

## **State of Conservation Report**

Summary of events since the last full report sent in July 2008.

There is no change to the condition of any of the Geological Conservation Review units that define the core values of the Site. 61 of the 66 GCR sites are in a 'favourable stable' condition while the remaining 5 are 'declining' or in 'unfavourable' condition, representing 7.5% of the GCR interests. These unfavourable interests represent a very much smaller proportion of the Site in terms of the physical area, (2% of the Site) and mostly apply to the Portland Harbour Shore which was in this condition prior to Notification on the World Heritage list.

### **SITE WIDE**

#### **Shoreline Management Plans**

The South Devon and Dorset SMP is now out for public consultation (ends 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009). The consultants are Halcrow and the lead authority is Teignbridge District Council.

The Poole and Christchurch Bays SMP is working to a very tight deadline to deliver the plan early in 2010. Draft policy will be available for public consultation in the autumn. The consultants are Royal Haskoning and the lead authority is Bournemouth Borough Council.

#### **Collecting Cultures**

The Dorset Museum Service has secured £200, 000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund with a further £30,000 match funding from Dorset and Devon County Councils to acquire and display fossils in nine museums along the coast. The project is one year into a two year programme. A number of displays have been improved and a number of fossils, both common and rare, have been secured.

### **EAST DEVON**

#### **Orcombe Rocks, Rodney Steps**

Old steps and associated iron work removed by East Devon District Council in preparation for new steps.

#### **Budleigh Salteron**

Concern regarding un-consented drainage works down the cliff near Steamer Steps. Amanda Newsome has expressed Natural England's concerns and poor work will be rectified.

Landscape questions have been raised regarding the redevelopment of a café on the sea front and a planning application for a house on the cliff top to the west.

#### **Branscombe**

Continued work to remove the remains of the Napoli wreck. Public enquiry held at Devon County Council.

### **Monmouth Beach**

Concerns regarding inappropriate hammering on the Ammonite Pavement and possible associated break up of part of it. Letter to the media from Natural England explaining concerns to the public.

Excavation of a plesiosaur fossil from the ammonite pavement and subsequent repair to the hole in order to protect the integrity of the pavement.

### **WEST DORSET**

The Fossil collecting code continues to operate and a number of interesting specimens have been recorded, including an exceptional specimen of a fossil shark, *Palaeosphinax*, rescued by an 'amateur' collector.

### **Lyme Regis town tip**

The landslide that started last May has continued to move, with a large failure in January 2009, bringing more tipped material onto the beach. West Dorset District Council has commissioned SITA to undertake beach cleaning operations to remove the worst of the tip material that has become exposed on the beach. A long term strategy is being drawn up for the site.

### **East Cliff, Lyme Regis**

Additional funding secured by WDDC to revise East Cliff, Lyme Regis, scheme in the light of concerns expressed by WHS Team, Natural England and residents on environmental impacts of consultants recommended option.

### **Charmouth**

The National Trust has served an injunction against a collector for persistent and dangerous digging in the cliffs along Stonebarrow, Charmouth. The case is awaiting a view from the court before it can be applied.

### **Burton Bradstock and Eype**

Concerns were received about a group of German collectors active together on these sites. We think we know who organised the trip and have had a correspondence explaining local sensitivities to groups undertaking this activity. They are doing nothing different from local collectors or all collecting effort in the past but working in a group over the Easter holidays has generated expressions of concern. A difficult issue that requires an outbreak of common sense.

### **Seatown**

Planning permission granted for West Dorset District Council to refurbish the slope stabilisation scheme and extend it by 15 m to the west. No objection from WHS team or Natural England.

Return to continue monitoring of ex situ starfish bed blocks. Since April last year a number of new blocks have fallen onto the beach and more specimens can be seen than last year despite continued collecting.

### **East Beach, West Bay**

The Environment Agency has concerns about the health of the beach as a flood protection barrier. Recharge last took place in 2004 with shingle derived from Freshwater Beach. Consideration of importing material is now being discussed along with possible harder defences in the future.

### **West Bay and Freshwater Beach**

Draft Beach Management Plan for West Bay and Freshwater consultation from Environment Agency. Comments made.

## **PORTLAND AND WEYMOUTH**

### **Tar Rocks, Portland**

Further evidence of ill informed attempts to extract ammonites from the large in sequence, ex situ blocks of Portland Stone, this time using a portable stone saw or angle grinder, together with a drill. Action considered with the Portland Environment Group. We do not want to publicise the location by making a press release. A sign will probably be vandalised. The worst of the saw marks have been removed. Ongoing.

### **Portland Coastal Strip**

Dorset County Council has placed a stop order on any work of the coastal strip. Issues of compensation and funding for any such compensation remain to be resolved. Report made to UNESCO in response to an enquiry.

### **Portland Harbour Shore**

Strategic study complete by Halcrow for the Harbour Shore. The only engineering likely to be explored may relate to stabilisation works of the Old Castle Road near Sandsfoot Castle. Possibility of co-ordinating clean up of rubbish on foreshore as part of the works discussed with W&PBC engineers.

Three slips along the Castle Cove area including one that has destroyed a cliff top beach hut.

### **Castle Cove, Portland Harbour Shore**

Consultation on redevelopment of facilities at Castle Cove Sailing Club. Minimal impact as the interest is already largely destroyed.

### **27 Castle Road, Portland Harbour Shore**

New application for development on the cliff top, this time outside the WHS boundary. Issues re erosion, erosion risk mapping and the Shoreline management Plan brought to developers attention.

### **Newton's Cove, Weymouth**

Advice sought from Dorset County Council highways regarding replacement of footbridge over road at Newton's Cove. No concerns were raised.

### **Preston Beach (outside the Site)**

Consultation on the Preston Beach Management Plan. Comments submitted.

### **Osmington Mills**

Volunteers from Records Management (Dorset County Council) with the Countryside Service, cleaned up surface rubble (aprox 2 tonnes), geotextiles and garden waste from the Osmington failed defence structure by pub car park.

## **PURBECK**

### **Lulworth Cove**

Concerns have been raised about the loss of beach on the west side of the Cove. Comments have been made on outline plans to address the issue.

### **Swanage**

Continuing discussions with the Pines Hotel and their consultants, Halcrow regarding cliff stabilisation issues on the North Swanage cliffs (Outside WHS boundary).

Initial enquiries for minor cliff stabilisation works at 28 Burlington Road (Outside WHS boundary).

Un-concented ground works above the SSSI off Burlington Road. Loading the cliff top could have an impact on ground stability (Outside WHS boundary).

- End -

Richard Edmonds,  
Earth Science Manager, June 2009