

## FLEET STUDY GROUP

Minutes of the 82nd meeting of the Fleet Study Group, held at the Estate Office, West Yard, Abbotsbury, on the 19th November 2004.

**Present:** John Whittaker (Chairman), Gordon Le Pard (DCC: Minutes), Dennis Seward, Edward Green, Don Moxom and Dave Wheeler (Ilchester Estates), Rachel Waldock (EN), Jeanne FitzPatrick, Geoff Poole, Ken Coombe, Sue Eden, and Danuta Kochanowska (DERC). The meeting welcomed Marcus Scrace, Edward Green's successor as Agent, Ilchester Estates.

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Lin Baldock, Ed Harland, Malcolm Bray, Suzy Witt, and Patrick O'Sullivan.

**2. Notes of Last Meeting:** Unfortunately Dennis Seaward was omitted from the list of those present; apart from that they were accepted as a true record.

### **3. Matters Arising:**

Gordon Le Pard distributed copies of a disc containing the old images of Chesil Beach and the Fleet that had been discovered by English Nature. All members were asked to look at the images as there were probably several interesting projects that could be developed from them.

### **4. Reports from Representatives:**

(4.1) Joint Dorset Marine Committee: A report on the last meeting had been sent by Lin Baldock. One important point concerned Portland Port who, it was felt, should be taking a more strategic view of management, especially concerning recreation, rather than looking at each problem individually.

(4.2) Dorset Coast Forum meeting, 23rd November 2005: Geoff Poole will be attending and will hopefully report to the FSG in March.

### **5. Current and Recently Completed Research:**

Dave Wheeler reported that he (with others) had recently been involved in a study of the Abbotsbury swans. The paper is entitled "Population structure, survival rates and productivity of mute swans breeding in a colony at Abbotsbury, Dorset", and the full authorship is McCleery, Perrins, Wheeler & Groves. The first two authors are from the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, the latter two are from our own Abbotsbury Swannery. So far, only a draft copy is available, but when published it will go to the FSG Archive.

The latest issue of *Fleet News*, Don Moxom's admirable newsletter, had a note on recent work on water quality, and its effect on *Lamprothamnium*. This was an area where more research is needed. John Whittaker said he knew of interesting dated specimens of *Lamprothamnium papulosum* in the Botany Herbarium of the NHM. He

also had taken part in a survey of this stonewort with a colleague, Jenny Moore, in the 1970's. He would send details to Rachel Waldock and Dennis Seaward.

Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Phase I (Archaeology) was now complete, reported Gordon Le Pard. Phase II would probably start next year, involving ground truthing the sites recorded from various sources. A series of pilot sites will be looked at to establish methodologies. One of these will probably be the Fleet.

Wreckmap Portland. This is a joint project between the Dorset Coast Forum and the Nautical Archaeological Society examining wrecks and maritime archaeological sites in the Weymouth & Portland area, reported Gordon Le Pard. A copy of the report will be placed in the FSG Archive. The most exciting discovery is the remains of a former railway bridge which spanned the southern ship entrance of Portland Breakwater.

Richard Acornley (South Wessex Monitoring and Data) is apparently carrying out further sediment studies in the Fleet. John Whittaker said he would find out more about this work.

West Dorset District Council is preparing a Heritage Plan which may involve a project to promote the Fleet hinterland

#### **6. Chesil Survey Points Update:**

Twenty-three of these points had now been surveyed in, from Abbotsbury to the Narrows; further points would be surveyed in during Phase 2. Malcolm Bray would be invited to next meeting to describe what had been done.

#### **7. Memorial to Alan Carr:**

The aim is to have a memorial plaque that can also act as a permanent survey point. More details will be given at the next meeting.

#### **8. Proceedings of the IVth Fleet Symposium:**

Dennis Seaward reported that there had been delays caused by the illness of one important contributor. However it was now hoped that all the articles would be completed soon.

#### **9. Poster/Demonstration Event :**

This had been planned to follow the next FSG Meeting, 18th March (at DWT Brooklands). [Although the room was booked, DWT notified us at short notice that they could not accommodate us. Thus the venue of the 83rd Meeting as had to be changed to Abbotsbury, and the Poster/Demonstration Event has been postponed until further notice].

**10. Any Other Business:**

The breeding of the little terns at Ferrybridge had not been very successful, despite all efforts. Don Moxom said that they would probably be reducing the amount of work on the site and not producing a full annual report

Fleet Management Plan. The FSG will be asked to help in the review. Don Moxom will circulate it for discussion at a future FSG meeting.

Danuta Kochanowska said that the study of eel-grass beds in Devon and Dorset was now complete.

**11. Presentation to Edward Green**

The meeting concluded with a presentation to Edward Green on his retirement as Agent, Ichester Estates. The Chairman thanked him sincerely for his generous support of the Fleet Study Group over very many years. He was then presented with a framed facsimile of King Canute's charter of 1023 by which he granted...."an area of seven hides of land to Orc, his thegn, for the monastery at Abbotsbury". This charter is the oldest surviving document relating to Dorset and Dennis Seaward kindly provided Edward with an accompanying exposition of it. He was also given a book on the natural wildernesses of New Zealand (a country in which he hopes to spend some of his retirement), and a framed caricature of an "ostracod" in the style of Edward Lear. Edward responded with some reminiscences of his time as Agent, and of his regard for the FSG.

**The next meeting of the FSG will be held on Friday 18th March 2005, at the Estate Office, West Yard, Abbotsbury. Please note this late change of venue from DWT, Brooklands, due to events beyond our control.**