

Minutes for DIGS Meeting

7.00 pm Tuesday 26th July 2016

Dorset Wildlife Trust, Brooklands Farm, Forston

1. Apologies for absence: Bob Christian, Kelvin Huff, Rhiannon Rogers, Geoff Rowland, Sam Scriven, Jo Thomas, Ruth and Martin Walden, Giles Watts.
Michael Gates has decided to withdraw from the group due to commitments.
2. New members Ruth and Martin Walden, David Lloyd
3. Minutes of last meeting 24th May 2016 and matters arising. Minutes were taken as read. Some minor changes to item 4 on Jurassic. 4.3 the quarry will not be restored as an archaeological monument – it should be the building will be an architectural monument! 4.4. the plesiosaur took 2,500 hours to prepare and is not called Kirsten.
4. Financial update: Lloyds £431.15
Nationwide £3846.20

Geoff's sales at Keat's Quarry event and sales at OUGS symposium. (£57.50).
5. IUCN geo-heritage collecting issue. **See further document sent with the minutes as appendix with comments by David Sole and Richard Edmonds.** Those present at the DIGS meeting were incredulous about this move to try and restrict collection of geological heritage. In west Dorset if material exposed is not collected immediately it is likely to be destroyed by natural processes and lost to science and the public. It is to be hoped that common sense will prevail. The motion is likely to be passed electronically before the meeting in September but it will then be reviewed by sub-committees in the IUCN.
6. Recent happenings:
 - (a) OUGS symposium at Exeter. This took place over the weekend 8-10th July with field trips before and after. Around 250 members of OUGS enjoyed a range of lectures on the theme of 'How the West was made'. Lectures took place on Friday evening (Ian Stewart), Saturday morning and all day on Sunday. A number of field trips took place on Saturday afternoon (cruise from Exmouth to Brixham, Exeter Cathedral, Hay Tor).
 - (b) Community liaison meeting at Swanworth Quarry and its future. This took place on the evening of 14th July. There was a tour of the current workings and the restored areas where calcicole flora is being encouraged through careful management. The group was also informed of the plan to extend the quarry to the north to enable it to function for a further 15-20 years. If no expansion is allowed then the stone production would stop in around 5 years. It is important to remember that Swanworth is an important source of aggregate for the Bournemouth and Poole conurbation and if the quarry closed it would have to be transported from Portland or even further afield. It also provides around 35 jobs so is important for local employment. The quarry is also important for recycling and tipping of inert waste.
 - (c) DGAG Chairman's Picnic on Saturday 23rd July. This was centred on Portesham Farm and involved a look at the quarry, lime kiln, a walk into Portesham as well as a walk along the ridge to Coryates and then up Hell's Bottom to the Hardy Monument before returning to Portesham

Farm. The efforts of DIGS members were appreciated providing a nicely trimmed surface for the picnic. The fossil log had also been cleared. It was a surprise to find that a number of the participants had not visited the site before.

7. Future events:

Rockwatch visit to Dorset 1st-5th August, Thursday 4th August visit to some Purbeck DIGS sites.

DGAG field trip to Mendips Saturday August 20th.

Joint event with Wessex OUGS Sunday September 25th Conservation and walk based on Red Lane.

Architectural Heritage Week Blandford is 8th to 15th September. Further information is now available on this <http://www.edht.org.uk/dahw%20-%20eventlisting%20sat10.html>

G.A. Conference Portland 22nd-23rd October. Base on Portland Heights Hotel, lectures on Friday and field trips on Saturday.

8. Website, recent update by Gillian Gunner. Alan reported website update by Gillian Gunner in the last week. She is very helpful and efficient looking after the DIGS website.

9 Sites and conservation:

- (a) Progress at Whiteway's Hill Quarry. Pete gave a detailed account of progress at Whiteway's Hill Quarry and this is work in progress. During excavation of a drainage pit in clay, potential decorative stone beds were found below the clay. This is being described as Marnhull Marble as it can be cut and will take a polish. It is oolitic limestone and similar to the Todber Freestone but not fossiliferous. It is white with crystalline calcite (sparite) with iron rich patches producing liesegang like patterns. Geoff Townson and Pete have produced a geological poster for Dean Harris, the quarry manager, to help him to promote the commercial use of the stone. Due to good working relationship with the Dean the DIGS group, helped by Geoff Townson, could make a significant contribution to the detailed knowledge of the Corallian in north Dorset and is looking to add this information to the website.
- (b) Poxwell Good progress was made at Poxwell on 30th June despite poor weather and the rank nature of the vegetation. The area by the road for parking was cut as well as the area inside the perimeter fence. The DIGS sign has now been erected inside the fence rather than on the fence boundary.
- (c) Red Lane. Some progress was made at Red Lane on 4th July but progress was limited due to the small work party, the considerable growth of vegetation and a wasps' nest! Alan will contact Peter Begley to arrange a further session and the conservation session with OUGS is also planned for September
- (d) Portesham Farm. Already covered in 6c above.
- (e) Rock Pit Farm. Roger gave a report on his work at Rockpit Farm, Maiden Newton. He has visited on 4 occasions giving the site its annual clean up. He met with Anne Holloway who is the new parish clerk. The registration marker has been replaced and survived after the previous one was damaged. There is ongoing discussion concerning an information board for the site.
- (f) Ridgeway cutting. Work was carried out on 14th June along the Dorchester Road section as well as in the cutting which leads to Bayard Dairy. Only the western side of

the cutting was partially cleared as the eastern side was covered in flowers. This is not a DIGS site but is part of the Bincombe SSSI but it is such a good section exposing the boundary between the Portland and Purbeck Beds up into the Wealden Clay, it deserves our attention.

- (g) Wanderwell. Roger has continued to carry out work at Wanderwell, Bothenhampton singlehandedly! He met up with new representative of the Dorset Countryside team and discussed further activity. He has continued to look after the lime kiln and also work on a replacement information board for the site on its geology and history. Our thanks to Roger for his continued efforts on this site.
- (h) Suggestions for new conservation activity. Tarrant Rawston Pit, Tuesday 16th August. 10.30 start. Red Lane Abbotsbury Wednesday 31st August. 10.40 start.

10 Any other business:

- (a) Update on Jurassica. A site meeting was held on 21st July with Alison Smith, Richard Edmonds, Phil Sterling (DCC ecologist) and Ruth Carpenter (N.E.). We walked the area mainly looking at the abundant flora and fauna helped by Nigel Spring and his team helping keep the vegetation under control benefitting butterfly conservation. There was an amazing show of pyramidal orchids! During the walk, the location of the attraction was explained. At the moment the work being carried out is a feasibility study but later there will have to be a major fund raising programme to generate the planned project cost of around £120 million.
- (b) Worth Matravers Fossil Roadshow event 23rd/24th July. This took place at the Square and Compass pub in a marquee in the garden. David Sole was there with some of his amazing fossils and Paul Ensom was present helping people identify their geological finds. This event has been running for several years but this is the first time that Alan and Kelvin knew about it. The fossil road show is succeeded by a stone carving event over the following two weeks and will be worth a visit especially later in the two week period.
- (c) Geoff Rowland is leading events for the Jurassic Coast Trust – see their website. <http://jurassiccoast.org/get-involved/go-jurassic-rangers/>
- (d) Alan drew attention to an article in the latest Rockwatch magazine entitled Reading the Jurassic Rocks which used the Purbeck Project illustrations created for DIGS by Carol Roberts
- (e) Alan also drew attention to items in the latest Geology Today, one by Mark Godden on stone mining on Portland and the second written by Alan on Bowleaze Cove geology and the recent landslip activity.

11 Date of next meeting including AGM Tuesday 6th September 7.00 pm.

Alan Holiday 27th July 2016.

Apologies if these are not as full as they might be but it is difficult to chair the meeting and take the minutes!