

Site importance

All or part of the study area is subject to one or more of the following designations:

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Under the EU Habitats Directive

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Sensitive Marine Area. Listed 1951, 1957, 1986 by NCC, predecessor to English Nature, and now Natural England

Wetland of international importance
1985, under the RAMSAR convention.

Special Protection Area (SPA) 1979 under the EU directive for the conservation of wild birds

Designated Bass Nursery Area
CEFAS

Chesil Bank and the Fleet Nature Reserve (in the ownership of the Ilchester and Crown Estates)

Part of the Dorset and East Devon **World Heritage Site** (Jurassic Coast) listed by UNESCO.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Part of the **West Dorset Heritage Coast.**
Dorset County Council.

Working on the Fleet and Chesil Beach

Permission to work on the Fleet and the Chesil Beach south of West Bexington must be obtained initially from the Warden, Don Moxom, at the Chesil Bank and the Fleet Nature Reserve office at the Chesil Beach Centre, Portland Beach Road, Portland Dorset.
01305 760579, reserve@chesil.fsnet.co.uk

The Fleet Study Group would expect to receive a copy of the results of any work carried out and these documents will be held in the Fleet Study Group archive.

Fleet Study Group Archives

A collection of nearly 350 papers and items relevant to the study area. The items are held in the reference section of Weymouth College Library, Cranford Avenue, Weymouth, Dorset, under the care of the Chief Librarian. Material can be consulted at the library, but may not be borrowed or removed. Photocopies can be provided at cost and with the consent of the librarian.

A copy of the catalogue of archive items is held at the library and is also available to download as an Excel spreadsheet from the FSG website: www.chesilbeach.org/FSG.

The Fleet Study Group

Founded 1975

MAP

The Fleet Study Group collates and disseminates information and encourages research on the Fleet Lagoon, Chesil Beach, and Portland Harbour, Dorset.

The Fleet Lagoon and Chesil Beach

A unique coastal environment in Dorset

The Fleet

The largest brackish water lagoon in Britain It is 13 kilometres long with a salinity gradient from east (marine) to west (brackish). The depth varies from 4 metres in the lower Fleet to less than 1 metre in the upper Fleet. The width varies from just 65 metres at the Narrows to over 1 kilometre at Butterstreet Cove. It is connected to the sea at Ferrybridge at its southernmost extremity.

Chesil Beach

One of the most important shingle beaches in Britain. It is a linear storm beach and an important example of a tombolo. It is 22 kilometres long and the pebbles are graded from large in the south to small in the north-west. Most of the pebbles are either flint or chert, mixed with some pebbles of quartzite and other rocks.

The beach is highest (~14 metres) at its southern end and widest opposite the Narrows. The width varies from 150-200 metres.

Associated habitats

Shingle beach
Sand flat
Mud flat
Salt marsh
Reed bed
Freshwater marsh
Saline lagoon

The Fleet Study Group

Established in 1975 by the late Dr Elsie Burrows, a world algal authority with Liverpool University. The inaugural meeting was held at the Dorset Institute for Higher Education (DIHE), now Weymouth College, on the 25th April 1975. It is a voluntary organisation bringing together a wide range of scientific and local interests. It meets three times a year, usually in March, July and November. The Fleet Study Group has received, and continues to receive, the full support of the Ilchester Estates.

From time to time the Group holds symposia to discuss results of recent studies. Proceedings of the first three (1981, 1985, 2000) have been published.

Objectives of the Fleet Study Group

- The collection, collation, and dissemination of scientific, historical and other relevant information about the Fleet, Chesil Beach and adjacent areas.
- To assemble and maintain an archive of relevant information
- The identification of gaps in our knowledge and topics for future research
- The consideration of environmental effects of natural and anthropogenic changes.

Any scientist interested in contributing to these aims is encouraged to contact the group.

Composition of the Group

The Fleet Study Group membership comprises:

Representatives of Ilchester Estates, Natural England, Dorset County Council World Heritage Site Team, and Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC).

And **scientists** with interests in:

Geology	Ecology
Geomorphology	Botany
Palaentology	Birds
Sedimentology	Fish
Hydrology	Invertebrates
Historical archives	Archeology

The Current Chairman is Ed Harland Tel: 07824 365556, ejharland@chesilbeach.org.

Membership is by invitation to those expressing an interest in appropriate topics and wishing to further the Group's objectives. The present membership consists of both amateurs and professionals who have worked in the study area on a relevant topic.