

Fleet Study Group

Minutes of the 78th meeting of the Fleet Study Group, held at The Dorset Wildlife Trust Headquarters, Brookland on the 18th July 2003

Present; D.R. Seaward (Chair), G. Le Pard (Minutes, Dorset County Council), K Coombe, G. Poole, R. Edmonds, P. Dyrinda, E. Green, D. Moxom, D. Wheeler, R. Waldock, S. Eden, P. O'Sullivan, S. Delany (ecologist, Environment Agency). Chairman welcomed Steve Morris (CEFAS, Weymouth), Dr Duncan Purdie and Silvia Nascimento (Southampton University School of Ocean and Earth Sciences) to give presentations upon Harmful Algal Biotoxins (Minute 10).

- 1 **Apologies for Absence;** J. Fitzpatrick, E. Harland, J. Whittaker, L. Baldock, M. Pegoraro, A. Bruce, D. Dorsett, R. Doe, M. Bray.
- 2 **Notes of Last Meeting:** in items 1 and 7.1, "Geryant Weaver" should read Geraint Weber. Add P. O'Sullivan (Plymouth University) to the list of those present.
- 3 **Matters Arising**
 - 3.1 Minute 11.2; The Fleet and Chesil Beach have now been included on the English Heritage inventory of wetland sites and landscapes in list B: "wetlands and landscapes of national importance" (GLP dealing).
 - 3.2 Minute 11.3; *The official guide to the Jurassic Coast: a walk through time* has now been published and a copy provided for the FSG archive. The Natural History Museum, London, will soon produce their scoping study on interpretation facilities of the World Heritage site (scheduled to be released July 2003) and RE will supply a copy for FSG archive.
- 4 **Reports from Representatives**
 - 4.1 Joint Dorset Marine Committee of 2nd June; the new *Dorset Biodiversity Strategy and Audit 2003* has now been published. Andrew Pollard, DWT Biodiversity Officer, will attend the next FSG meeting to introduce it as relevant to Chesil, the Fleet and Portland Harbour.
 - 4.2 Dorset Coast Forum meeting 11th June; there were two main points of interest to FSG: the English Nature presentation by Victoria Copley, notes of which are appended, and Powergen Renewables preliminary consultation on a wind farm scheme in Portland Harbour. The latter will be discussed at the next FSG meeting
- 5 **Current & recently completed research**
 - 5.1 P. O'S reported that Geraint Weber, one of his Masters students at Plymouth University, is attempting to create an historical record of past nutrient loading in the Fleet. Using agricultural census data from the 1850's and earlier estate maps he aims to model nitrogen, nitrate, phosphorus and phosphate loading in the Fleet. Another student, Neil Hudson, is surveying farms in the Fleet catchment to calculate present nitrogen and phosphorus loadings.
 - 5.2 GLP's paper on the various attempts to drain the Fleet has been published in the *Dorset Proceedings*; copies available from GLP.

- 5.3 In July RDF media have been filming off Chesil an episode of the TV programme "The Wreck Detectives". The site has been identified as that of the *Cassibelaunus* which sank on 26th November 1872.
- 5.4 A diver has reported finding peat under the "Chesil Cannon site" opposite Fleet village. GLP will send details to David Parham.

6 Research proposals.

- 6.1 A "Channel Coast Observatory" has been established to monitor coastal processes and change from Selsey to Portland Bill using LIDAR and ortho-rectified aerial photographs. Details are available on www.channelcoastobservatory.com. The Lyme Bay and South Devon coast group are looking at options for extending this work westwards.
- 6.2 RE reported that the World Heritage site project is looking at conservation monitoring of geological interest sites.
- 6.3 GLP reported that English Heritage had provided funding for a Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment of the archaeology of the Dorset Coast, to be carried out by Wessex Archaeology.
- 6.4 RE reported that EA are proposing to do another LIDAR flight along Chesil Beach. DM said he would contact Nick Lyness to see if this could be done at a suitable low tide so that the mud flats could also be included in the Survey.

7 Future meetings

- 7.1 21 November 2003 at Committee Room 3, County Hall, Dorchester (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE) and 19 March 2004 at DWT Brooklands; presentation subjects: on 21 Nov, Don Moxom on Chesil Beach terns and on 19 Mar, to be announced.
- 7.2 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; Patrick O'Sullivan on "hind casting" nutrient loads to the Fleet.

8 Resignation of Chairman

- 8.1 DRS gave notice that he would resign at the next FSG meeting on 21 Nov. Dr John Whittaker of the Natural History Museum, London is proposed as the new Chairman.

9 Any Other Business

- 9.1 EG/DM reported that concerns are still being raised over lack of progress in formalising the pollution control plan for Ferrybridge to protect the Fleet.
- 9.2 EG asked whether any thoughts were being given to the effect upon Chesil, The Fleet and hinterland of the possible rise in sea level and increase in storminess which may occur, perhaps due to global warming. It was agreed that if appropriate knowledgeable speakers can be found, a meeting of FSG will be devoted to debate on the topic.

10 Presentation

Presentation by Steve Morris of CEFAS Weymouth on Harmful Algal Biotoxins in England and Wales and in the Fleet, and by Duncan Purdie and Silvia Nascimento of Southampton University School of Ocean and Earth Sciences on their research into toxigenic microalgae in the Fleet.

They are providing summaries which, together with comments by Dr Peter Dyrinda on the subsequent discussion which ranged widely, will be appended to the Agenda for the next FSG meeting.