

Fleet Study Group

Minutes of the 77th meeting of the Fleet Study Group, held at West Yard, Abbotsbury
21st March 2003

Present; D.R. Seaward (Chair), G. Le Pard (Minutes, Dorset County Council), K Coombe, G. Poole, J. Whittaker, D. Brunson, C. Pamplin (World Heritage Team), P. Dyrinda, E. Green, D. Moxom, R. Waldock, A. Poore (Ilchester Estates), G. Weaver (Plymouth University).

- 1 **Apologies for Absence;** Sue Eden, Richard Doe, Jean Fitzpatrick, Nicole Price, Richard Acornley, Malcolm Bray.
- 2 **Notes of Last Meeting** The minutes of the meeting of 22nd November 2002 were agreed as correct except that in line 5 of Minute 1, the words "...the ostropods in the peat exposure in the Fleet. A copy of his dissertation..." should be deleted..
- 3 **Matters Arising** There were no matters arising
- 4 **Reports from Representatives**
 - 4.1 Joint Dorset Marine Committee (11th March 2003): Bridget Betts has taken up a job share post with Medea Gravelle as Co-ordinator of the Dorset Coast Forum. There is therefore now no Marine Conservation Officer. Funding for this post expires at the end of this financial year. A draft paper has been presented to the JDMC outlining the situation.
 - 4.2 World Heritage site: Scientific and Conservation Advisory Group and Scientific and Conservation Advisory Network. The SCAG are scientists who will be consulted on anything that affects the WH site. The SCAN form a wider network who will be kept informed. It was agreed that the FSG should be part of this network. with JW representing FSG and CP liaising. JW will meet the WH team to discuss the role of the FSG in relation to the World Heritage Site.
 - 4.3 Chesil & the Fleet Nature Reserve. There had been problems with the oil boom supplied by Portland Bunkers International. Finally it had been agreed that it would be deployed by Blue Water, who would be trained in its use by Portland Harbour, training costs paid for by PBI. There was to be an exercise in September.
- 5 **Fleet Study Group Symposium Proceedings** The Journal editor had agreed on the papers to be included. They were now going for peer review.
- 6 **Current research**
 - 6.1 **Survey Points.** DM had set up a prototype survey station marker post that had been approved by Malcolm Bray of Portsmouth University who will ultimately survey them to fix their positions. DM will now instal the remainder as opportunity arises.
 - 6.2 DM found the Abbotsbury Causeway exposed for much of its length on a day earlier this year and wondered if the causeway extended under the

beach, and if so whether dating evidence might exist there. GLP said that there was a need for further survey work on the structure and hoped it might be done later in the year. He will liaise with DM to arrange access.

- 6.3 GLP's paper on the various attempt to drain the Fleet, will be published in the next volume of the Dorset Proceedings.

7 Research proposals

- 7.1 Geryant Weaver, masters student at Plymouth University, is trying to create a historical record of nutrient loading in the Fleet. Using agricultural census data from the 1850's, as well as earlier estate maps he aims to model nitrate and phosphate loading in the Fleet
- 7.2 Bournemouth University have applied for funding under the Aggregate Levy (Mineral Industry Research Organisation ("miro")) for a project to look at the impacts of, and recovery from, gravel extraction on Chesil Beach. M Bray, D Parham and JW are among those involved.

8 FSG Archive

- 8.1 FSG are grateful to Maria Pegoraro and Alison Stewart (DERC), and Liz Hayman and Jan Hudson (Weymouth College Library) for their work on the catalogue and on the archive itself at the library, and to Weymouth College for continuing to host the collection. RW (EN) has put the FSG archive catalogue on disc and she distributed copies to members at the meeting. Further copies are available from DRS or RW. PD will also put it on the FSG web site.

9 FSG Leaflet & Web Page

- 9.1 Some members have commented upon a first draft of the leaflet. DRS and PD will liaise to ensure that leaflet and web site are compatible.
- 9.2 PD showed the current Website. He asked for additional information to go on the site. If people were prepared to be listed as contacts, could they let him have their e-mail address, as well as suggestions for any other pages that should be linked to the site (P.Dyrynda@swansea.ac.uk). Members thanked PD for creating such an informative and attractive site.
- 9.3 PD has also created additional sites on the Marine ecology of the Fleet Lagoon and Poole Harbour.
<http://www.swan.ac.uk/biodiv/fleet/index.htm>
<http://www.swan.ac.uk/biodiv/poole/index.htm>

10 Future meetings

18th July 2003 at the DWT headquarters Brooklands. Presentation by Steve Morris of CEFAS on Harmful Algal Biotoxins in the Fleet.

21st November at Abbotsbury. Presentation topic and speaker to be announced.

Suggested future speakers: Ed Harland on Fleet instrumentation and telemetry; Richard Acornley on Fleet water quality; Alasdair Bruce on aspects of Holocene evolution of the Fleet.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 DM reported that harmful biotoxin-producing algae had been detected in the Fleet, and algal biotoxins had been found in Fleet shellfish tissues, in January 2003; as a result, the Fleet oyster fishery had been closed and notices warning of the danger of consuming shellfish from the area had been posted by the Weymouth Port Health Authority. DM said that although algal blooms occurred frequently in the Fleet, a winter bloom was unusual and harmful biotoxins were seldom discovered. DB expressed concern over apparent large gaps in knowledge of the subject, particularly in regard to possible harmful effect upon Fleet birds and fish and perhaps other phyla, and suggested that FSG should encourage appropriate research. PD offered to speak to Kevin Flynn who is involved in such work. DRS will discuss with RW what is known of the biology and ecology of the algae as regards to Fleet conservation, and whether EN will fund research. [Note the presentation topic and speaker at the next FSG meeting]

11.2 Heritage Management of England's Wetlands is a new project funded by English heritage to identify wetland areas of archaeological importance and ensure their proper management. Under the criteria proposed the Fleet would certainly qualify. GLP will investigate further and report back at the next meeting.

11.3 World Heritage. There will be a visit from consultants from the Natural History museum to the area on 7 April, including JW, to look at on site interpretation. Richard Edmonds is co-ordinating this and will be contacting people shortly. World Heritage Field guide will be published shortly.

12 Presentation by Andy Poore of Ilchester Estates on the Abbotsbury Historic Landscape Project (summary below).