- There is a weekend course at Dillington House on the discovery of wetland and inter-tidal archaeology.
- Dorset Coast Forum are producing a CD Rom with illustrations and text. Photographs would be welcomed.
- J. Whittaker has organised a plaque for the picture given to J. FitzPatrick for her many years of service as the FSG secretary.
- Pete Sutton had written an article in British Wildlife on the scaly cricket. D. Moxom produced a copy for the archive. Any other articles for the archive can be sent to D. Seaward.

Future meetings: 30th July at Dorset Wildlife Trust, Brooklands Farm, nr. Dorchester
26th November, County Hall, P. Sterling Chesil Bank Ecology
or Charlotte Johnston Water Quality in the Fleet

The meeting was followed by a presentation from Victoria Copley on the cSAC designation of Chesil and the Fleet.