

Fleet Study Group

Minutes of the 71st meeting of the Fleet Study Group, held at West Yard, Abbotsbury
23rd March 2001

Present; D.R. Seaward (Chair), G. Le Pard (Secretary, Dorset County Council) V. Copley (English Nature), S. Eden, P. Dyrynda (Swansea University), J. Fitzpatrick, E. Green (Ilchester Estates), D. Moxom (Ilchester Estates), P. O'Sullivan (University of Plymouth), G. Poole. Derek Dorsett was welcomed as a new member.

With great sadness, Chairman reported the death since the last meeting of Dr Alan Carr, founder member of FSG and Chairman from 1997 to 2000. He had written to Mrs Carr expressing condolences on behalf of FSG, and will assist her in ensuring that relevant records of Alan's valuable and seminal work on Chesil morphology joins the archive. Chairman and Geoff Poole spoke in appreciation of Alan's huge contribution to knowledge of the Beach and to FSG. (See also 7.4 below).

Apologies for Absence; B. Loveday (Dorset Coast Forum), J. Whittaker (Natural History Museum), K. Coombe.

- 1 **Notes of Last Meeting** The minutes of the meeting of 10th November 2000 were accepted as correct.
- 2 **Matters Arising** There were no matters arising not already on the agenda.
- 3 **Secretary** GLP has kindly volunteered to act as secretary. Members expressed their appreciation.
- 4 **Reports from Representatives**
 - 4.1 DM reported on the annual combined Fleet Management committee and SAC held on 5 February 2001. The Fleet is being considered by Environment Agency for nomination as a Nitrate Sensitive Area in view of its importance.
 - 4.2 Mr Williams of Ferrybridge marina has reported that the channel appears to be silting up. SAC steering group is drawing up plans to repeat a bathymetric survey, probably later this year.
- 5 **Fleet Study Group Symposium Proceedings**
 - 5.1 3rd Symposium volume was reviewed in the Porcupine marine natural history society Newsletter (Nov 2000) 6:4-5.
 - 5.2 Editors for the 4th Symp Procs (DRS, JW, PD) are now awaiting receipt of papers for peer review
- 6 **Current research**
 - 6.1 Archaeology - GLP showed the beaver bones which had been found by David Harvey in one of the peat blocks thrown onto the beach at Abbotsbury. The full report from English Heritage has not yet been received.

- 6.2 The current 'Wreck Amnesty' of the Receiver of Wreck has led to several important items being declared. From off Chesil a rudder pintle from a large eighteenth or early nineteenth century ship (now in Weymouth Museum) and a possible eighteenth century wreck.
- 6.3 In 2001 GLP hopes to continue the survey of the Abbotsbury Wadeway, and possibly relocate the iron age salt boiling hearth in Pirates' cove (this could give evidence of past sea levels)
- 6.4 Chesil rejectamenta – this was discovered by David Harvey; blocks of clean pebbles, typically c. 1 1/2cms, held together with a matrix largely consisting of tubeworms (spirorbid *Circeis spirillum* and bryozoan *Conopeum seurati*). The material is fascinating and puzzling and requires further study. It is now in DRS possession and available for examination by anyone interested – researchers welcome. More samples are needed.

7 Research proposals

- 7.1 POS proposals (minute 8 of last FSG meeting). He has held meetings with Andy Poore & Bournemouth University about history of land use. There are excellent records for the Abbotsbury estate.
- 7.2 POS is looking at funding for other parts of proposal; there are problems with both 'Landfill tax' and LIFE funds. NERC was suggested. FSG does not involve itself in grant application or financing of schemes.
- 7.3 Vince Giavarini and Oliver Gilbert have been surveying the lichens of Chesil beach. A new species of *Caloplaca* has been discovered. VG willing to come and talk to FSG
- 7.4 Memorial to Alan Carr. Suggestion of a series of fixed survey points along the Chesil/Fleet shore welcomed by all. Working group of DRS, DM & GLP will examine options.
- 7.5 Fleet/Chesil vital statistics. DRS suggested the drawing up of a basic list of 'facts' about Chesil and the Fleet such as flows, levels, areas, volumes etc. DRS will prepare first draft.
- 7.6 Place names with map. DRS suggested that early place names could throw light upon conditions and land use in early historic times. (DRS)

8 Future meetings

20 July 2001 DWT Brooklands – Geoff Poole; Changes in the Western Boundary of the Fleet.

23 November 2001 – place? – possibly Paul Chester, Portland Port. (VC)

22 March 2002 – place? – possibly Vince Giavarini Fleet/Chesil lichens.

9 Any Other Business

- 9.1 Archives – DM offered to provide box files to contain loose papers in the archives. The archives do not currently include copies of the Fleet Newsletter or of reports originating from Ferrybridge Centre. DM

agreed to be responsible for depositing these and maintaining them up-to-date, but they will not appear in the archive catalogue. (DM)

9.2 World Heritage Bid; GLP reported that the inspector from UNESCO had visited the site and it was understood that his report was likely to be favourable. The final decision on the bid will be made at the end of the year. EG said that the estate still had reservations about the bid, in particular the potential pressure of additional visitors on Chesil & the Fleet.

9.3 Fleet Study Group pamphlet. This is out of date and needs to be revised. DRS/DM will draft revision for next meeting.

10 Natural Change – presentation by Victoria Copley