

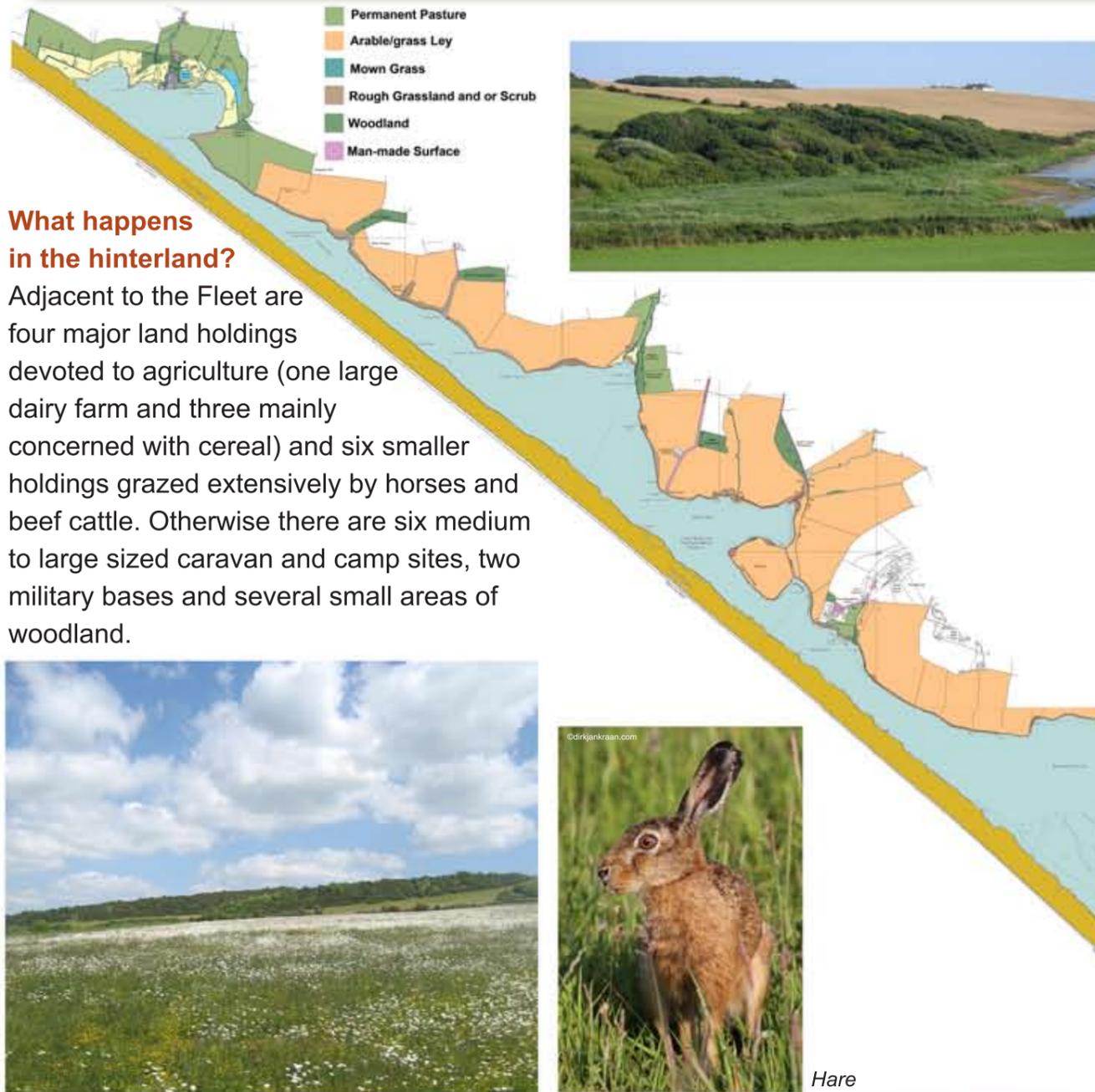
The Fleet Hinterland

Don Moxom

Chesil Bank and the Fleet Nature Reserve



The Fleet Hinterland comprises a series of hills running at right angles to the Fleet. Apart from touching the built environment of Weymouth, the hinterland is rural. The fields are small and medium in size, either hedged or walled, and make, with Chesil and the Fleet, delightful viewing especially from the higher ground above Abbotsbury. All of the hinterland bordering the Fleet is SSSI and contains important geological exposures of the Jurassic Coast. Farming and other activities have and will continue to influence the Fleet.



What happens in the hinterland?

Adjacent to the Fleet are four major land holdings devoted to agriculture (one large dairy farm and three mainly concerned with cereal) and six smaller holdings grazed extensively by horses and beef cattle. Otherwise there are six medium to large sized caravan and camp sites, two military bases and several small areas of woodland.



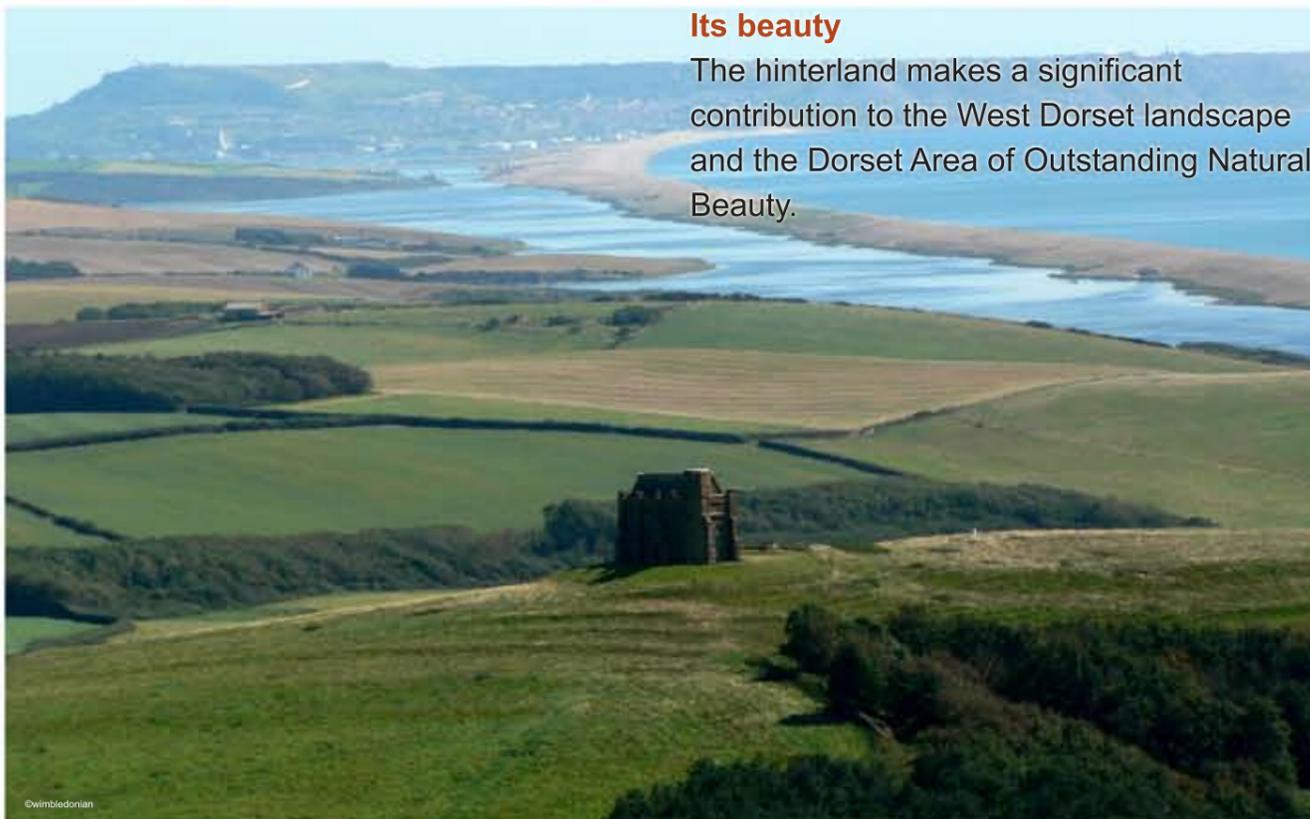
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Its beauty

The hinterland makes a significant contribution to the West Dorset landscape and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Management for nature

Landowners in the hinterland, particularly those in the Fleet water catchment and with fields bordering the Fleet, work closely with a number of concerns to maintain the environmental and visual quality of the banks and cliffs and the Fleet itself. Thanks to interpretation provided by Dorset County Council, the World Heritage Site team and caravan park owners, most visitors are well informed about the Fleet, and respect and enjoy it.

Its importance for nature

The banks contain numerous important geological exposures of the Weymouth Anticline. The banks are biologically important too, comprising a variety of coastal habitats of a primary nature – unmanaged - shaped and influenced by the prevailing westerly winds blowing straight in from the sea, and the waters of the Fleet.

Threats

In the past the Fleet has been degraded by excessive amounts of nitrate and phosphate coming in from the numerous streams in the water catchment area and from the land. Visitor disturbance can be problematical and the new Coastal Access bill could ruin the peace required by roosting birds in the Fleet's coves. Wind blown and tidally borne plastic litter provides a never ending clearance task.

