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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



COE158747

Committee of experts - protected areas

PURBECK HERITAGE COAST

Application for the award of the
European Diploma
submitted by the United Kingdom

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INTRODUCTION

The Purbeck Heritage Coast of Dorset is an outstanding example of a tract of countryside and coast which on the one hand is of great importance for its geology, wildlife, landscape and cultural associations and on the other is under considerable pressure from tourism, mineral extraction and agricultural production.

During the last thirty years a variety of measures have been implemented to protect the wildlife and landscape of the area and to enable visitors to enjoy it without damaging its natural attributes.

The conservation of this area is of international importance and it is for this reason that the application for the award of the European Diploma of the Council of Europe is being made.

1 TYPE OF AREA (See Plan Annex A1)

The Purbeck Heritage Coast covers some 164 sq kms in the south-east corner of the County of Dorset. It is an inhabited area with a number of small villages and with a wide range of economic activities including agriculture, forestry, quarrying, oil production and tourism. Within the area certain sites have been set aside specifically for nature conservation and informal recreation.

II CHARACTERISTICS AND SCIENTIFIC, AESTHETIC, CULTURAL AND RECREATIVE VALUE JUSTIFYING CONSERVATION

The Purbeck Heritage Coast is of considerable scientific, aesthetic, cultural and recreative value. These are very briefly summarised below and followed by a more detailed description of the area and the pressures to which it is subject.

(a) SCIENTIFIC VALUE - The geographical location of the area means that it is influenced both by the warm damp oceanic climate of the west and the more seasonal continental conditions of the east. As a result the distribution ranges of many species overlap in this area giving a particularly wide diversity of types.

(b) AESTHETIC VALUE - The area contains a very wide variety of landscapes varying from the dramatic cliffs along its southern edge to the tranquil shores of Poole Harbour with its numerous creeks and mudflats. There are numerous individual features of scenic value such as Old Harry Rocks, St Aldhelm's Head, Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door.

(c) CULTURAL VALUE - From earliest times the area has been inhabited by man and there are numerous relics of former habitation and economic activity e.g. celtic field systems.

(d) RECREATIVE VALUE - There are many opportunities for recreation, including the beaches, cliffs for climbing, cliff walks, sub-aqua diving, sailing and boating and study of wildlife.

DESCRIPTION

(a) Climate

The area receives between 30 and 35 inches of rain a year with a typically mild maritime temperature regime. The southern parts are directly influenced by the sea and frosts and snow are uncommon.

(b) Geology

The Purbeck coast is one of the most important geological localities in the UK. Arkell (1947) described it as the most richly endowed geological teaching area in the country.

The location is the European type area for the Kimmeridgian and Portlandian stages of the Upper Jurassic and is the UK type area for the Corralian rocks of the Upper Oxfordian stage of the Middle Jurassic.

Tectonic interest lies in the relationship between thick clay sequences interbedded with limestones which have been folded and faulted on a severe scale. Erosion has exposed what is considered to be the most perfectly exposed Alpine fold of the chalk plains of North-West Europe.

The area is important palaeontologically, particularly in the deposit of mammal remains, which are world famous. These are found mainly in the Purbeck facies of the Portlandian although the freshwater and terrestrial fauna and flora of the whole of the Purbeck facies is of significance particularly with regard to fossil tree and dirt beds, insects and reptiles including footprints of Iguanodon and Megalosaurus.

The area is outstanding for the richness and variety of its saurian remains and is a famous locality for the dispar zone of the Albian. Sedimentation during the Portland, Purbeck and Wealden beds displaying the retreat of the Jurassic sea and the change from marine to hyper saline and then terrestrial and freshwater beds is of particular interest in respect of the palaeoenvironments of the Jurassic/Cretaceous boundary.

The area is dominated by the eastward plunging anticline of the Purbeck Fold. In the east of the area the northern part is comprised mainly of sands, gravels and clays of Eocene, Lower Tertiary age, on which recent deposits of alluvium, gravel and peat are found. The growth of spits and of wind blown sand dunes at Studland and adjoining areas has enclosed and protected the drowned lower reaches of the Rivers Frome and Piddle to form a large, 3,846 hectare, brackish water lagoon known as Poole Harbour.

The Eocene rocks rest to the south unconformably on a line of a major fault complex of intra-Cretaceous and Miocene age, the Abbotsbury Fault line against the chalk of the Cretaceous. At that junction the ground rises sharply to some 200 metres in a long but narrow east-west trending hog's back and then falls away equally sharply into a wide east-west trending valley excavated in the freshwater clays and sands of the Wealden beds of the basal Cretaceous Neocomian stage. South again these rocks merge inconspicuously into the underlying Purbeck beds of the Jurassic which thin by erosion and rise to between 100-200 metres on top of the durable marine limestone and dolomite of the Portland beds folded asymmetrically with the steep limb to the north.

In the east the Portland limestone ends in sheer sea cliffs of 30 metres or over but further west the shale, clay and mudstones of the Kimmeridge Clay strata appear from beneath the limestone and are exposed as a broad pericline surrounded by an escarpment of Portland limestone.

Further west still the major zone of disturbance of the Purbeck fold is entered and all the previously mentioned strata are found involved in intense faulting and folding although within a short distance to the north and beyond the Abbotsbury fault line much less disturbed rocks of Cretaceous and Eocene age occur resting unconformably on clays, limestones and sands of the Corallian, Kimmeridge Clay and Portland and Purbeck beds involved in small periclinal and block faults.

(c) The Landscape (see photographs for examples of the landscape)

The landscape of the defined Heritage Coast can be broadly divided into four elements:-

- (i) Heathland and Chalk - The islands and promontories of Poole Harbour and the heathlands rising to join the chalk ridge which runs east to west throughout the area.
- (ii) The Central Valley - intensively farmed and including the main settlements of Corfe Castle, Harman's Cross and Swanage.

(iii) The Limestone Plateau - This ends in rugged limestone cliffs with direct access to the sea only being possible at the attractive hanging valleys of Winspit, Seacombe and Dancing Ledge.

(iv) Chalk, Limestone and Kimmeridge Clay - The complex geology from St Aldhelm's Head to White Nothe has produced one of the most varied coastal landscapes in Europe. There are many outstanding coastal formations including Lulworth Cove, Durdle Door and Stair Hole, the cliffs becoming progressively more dramatic, reaching their culmination in the White Nothe Headland. Finally the coastline dips into a more rounded and subdued landscape around Ringstead and Osmington Mills from where outstanding views across Weymouth Bay to the Isle of Portland and back to White Nothe may be obtained.

(d) Flora

The northern heathlands are relatively remote from public roads and disturbance. They are on the north-western fringe of the lowland heaths of Europe and only 5,600 hectares of this habitat remain in Dorset. Although the heather species themselves are widespread, there are rarities such as the Dorset Heath and the Marsh Gentian. Club-moss occurs in a few limited localities and the area exhibits ecological gradients from the salt marshes on to the dry land and from the more exposed parts on the east to the more sheltered parts in the west. Bog and mire habitats abound, and are popularly known for their insectivorous plants. The southern sector is more heterogeneous with the limestone areas producing grassy habitats that are kept in check by the salt spray of the sea. This grassland reflects the dryness of these limestone soils whereas the scrub and woodland exists in the more water retentive clay areas. Not only do restricted maritime plants such as the Sea Spleenwort exist along the coast but this is one of the few areas in England where the Early Spider Orchid is found. The relative lack of interference by man here has meant that there is a wide range of native plants.

(e) Fauna

Birds. The Dartford Warbler is on the north-western extreme of its distribution and its main British stronghold is in the Purbeck heathlands. At one time the heath and marshlands held 25% of the British breeding population of Marsh Harriers and the decline of this species may be due to the national use of pesticides. The scrub-filled valleys provide food and shelter for migrant birds moving across Europe in the spring and autumn.

The waters of Poole Harbour are major over-wintering areas for wildfowl and the scrub-filled valleys of the southern coast are major landfalls for migrating birds. The cliffs at Durlston are the most easterly site in Britain of the Fulmar, and the once common Puffin still survives along the southern cliffs. The Peregrine and Raven, rather more characteristic of wilder northern Britain, occur here also.

Mammals. Although the mammals of the area are less significant, it is worthy of note that the Red Squirrel survives on Brownsea Island, one of the few remaining localities in lowland Britain. The Greater Horseshoe Bat, specifically protected by the Wild Creatures and Plants Act 1975 inhabits old stone workings.

Reptiles. The smooth snake and sand lizard are also especially protected and occur on these heathlands on the periphery of their European distribution range.

Insects and Butterflies. The grasslands provide habitats for many insects and the butterfly populations are particularly significant. The Lulworth Skipper flourishes in this area and, indeed, is named after the area. Other butterflies of note are the Blues and, despite the drastic decline of its food plant due to Dutch Elm Disease, the White Letter Hairstreak - now quite rare - is still found in the area. Both the grasslands and heathlands are renowned for their populations of grasshoppers and crickets, whilst dragonflies are also a feature of the area. Many of these insects are, in turn, food for birds and the combination of habitats and proximity to the sea makes the Purbeck Coast an important locality for birds.

Marine Life. The waters of the coast are of considerable interest since this is the furthest east that the direct influence of the Atlantic is felt along the southern English coast. It also receives water moving westward down the English Channel. The water is unpolluted and a number of detailed studies of the littoral and underwater habitats have been undertaken. (Second Dorset Underwater Survey 1979 - see Annex B.)

Although predominantly a rocky coastline, there are areas of shingle and sand together with the muddy sub-strates within Poole Harbour. Again, there is great variety in a small geographical area.

N.B. Many of these wildlife features are described and their conservation discussed in the Dorset Naturalists' Trust Conservation Studies Nos. 1, 2 and 3 (see Annex E).

(f) Cultural Interest

Archaeologically the Purbeck Coast is extremely interesting and reflects strong links with Europe. Prior to the occupation by the Romans a substantial Iron Age earthwork was built at Flowers Burrow. The Roman influence is seen in the Romano-British Field System north of Chapman's Pool and a number of Roman potteries. Strip lynchets from the middle ages extend from the present village of Worth Matravers down to the cliff top. The Norman influence and connection with France is seen in the churches at Studland and Worth Matravers. The Chapel of St Aldhelm on the head served as a sea mark for traders between Britain and the Continent from the twelfth century onward.

Literary connections with the Purbeck area are not extensive, but the works of Thomas Hardy have been translated into many languages and are read worldwide.

III PUBLIC PRESSURES ON THE PURBECK HERITAGE COAST

Within the South East Dorset area the tourist industry provides 12-15,000 permanent jobs and approximately £95,000,000 is spent in the area by tourists each year. Although holidaymakers visit the area throughout the year, the majority come during the summer peak of eight to twelve weeks. Figures for the Purbeck Heritage Coast area show that, 100,000 visitors a year go to Brownsea Island, 500,000 per year to Studland Beach, 100,000 go to Durlston Country Park, and 136,000 to Kimmeridge Bay. This is partly due to the popularity of the south coast as a holiday location nationally, and partly due to the proximity of Purbeck to the large centres of population in the south-east of England. It is estimated that 10% of the holidaymakers are visitors from abroad. The fact that all these visitors come during a relatively short season creates considerable management problems. The threat of conflicts between the activities of visitors, the wildlife of the area, and local land uses such as agriculture is considerable.

IV EUROPEAN INTEREST JUSTIFYING THE APPLICATION

1. In a relatively small area there are a large number of geophysical formations, spanning over 100 million years. Local exposures have given type names to strata found in other parts of Europe.
2. The heathlands constitute the north-western edge of the European lowland heaths, and these heathland habitats are severely restricted in the rest of Great Britain.*
3. A number of plant and animal species live here that are on the edges of their European ranges of distribution.*
4. It is difficult to find such a variety of natural unspoilt landscape forms in such a confined area in Europe.
5. The unpolluted coastal waters, combined with the variety of underwater geology and small tidal range made this a significant locality for marine wildlife.

*Internationally and nationally important sites (with their associated species) have been identified in the Nature Conservation Review (1977) and the relevant extracts are attached (see Annex H).

V CONSERVATION MEASURES

Introduction

The importance accredited to the landscape and wildlife of the area can be demonstrated by the variety of measures taken to conserve them during the last thirty years.

It is possible to identify two broad types of measure which have been implemented:-

- (a) protection of the area from development through the Statutory Land Use Planning Process which operates throughout the United Kingdom - this is largely a negative process which either prevents undesirable developments from taking place or minimises the impact of developments which are allowed.
- (b) management measures which promote positive action on the ground to protect or give access to particular areas.

An important element linking the two has been the development of the Heritage Coast concept which is described below.

1. STATUTORY CONTROL POLICIES FOR PROTECTING THE AREA

The planning policies of the Dorset County Council and the District Council include the Rural Policy Statement, various Village Plans, Conservation Area Policies and the Coastal Area Policy. These provide a strong basis for the control of development.

- 1.1 The County Development Plan. The County Development Plan was approved in 1957. This envisaged no material changes in the area over the twenty years ending 1977 and stated that the "need to preserve good agricultural land was a foremost consideration". The whole of the Study Area was defined as an Area of Great Landscape Value. Within the area of Great Landscape Value special care was to be taken in controlling any change of use or additional development in order to conserve the existing natural features and amenity of the areas.
- 1.2 Rural Planning Policy. The Rural Policy Statement approved by the County Council in June 1969 adopted a more detailed approach to the conservation of the countryside. Its overall aim was to prevent any non-essential development in the open countryside, including the coastline.
- 1.3 The Coastal Policy. This integral part in the Rural Policy Statement was prepared in accordance with MHLG Circular 7/66 and applies to the whole of the Study Area. It prohibits any development except that which is essential for agriculture, is within the curtilage of existing buildings or changes of use (except to industry) which are considered appropriate. It was intended that the policy would not "preclude the consideration of local authority development essential for the enjoyment of the area for recreational purposes."

- 1.4 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In 1957 some 450 square miles of Dorset was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The designation, which was confirmed by the national government, confers a national significance and prestige, the effect of which strengthens the hand of the local planning authorities in resisting pressure for unsuitable development.
- 1.5 Camping and Caravans. The majority of the area is subject to the joint County Council/Purbeck District Council 'Caravan and Camping Policy' approved in 1977. This seeks to preserve and enhance the character of the coast and countryside whilst allowing reasonable provision within the area for those people who wish to visit Purbeck in order to enjoy its facilities and natural beauty (details of the Policy are set out on page 25 and Map 1 of the document 'Purbeck Heritage Coast - Report and Proposals' - Annex A2).
- 1.6 Minerals. Ball clay, oil, limestone and some gravel deposits are found in the area. Considerable damage could be caused to the environment by the uncontrolled extraction of these minerals and the approach adopted is to negotiate legally binding agreements and place strict conditions on such operations. The result is that these operations do not generally impinge on the outstanding landscape of the area and cause minimal disturbance to wildlife and the local population.
- 1.7 County Structure Plan. The County Council has prepared a Structure Plan for the County including the Purbeck area (The Council is required to do this under the Town and Country Planning Acts). This Plan will supercede the policies mentioned above. The Plan sets out a number of policies which aim to secure the conservation of the area. It recognises the whole area as a Heritage Coast and states certain general principles for the planning and management of the area. The Structure Plan, Annex G to follow, states the following:-

"G5 Within the areas treated as Heritage Coast the following policies will apply:

- (i) Development which would have an adverse effect on the character of the coastline will not normally be permitted.
- (ii) The provision of car parking and other recreational facilities will be permitted only where an increase in the number of visitors is compatible with the retention of the unspoilt character of the area.
- (iii) Provision will be made for public access to the coast and countryside. Such provision may include appropriately signed footpaths and bridleways, together, where appropriate, with small car parks for walkers, and will have regard to the need to safeguard farmland and Sites of Scientific Interest, to the interests of owners of the land, and to the amenity of local residents.

- (iv) The reconciliation of conflicts between the recreational use of the coast and the conservation of its heritage value will be sought."

In addition the Plan puts forward a range of policies aiming:

- (a) to protect agricultural land;
- (b) to reconcile farming, forestry, recreational, nature conservation, landscape and archaeological interests in the countryside;
- (c) to co-operate with landowners to enhance the appearance of the landscape;
- (d) to protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest (especially heathland);
- (e) to encourage the activities of voluntary conservation bodies;
- (f) to continue the provision of interpretative and educational facilities in order to achieve a better understanding of the countryside;
- (g) to protect sites of archaeological interest;
- (h) to provide recreational facilities where they will not cause serious detriment to other countryside interests.

Whilst all these policies refer to the County as a whole, the recognition of the area as a Heritage Coast will give added importance to the implementation of such policies. Although adopted by the County Council these policies are still subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment.

2. POSITIVE CONSERVATION ACTION - THE HERITAGE COAST

In spite of a range of statutory control policies widespread concern was by the mid-1960s being expressed nationally over the effectiveness of these policies in protecting coastal areas such as Purbeck. In addition there was a growing awareness of the need to develop a more positive approach to coastal conservation.

In 1966 the National Parks Commission (predecessor of the Countryside Commission) was invited by the Government to conduct a major study of the coastline in co-operation with the coastal local planning authorities. The detailed findings of these studies were collated in two reports - 'The Planning of the Coastline' and 'The Coastal Heritage' which were submitted to the Government in 1970.

The concept of Heritage Coasts and the associated management principles were endorsed by the government in DoE Circular 12/72, which supported the "definition" of stretches of coastline as Heritage Coasts jointly by the Countryside Commission and Local Authorities in preference to statutory "designation".

The Commission's view is that the stewardship of Heritage Coasts must involve equal elements of land use planning, conservation, management and interpretation, if the long-term conservation of the unspoilt coast is to be achieved. The national policy therefore emphasises the positive and detailed conservation management of coastal areas in close co-operation with landowners, farmers and other interests, to produce a blueprint for positive and detailed action. In order to facilitate the preparation of such plans and to test and develop new planning and management techniques, the Commission set up experimental projects in conjunction with local authorities in three Heritage Coast areas - Suffolk, Glamorgan and Dorset.

The three projects are described briefly in the pamphlet "An Approach to Countryside Management" (see Annex M). As a result of the success of the projects in resolving the small scale conflicts, the Commission are encouraging local authorities to set up similar projects and are providing grants towards the cost of financing them. The key approach is the appointment of a project officer to provide a focal point for local initiatives and to act as a bridge between local people and various agencies and departments of central and local government.

The range of duties of a project officer are very wide. The major tasks are:

- (i) the preparation of a management plan;
- (ii) securing its implementation by involving local people, landowners and organisations and persuading public authorities to implement larger scale schemes.

A list of typical small scale works which might be tackled on a co-ordinated basis are set out in the leaflet at Annex M.

In 1974 a Heritage Coast Officer was appointed and in July 1975 he reported to the County Council and District Council suggesting proposals for experimental management schemes which would seek to reconcile the conflicts in this area. These are referred to in greater detail in Section II of the Heritage Coast Report and Proposals attached (Annex A2). With the assistance of the staff as shown on the diagrams on page 12 of that report, a wide variety of conservation tasks and management measures began to be tackled within the area between Poole Harbour and the army ranges. The programme of works and negotiations has now been completed at Kimmeridge and the approach used there is the approach which the authority hopes to adopt at other problem sites within the area.

The development of the Heritage Coast Service has been a very important element in the positive conservation of the area. However, it is important to stress that parallel forms of action have been pursued.

- 2.1 Land Acquisition. A number of organisations pursued a policy of land purchase or leasing in the area in order to protect wildlife and landscape, and to promote public access.

- (a) The Nature Conservancy Council (the UK Government's Statutory Advisers on Nature Conservation) lease 709 hectares, all of which have been designated National Nature Reserves under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (the 1949 Act). These areas are comprised mainly of heathland and are of international importance. The NCC operate a full time warden service to look after these areas. Steps have been taken to provide access for the public including the provision of nature trails.
- (b) The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (an entirely voluntary organisation) have purchased some 400 hectares of the heathlands. They too have a small warden service to look after the area. Public access is allowed to certain parts of their land with nature trails and hides for the general public.
- (c) The National Trust has purchased 220 hectares, mainly under their 'Enterprise Neptune' to protect the coastal landscape in this area and these areas are patrolled and maintained by their wardens in co-operation with the Heritage Coast staff.
- (d) Dorset County Council (the local planning authority) have purchased some 105 hectares of cliffland at Durlston Head to the south of Swanage. The land was purchased and a Country Park was declared in 1972 using powers under the Countryside Act 1968. The Council was supported in this venture by the Countryside Commission (the Government's Advisers on landscape and recreation in the countryside).

A description of the measures taken at Durlston now follows.

Durlston Country Park

The land acquisition of 105.7 hectares was completed in 1973 and work started on the removal of eyesores, such as overhead power cables and the derelict remains of a radar station. A temporary summer warden was appointed and in 1974 this led to the establishment of a permanent warden service to look after both the visitors and the natural environment. The policy plan recognised that people walking in small groups and dispersing over an area cause little natural damage whilst enjoying their recreation time. Also, only a proportion of visitors move far from their cars. The strategy at Durlston is to limit cars to a single access and parking zone. Visitor facilities are concentrated in the more robust zone around the car parks and paths lead visitors to picnic areas, a cafe/restaurant and the Park Centre where wildlife exhibits, innovative displays, slide shows and general information can be obtained. The process of gradually dispersing visitors out into the park by particular routes decreases the risk to sensitive wildlife whilst allowing the public to see and appreciate the natural features. A limited number of signs introduce visitors to the area and allow them to discover new features on subsequent visits.

The overall policy of "Conservation for Public Enjoyment" includes management of the land to encourage wildlife, such as the use of traditional hay-cutting techniques to encourage butterflies, the control of some scrub and limited grazing to maintain grasslands rich in flowering plants. The wildlife has been closely monitored since 1977 and extremely detailed reports and records are available at the Park Centre. Some of this has been incorporated into leaflets available to the public. A potential conflict between uncommon nesting seabirds and rock climbers has been resolved by the designation of three zones where climbing is completely restricted, limited to the time of year when the birds are not nesting, and an area where there are no restrictions. A wildlife sanctuary, free from human disturbance, has been established on two sections of the cliffs. The wardens provide guided walks for visitors and have bye-laws to support them in their work. The whole of the project has received considerable professional and financial support from the Countryside Commission. An article (reprinted from 'Landscape Design' May 1981 (see Annex 1)), with maps about the project is attached.

- 2.2 Co-operation with landowners. A very important element of the positive approach to the planning and management of the area has been the co-operation between the local authorities usually represented by the Heritage Coast Officer and local landowners. Whilst many of the projects have been small scale e.g. the repairs of walls and fences and the waymarking of footpaths, there have been two particular areas where co-operation with landowners has already demonstrated benefits for conservation and enjoyment of the coast - the Smedmore Estate at Kimmeridge and the Military Ranges at Lulworth. A description of the measures taken in these two areas now follows.

(a) Management and Planning of the Smedmore Estate at Kimmeridge.

Introduction. During the summer of 1974 the Heritage Coast Officer held negotiations with the estate owners and managers at Kimmeridge, the managing agents being the firm of Savills. During the negotiations it emerged that the landowner was sympathetic towards the aims of the Heritage Coast Project as described and would welcome help with the management of recreation, public access, parking, wildlife conservation and geological conservation. Discussions then turned to the practical aspects of carrying out a scheme. First of all, the footpaths were signposted with stone or wooden signs so that visiting members of the public could find their way around the area without causing damage or nuisance to ecological and agricultural interests. The signing was based on the existing footpath system in the area but in addition extra paths were also signed by agreement with the landowner.

The Heritage Coast Warden. All this work was carried out by people working under the supervision of the Heritage Coast Warden who had recently been appointed on an experimental basis to cover about fifteen miles of coast. On Sundays during this initial period he concentrated patrols on Kimmeridge Bay, although this was only a small part of his area, in order to prevent conflicts between the various activities taking place there. These conflicts occurred between the considerable number of divers who come to the area every weekend for recreation and wildlife study, and the

other users of the Bay who are sightseers, walkers, bathers, etc. To a limited extent he was able to stop the danger to life through the breaking of the bye-laws which prohibit speeding by boats in the Bay, ensure that the public were able to enjoy themselves freely in the area without conflicts, and to give people information about the wildlife and geology and make suggestions for walking and other recreation.

The Reserve Warden. In 1979 the experimental Kimmeridge Bay Reserve Warden service was financed by the Dorset Naturalists' Trust and the owners, the Smedmore Estate, with much practical support from the Heritage Coast Warden who was then better able to patrol other parts of the Heritage Coast. A report on the wardening of the newly established Purbeck Marine Wildlife Reserve is attached and describes the progress and success of this venture. In outline the Reserve Warden meets all school parties who visit the area, introduces them to the wildlife and then guides them around the Bay letting them ask questions, identifying species and giving talks on the local ecology. The warden also controls the use of geological hammers in order to conserve the geological interest of the area, discouraging the removal of any species from the abundant rock pools and ledges in the Bay.

After general agreement as to the success of this venture the British Petroleum Company made finance available towards the cost of employing a full-time Reserve Warden to carry out the duties as recommended in the Wardening Report and the Countryside Commission Grant Aided this appointment in order for it to become a reality. The Reserve Warden normally mans the Information Centre, meets all school groups visiting the area, runs local guided walks across the Reserve and organises a guided walks programme for the whole of the Heritage Coast.

The Information Centre. Towards the end of 1980 a fisherman's hut became available within Kimmeridge Bay and this was purchased by the Dorset Naturalists' Trust. They proposed to use it as an Information Centre and a base for the Reserve Warden. The Information Centre exhibition was prepared by the Heritage Coast team with grant aid from the Countryside Commission and the World Wildlife Fund. It covers the early history of Kimmeridge Bay from Roman and Romano-British times through the present day, explains that the area has now become a Voluntary Marine Wildlife Reserve and illustrates in a popular form the geological, biological and botanical assets of the area.

Outdoor Information Displays. Information boards were prepared by the Heritage Coast team with grant aid from the Tourist Board and were placed at strategic points throughout the Estate. These drew attention to the natural and man-made qualities of the area, briefly describing the history and geology and drawing attention to interesting places to visit in the vicinity. In addition walkers' car parks were indicated at various places throughout the Estate from which the footpath network radiates.

Summary. The general effect of the co-operation between all of the various bodies named has been that visitors now entering the Kimmeridge area are clearly directed. By taking advantages of the information provided they can quickly make a decision as to where they wish to go and what they want to do. This assists visitors to enjoy the area, helps to conserve the wildlife by preventing erosion and disturbance in unwanted places, and helps the local population to carry on their activities relatively undisturbed.

- (b) The Lulworth Army Ranges. Co-operation with the Military Authorities began in the late 1960s when two sites for picnic areas were offered to the County Council. In 1974 the Government announced that the Lulworth Army Ranges were to be opened to the public at weekends and all school holidays. This meant that similar measures to those taken at Kimmeridge could be taken in order to ensure the proper conservation of much of the Army Range area which lies within the Heritage Coast boundary. The Heritage Coast Officer is on a committee which meets twice a year to discuss management problems. A system of twelve miles of footpaths was signed and way-marked throughout the most beautiful parts of the Army Ranges, and a Visitors Centre was opened in the former Tyneham Church. As at Kimmeridge this Centre tells people the history, geology and wildlife of the area and helps to steer them to the places in which they are most interested. Parking is at a number of locations but nowhere closer than one mile from the coast, and this helps to keep pressure down on the immediate coastline. The coast-path which continues along the whole of the Dorset Heritage Coast, was opened through the Army Ranges as part of this scheme. We believe that this co-operation between the Army, the local authorities and the public is an outstanding feature. Outdoor information displays have been placed in all the car parks within the Army ranges. Wildlife conservation is carefully considered in the unfarmed areas which are not open to public access and the Army have appointed wardens to patrol the area and enable its safe use by the public. The information displays in the church are maintained by the Heritage Coast team and temporary exhibitions are placed there to provide additional interest for visitors who come more often.

Conclusion on the co-operation with Landowners. Within the Purbeck Heritage Coast area, the two examples of Kimmeridge and the Lulworth Army Ranges are quoted as examples of the type of approach which we hope to adopt throughout the area as time and resources permit. This means that there are still considerable problems to tackle, for example, at Lulworth and Durdle Door, but we believe that the approach used to date has been successful and has every chance of success in dealing with the many problems in the remaining defined area.

ANNEXES (available at the Secretariat)

- A1 Map of Area
- A2 Purbeck Heritage Coast - Report and Proposals
- A3 Purbeck Heritage Coast Joint Policy Statement
- B Second Dorset Underwater Survey
- C Kimmeridge Warden Report
- D Purbeck Heritage Coast leaflets
- E Dorset Naturalists' Trust Conservation Studies
Nos 1, 2 and 4
- F Durlston Country Park - Information leaflets
- G County Structure Plan
- H Nature Conservation Review Extracts
- J 'Landscape Design' Article February 1981
- K Ordnance Survey Leisure Map of Purbeck Heritage Coast
- L Photographs of Purbeck Heritage Coast, including the
Army Ranges, Tyneham Information Centre,
Kimmeridge and Durlston
- M An Approach to Countryside Management