

Fleet Study Group

Minutes of the 66th meeting of the Fleet Study Group held at County Hall, Dorchester
26th November 1999

Present: A. Carr (Chair), C. Steele (Secretary, Dorset Environmental Records Centre), S. Cooke (Dorset County Council), P. Dyrinda (Swansea University), S. Eden, J. Fitzpatrick, S Harvell (University of Plymouth), J. Jamieson (Environment Agency), S. Kenarick (University of Plymouth), G. Le Pard (Dorset County Council), D. Moxom (Ilchester Estates), P. O'Sullivan (University of Plymouth), G. Poole, D. Seaward, P. Sterling (DCC), D. Weeks (Ilchester Estates)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

B. Loveday (DWT), J. Churchouse, K. Coombe (School of Geog. Oxford University), V. Copley (English Nature), E. Green (Ilchester Estates) D. Henon (University of Plymouth)

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The environmental appraisal for the Fleet Lagoon by Portland Port. Portland Port will be assessing the water circulation in the Port, D. Moxom has a copy of the survey brief.

4. PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1993 SYMPOSIUM

The symposium is now at the final draft stage and will go to the printers in early December. This is the final opportunity for comments from the authors. P. Sterling emphasised the considerable time and effort needed to bring it to this stage, especially from D. Seaward, DCC Tech Graphics and S. Cooke. D. Seaward suggested producing a flyer, and reviews through professional journals. Any suggestions on suitable publications, please contact P. Sterling.

ALL

5. WORLD HERITAGE BID

A Carr reiterated K. Coombes concern over inaccuracies in the description of the site, and cited several examples. A. Carr has sent his comments to the Bid Co-ordinator, T. Badman, at DCC. S. Cooke is working on a draft management plan and landowner consultation.

6. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

D. Moxom has received comments from FSG members on the management plan. The final version will soon be available. D. Moxom hopes to draw up a document on the sensitivity of the Fleet to guide the timing of future research. There has been increased interest since the SAC designation. The Estate are keen to encourage research which is beneficial to the Fleet.

D. Seaward suggested research proposals could be amended to make wider use of samples collected and thereby minimise disturbance and possible damage.

P.T.O.

Paul Brown (Dept. Entomology, Natural History Museum), has visited to look at aphids on *Taraxacum* and *Picris*.

D. Moxom has been in contact with an international Shingle Interest Group. A recent e-mail requested information on rare, endangered, and notable shingle species.

V. Copley has begun a list of marine species.

J. McGlade (Centre for Marine Studies at Plymouth University) is working on a joint project with English Nature and the Environment Agency. J. McGlade had contacted D. Moxom before a member of staff carried out a 3 day survey of the Fleet. The results are not yet known. J. Jamieson will try to find out more.

The group discussed the current informal arrangements for researchers. D. Moxom did not feel there was any research on the Fleet of which he was unaware. He will usually contact an appropriate member of FSG with proposals. S Cooke suggested a register of interest, which could lead to more sharing of results. The Management Plan could include a proforma.

D. Moxom is also concerned about increased use of boats with outboards in the Fleet, particularly by researchers with limited time/costs.

G. Le Pard is working on a maritime archaeological record for Dorset. Currently there has been little work on the Fleet. Following the proposal at the last meeting, the Nautical Archaeological Society (NAS) are keen to be involved and G. Le Pard has been discussing possible sites for future work with D. Seaward. These include determining the extent of peat beds off West Bexington. NAS need records of when and where peat is thrown up, to compare with weather conditions. Also looking historical at activity within the Fleet, including the causeway at the northern end. NAS will also be investigating Green Island causeway in Poole Harbour. G. Le Pard hopes work will begin next year with voluntary divers. A recent meeting of the Coastal Strategy Group suggested a working group on archaeological survey. They may begin with an intertidal survey.

Some members of FSG suggested a simultaneous collection of biological information. G. Le Pard to discuss with P. Sterling.

D. Seaward had attended the last meeting of the Coastal Forum. Their transport plan is currently out for consultation, a copy will be available for FSG. They have also looked at the military aspects.

V. Copley reported (through D. Moxom) that DERA have offered to collaborate in providing information on coastal and marine processes to anyone who can make use of the data. Malcolm Turnbull (DCC) will co-ordinate.

V. Copley reported on the Reg. 33 package, English Nature's formal advice on the objectives and operations likely to damage or disturb the international wildlife features of Chesil and the Fleet SAC and SPA. This has now been issued and all members of FSG should have received a copy. Thanks to people who have responded so far, your comments will be incorporated into the final version where appropriate. There are areas which will need amending as more information comes to light,

especially quantifying favourable conditions. FSG have a role in scoping future research (Table 2), and possibly in actively monitoring.

The CASI Project (Compact Aerial Spectrographic Imagery). This is part of a UK wide trial funded by EU LIFE programme, using different techniques to monitor marine habitats. It has been used to look at vegetation in the Fleet, particularly seagrass beds - distribution, density, quality, and compare with more traditional ground survey techniques with diving teams. Results so far show CASI can identify *Zostera* and *Ruppia* and possibly *Lamprothamnium*. A report is due by end March 00.

Armandia cirrhosa. V. Copley reported that a comprehensive survey is planned for next spring/summer in east Fleet and Portland Harbour. These sites may provide a source for reintroduction to Eight Acre Pond, Hampshire.

7. RESEARCH PROPOSALS

P. O'Sullivan and K. Coombes (and anyone else interested) plan to put together a proposal for Entrust to fund work on cores.

J. Whittaker has spoken to D. Seaward about a group to discuss the evolution of the Fleet.

J. Jamieson report EA have some experience with Entrust funding and may be able to help with advice.

Suggestions for projects should go to D. Moxom.

8. CURRENT RESEARCH PROPOSALS

All proposals had been discussed.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Future Meetings. The group discussed various proposals for the summer meeting, including themes such as the origin of the Fleet, or management of the Fleet. G. Poole suggested comparisons of the Fleet with sites of similar post-glacial origins eg. Radipole, Slapton, perhaps even a joint meeting. A. Carr was concerned over timing. A large meeting will require prompt action. All suggestions for possible content should be sent to A. Carr by 31st December.

ALL

Poole Harbour Study Group are holding a symposium in October 2000.

P. Drynda suggested the FSG should have a web-site. It could include species lists and publications.

Next Meeting:

24th March 2000 at West Yard, Abbotsbury with a presentation by Charlotte Johnston on Water Quality on the Fleet (to be confirmed)

The meeting was followed by a presentation by Dr P. Sterling on Lepidoptera of Chesil.

P.T.O