

## **Fleet Study Group**

Minutes of the 69<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Fleet Study Group held at Brooklands, Farm, Forston  
28<sup>th</sup> July 2000

Present: D.R. Seaward (Chair), C. Steele (Secretary, Dorset Environmental Records Centre), K. Coombe (School of Geog. Oxford University), V. Copley (English Nature), P. Dyrynda (Swansea University), S. Eden, B. Loveday (Dorset Wildlife Trust), D. Moxom (Ilchester Estates), G. Poole, T. Saunders-Davies, D. Weeks (Ilchester Estates), J. Whittaker (Natural History Museum) and C. Johnston (English Nature)

1. Chairman reported the death of Dr Christopher Wagner, the distinguished pathologist who, with his wife Dr Margaret Wagner, joined FSG in 1989. Between then and 1995 they undertook historical archival research relevant to the Fleet. Their notes and abstracts provided a valuable new background to the Fleet archive. They resigned from the FSG last year on planning to move from the area. Chairman will write to Margaret from FSG expressing our appreciation and condolences.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

T. Badman (Dorset County Council), A. Carr, J. Fitzpatrick, E. Green (Ilchester Estates), P. O'Sullivan (University of Plymouth).

### **3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

#### **Min. 4. World Heritage Site Status**

The nomination document ("Nomination of the Dorset and East Devon Coast for inclusion in the World Heritage List") is now complete and has been submitted by Government to UNESCO. A copy will go into the FSG archive. A UNESCO assessor will visit in the autumn and a final decision made by December 2001.

### **5. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

Two written reports were circulated with the agenda. Enc. 1., The Dorset Coast Forum Progress Report to July 2000, was summarised by BL for the benefit of some members who did not receive a copy (available from the Secretary).

The marine database, currently housed by DWT may move to DERC next spring.

The seafood cookbook was launched on 2 July and copies are available through DWT.

The bid for Life III included Roxana and Side Scan Sonar survey of specified areas off the Dorset coast. DRS proposed that one of these areas should cover the seabed off Chesil Beach between Abbotsbury and West Bexington from where suspected "proto-Fleet bed" remains were occasionally washed up. He would liaise with BL to specify the extent.

DRS/BL

The next meeting of the Dorset Coast Forum will be 18<sup>th</sup> October at Weymouth Pavilion. It is an open meeting and the subject for discussion is climatic change in Dorset. Please contact Medea Gravelle (DCC) for details.

### **6. PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1993 SYMPOSIUM**

These are now published and have been distributed to authors. FSG members are entitled to a copy for collection at Ferrybridge Centre (£1.50 p&p). Further copies are available at £10 + p&p. Copies will be available for collection at the 4<sup>th</sup> Symposium.

DM

#### 7. 4<sup>TH</sup> SYMPOSIUM 9th NOVEMBER 2000

The 1<sup>st</sup> notice/request for contributions has been circulated, and a number of offers for presentations and posters have already been received. Venue will be the Portland Heights Hotel, providing separate rooms for lectures and posters etc. (JW offered video equipment). Special B&B rates have been arranged for any wishing to stay overnight. Field trips will be offered on the following day (Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November), subject to demand, ending by 4pm, followed by the next FSG meeting at West Yard, Abbotsbury at 4.30 pm.

The arrangement with the editor of the Journal of Aquatic Conservation for publication of the Proceedings in a special issue has been confirmed.

VC, PD, DRS to vet abstracts of papers and posters offered, produce programme and consider publicity. FSG are grateful to the Dorset Coast Forum for their offer to provide administrative support including handling bookings, press releases etc.

VC/PD/DRS

(Note that the details and an attendance return slip are enclosed with these minutes).

#### 8. CURRENT and RECENTLY COMPLETED RESEARCH

- a) Archaeology. DRS circulated a photo by Gordon LePard of part of an 18<sup>th</sup> century map depicting the medieval causeway across the Fleet near Shipmoor Point "where wagons go over at low water". DRS, DM and G. LePard are meeting members of the Nautical Archaeological Society at the site to discuss a site survey this summer.
- b) JW raised the topic of the 1635 attempts to drain (part?) of the Fleet which would have included building dams, perhaps including this site. Possible topic for future meeting presentation.
- c) Botany. EN have funded a study by A Martin on *Lamprothamnium* in the Fleet and elsewhere in the UK. This will be presented as a 4<sup>th</sup> Symposium paper.

#### 9. RESEARCH PROPOSALS

- (a) Statement of Natural Change (Enc. 2 - English Nature)

VC requested comments from members on defining types of change (natural/unnatural) and views on the effects of such change on Chesil and the Fleet. After discussion it was agreed the subject would form the presentation and discussion topic at the March 2001 FSG meeting.

- b) Proposal for further palaeo-environmental research in the Fleet (p.4 of the last minutes, 24 March 2000)

PO'S was unable to attend the meeting. Consequently the pre-meeting planned to discuss his proposal has been postponed until after the Symposium and next meeting.

- c) Other proposals.

JW and KC are continuing work on KC's cores in relation to chronology of the Fleet.

JW hopes to pursue the possibility of getting dredged samples of "pro Fleet bed" as discussed in the last minutes.

#### 10. FUNDING FOR SECRETARY

Current funding, kindly provided by EA, is unlikely to continue beyond the end of the year. The main problem is for someone to take notes at the three annual meetings and produce first draft minutes. Any ideas or offers would be gratefully received by the Chairman. Under present arrangements, it is not clear how FSG can continue after the November (70<sup>th</sup>) meeting.

## 11. FUTURE MEETINGS (subject to resolution of the last item)

10<sup>th</sup> November 2000 following field meetings on the day after the Symposium. 4.30pm at West Yard, Abbotsbury. No presentation. NOTE CHANGE TO DATE AND TIME.

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2001 at 2.30 pm, West Yard, Abbotsbury. Presentation: discussion on "Natural Change"

20th July 2000 DWT, Brooklands Farm. Presentation: Changes in the western limits of the Fleet by Geoff Poole.

VC will invite Paul Chester, ecologist for Portland Port Ltd, to give a presentation to a subsequent meeting.

## 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The circulation list needs updating. Minutes will only be sent to recent participants in FSG.

Archive. DRS is currently reviewing additions to the archive. Please send any new reports to DRS as soon as possible.

Headed notepaper for the FSG needs reprinting. VC to organise.

VC

Temperature data loggers, used for the little tern project, are available for use over the winter. Suggestions for the best places in the Fleet to DM.

ALL

The meeting was followed by a presentation by Charlotte Johnstone on the Water Quality of the Fleet (see Abstract).

## Addresses

Carolyn Steele (Secretary) [derc@dorset-cc.gov.uk](mailto:derc@dorset-cc.gov.uk)  
DERC, Library Headquarters, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ Tel: (01305)225081

Victoria Copley [dorset@english-nature.org.uk](mailto:dorset@english-nature.org.uk)  
English Nature, Slepe Farm, Arne, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5BN Tel: (01929)556688

Dennis R. Seaward (DRS)  
Barn Court, Chetnole, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 6NY Tel: (01935)873066