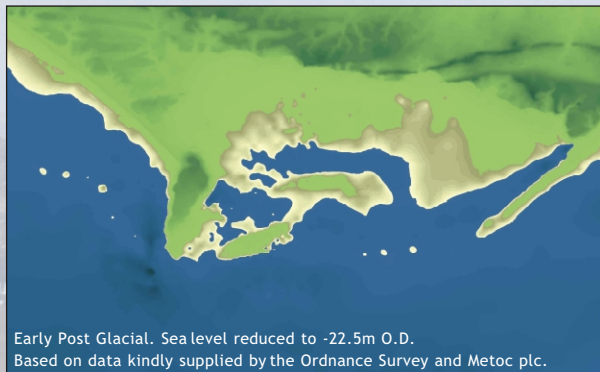


Modelling coastal change

One of the most exciting aspects of the project has been the creation of a computerised model helping to reveal what the Dorset Coast might have looked like in prehistoric times.



For example, by incorporating what we know of sea levels some 30,000 years ago, it seems that much of Weymouth Bay would have been dry land. It is also likely that the large lagoons would have attracted an abundance of game fish, waterfowl, deer and wild cattle. With such ready supplies of food to hand, Weymouth Bay would have been an ideal place for our early predecessors to establish their camps. Evidence for these early camps may still survive on the seabed today.

The model suggests that Dorset's coast went through its most radical changes some 10,000-6,000 years ago. The model can also be used to show how future sea-level changes might effect sites and monuments on the coast.

Getting involved

Discovering local history can be both fascinating and fun. If you would like to find out more about local history groups and activities along Dorset's coast, or if you have information about historic buildings and archaeological sites that you would like to share, please contact;

Dorset Coast Forum
c/o Environmental Services Directorate
Dorset County Council
County Hall, Dorchester DT1 1XJ
Tel: 01305 225117 Fax: 01305 224875
Email: dorset.coast@dorsetcc.gov.uk
www.dorsetcoast.com
or
Senior Archaeologist (Promotion and Liaison)
Dorset County Council
County Hall, Colliton Park
Dorchester DT1 1XJ
Tel: 01305 224921 Fax: 01305 224835
Email: c.j.pinder@dorsetcc.gov.uk
www.dorsetcc.gov.uk/her

Dorset's Historic Environment Record is a public record and enquiries are welcome.
Please contact 01305 224921 for more information or email c.j.pinder@dorsetcc.gov.uk

If you would like to find out more about the Dorset Coast Survey, check the Web Site at www.wessexarch.co.uk



Wessex Archaeology

Sponsored by



Land, Sea, Nature and People



*Dorset Coast Historic
Environment Survey*

*Making Dorset's coastal
archaeology available to all*

From Christchurch to Lyme Regis, Dorset's spectacular coast begins to reveal the richness of its human history

In 1999 Dorset Coast Forum proposed a survey to improve information about historic buildings and archaeological sites along the coast. The broad aims of the survey are to:

- enhance the information resource for historic and archaeological sites for the heritage managers, researchers and special interest groups
- develop an overview of coastal change
- assess the degree and nature of threats to historic assets
- create a sound basis for developing management and research priorities
- enhance public understanding and enjoyment of the coast

The survey complements the World Heritage Site status of Dorset's Jurassic Coast, by showing how people have shaped the landscape and seascape that we treasure today.



Local groups have already recorded several wooden structures along the edge of Poole Harbour

Dorset's Historic Environment Record

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage undertake on the first part of the survey and began work in September 2003. Special interest groups were contacted and archives were visited, to start bringing together all the information about archaeological sites and historic buildings into a single database (Historic Environment Record or HER) maintained by Dorset County Council.

Wessex Archaeology have added some 3000 new sites to Dorset's HER and have incorporated the maritime archaeological database developed by the Dorset Coast Forum. For the first time, Dorset's HER contains information about shipwrecks and other underwater archaeological sites.

Research Priorities

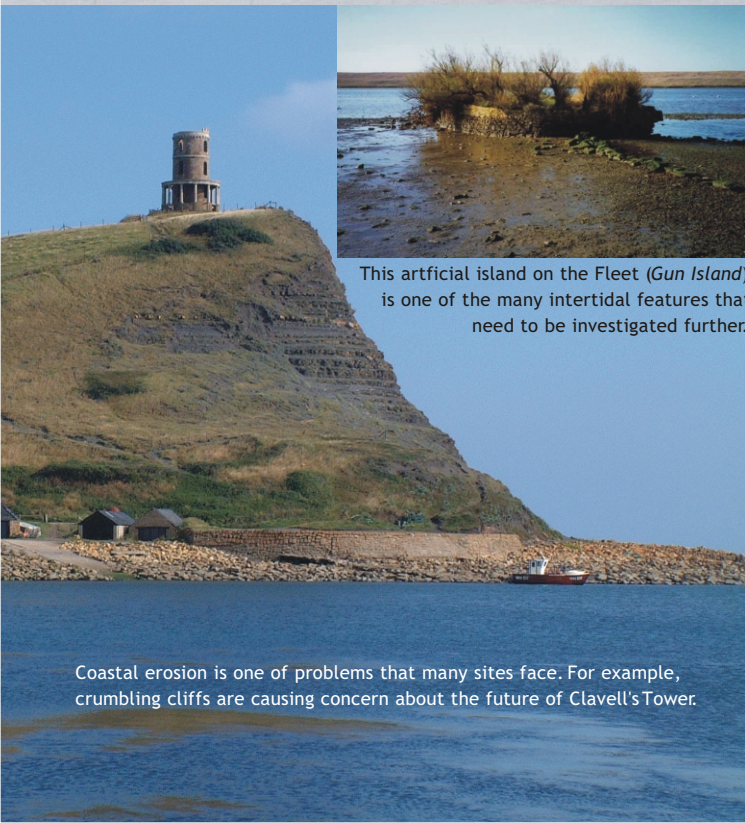
The creation of an integrated database has highlighted many gaps in our knowledge. Another task for the survey team has been to devise a research framework outlining topics, themes and possible projects that might be developed further by universities, community groups and individual researchers.

Gathering Information from Fieldwork

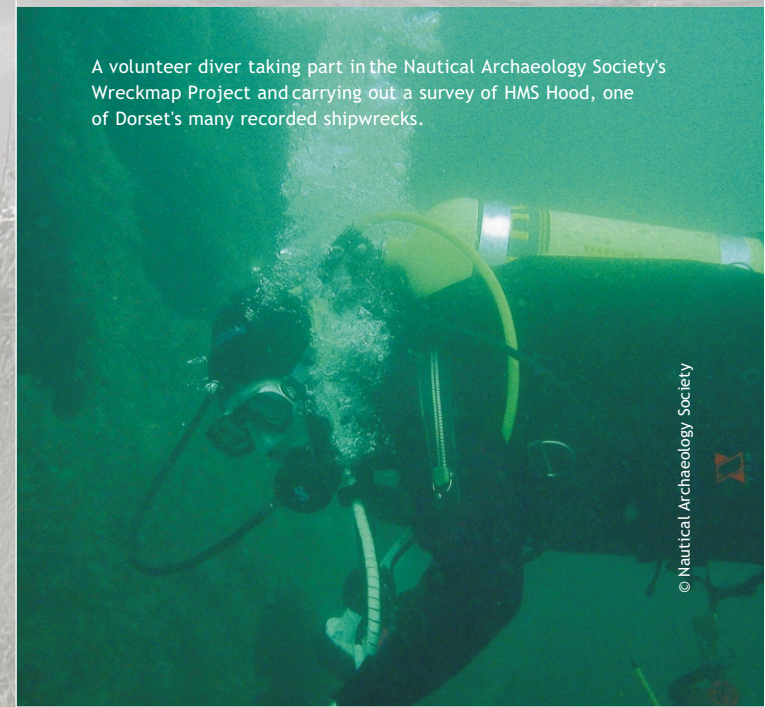
The next phase of the Dorset Coast Survey is to undertake a programme of fieldwork to verify the existence of sites and to gather information about their current condition. Many local groups are already gathering information, and it is hoped that further large-scale survey work will be undertaken in due course.



This artificial island on the Fleet (*Gun Island*) is one of the many intertidal features that need to be investigated further.



Coastal erosion is one of problems that many sites face. For example, crumbling cliffs are causing concern about the future of Clavell's Tower.



A volunteer diver taking part in the Nautical Archaeology Society's Wreckmap Project and carrying out a survey of HMS Hood, one of Dorset's many recorded shipwrecks.