

FLEET STUDY GROUP

Minutes of the 75th meeting, held at West Yard, Abbotsbury on 19 July 2002

Present: D R Seaward (Chair), G Le Pard (Secretary; Dorset County Council), K Coombe (Oxford Univ.), V Copley (English Nature), R Doe (West Dorset Coastal Research Group); Univ. Portsmouth), E Green (Ilchester Estates), D Moxom (Ilchester Estates), P O'Sullivan (Univ. Plymouth), D Wheeler (Ilchester Estates), and Peter Tinsley (Dorset Wildlife Trust) as Guest Speaker.

Apologies for Absence: R Alcock (Weymouth Mus.), L Baldock, B Betts (Joint Dorset Marine Cttee), P Dyrinda (Swansea Univ.), S Eden, J Fitzpatrick, G Poole, N Price (Environment Agency), J Whittaker (Nat Hist Mus.).

- 1 **Notes of last meeting (22 March):** in item 7, the last sentence of the second para should read 'DP would liaise with JW and Alastair Bruce about the Abbotsbury peat exposures and also with LB over investigating the new peat exposures she has discovered in the East Fleet.'

- 2 **Matters arising:** none.

- 3 **Reports from Representatives:**

- 3.1 Joint Dorset Marine Cttee. Following 11.2 of last FSG meeting, PD provided a letter detailing his worries over the possible spread of the alien Manilla clam into the Fleet or Portland Harbour, which DRS tabled to the JDMC meeting on 26 March. Dr A Jensen (Southampton Univ. and Southern Sea Fisheries Cttee.) commented that '...the chances of the Manila clam naturally moving out of Poole Harbour are minimal, and the reproductive ecology of the mollusc is currently being studied at Southampton University.' The minute continued that '...concern was expressed over their [possible future] intentional deposition into the Fleet. Don Moxom will be writing an article on effects of alien species for the local paper and will circulate to Fleet fishermen highlighting the introduction of any species is illegal', and that AJ would ensure that SSFC is aware of this concern. VC subsequently raised this at a European Marine Sites meeting and the fisheries representative there stated that the clam had only begun breeding in Poole after careful management; she will pass DRS a copy of the relevant minute. At the next JDMC meeting on 28 May, there was a presentation on the Portland Harbour bunkering proposals which had received approval, and work would commence in July for completion in June 2003. DRS comments for FSG on the environmental consultation had been incorporated in the May 2001 response by DWT/ JDMC.

- 3.2 Dorset Coast Forum meeting of 23 May was mainly to celebrate the confirmation of designation of the World Heritage Site. UNESCO experience indicated that designation did not generally produce a substantial increase in the number of visitors. Copies of the Revised

Strategy Plan for the Dorset Coast are now available from GLP; this details the work the Forum intends to carry out over the next 4 years.

4. FSG 4th Symposium Proceedings: After incorporation of Journal Editor's suggestions, 7 papers have now been submitted and his response is awaited.

5. Current Research:

- 5.1 Frances Bunker of MarineSeen and team is carrying out monitoring of some aspects of Fleet plants and invertebrates as part of a national EN-funded project designed to test methodology.
- 5.2 Tens: poor breeding success of little terns due to fox predation. Common terns are doing much better at the Swannery colony. The new rafts have not yet been colonised.
- 5.3 P O'S displayed posters of work by his students from Plymouth University showing results of core analyses from Fleet bed at the Swannery and Langton Hive Point. Anomalies may be attributable to historic events such as the 1824 storm and the 1630 drainage attempts.
- 5.4 David Parham(minute 7, para 2 of last minutes) hopes to obtain additional radiocarbon dating for the peat blocks washed up at Abbotsbury. He also hopes to locate the peat beds by diving later this summer.
- 5.5 RD (last para of minute 6 of last meeting) has spoken to Alex Coe who is willing to make available the high resolution air photos of Chesil and VC may be able to get them geo-referenced.
- 5.6 GLP has completed his paper on the various attempts to drain the Fleet, based on historical documentary sources. This will be submitted for publication in a future Dorset Proceedings. His short notes on magnetite on Chesil beach, on beaver bones from peat beds off Abbotsbury, and on recording a hulked vessel in the Fleet, are all published in the current Dorset Proceedings (vol 123; 2002 for 2001).

6. Research Proposals:

- 6.1 See para 4 of FSG minutes of 22 March. RD has liaised with West Dorset Coastal Research Group and arranged an initial meeting of active groups to discuss future research perspectives on 18 October at County Hall, Dorchester (**draft programme tabled at the meeting and copy attached**)
- 6.2 GLP referred to the 'First Stage Assessment of the Dorset Coast': this is an English Heritage funded project, aimed at enhancing the Sites and Monuments record. It is a desk based study which is considered essential before EH will support field based research projects along the coast. It will be carried out by Wessex Archaeology over the next twelve months.
- 6.3 Marine Aggregate Levy: this is a funding opportunity which might be available for work on Chesil Beach. VC has details.

7. FSG leaflet: DRS has produced a draft which will be modified to be consistent with the web site. The revision will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting.

8. **FSG web page:** PD has extended this (www.swan.ac.uk/biodiv/fsg). Comments and suggestions to him at P.Dyrynda@swan.ac.uk.

9. **FSG archive:** the catalogue has been updated by DRS/VC and circulated with the agenda for this meeting (note that the date of issue at bottom left of each page should be July 2002, not October 1998).

10. Future meetings:

22 November 2002 – *Richard Acornley of AE on Water Quality monitoring in the Fleet*

21 March 2003 – *Andy Poore of Ilchester Estates on the Abbotsbury Historic Landscape Project*

18 July 2003 – *to be decided*

11. **Any other business:** VC is being promoted to become EN Head of Marine Operations Advice, so a new person from EN will attend meetings. The meeting congratulated her upon her new appointment, and thanked her for her keen interest and help during a period of great change.

12. **Presentation:** by Peter Tinsley, Marine Awareness Officer for the Dorset Wildlife Trust, on *The Purbeck seabed mapping project* (abstract attached).

DRS/GLP August 2002