

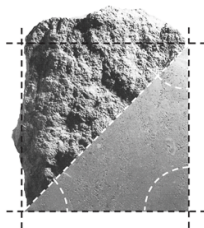


Portland Living Landscape Project

The Isle of Portland Limestone Grassland Restoration Project 2011-2015

Final project summary

Kindly supported by



ALBION STONE

Aims and Objectives of the Project

The main aim of the project was to restore and secure 200 hectares of UK Biodiversity Action Plan limestone grassland and to safeguard hundreds of rare, threatened and declining species including ten UK BAP species on the Isle of Portland. In achieving this aim the project has established: a 10-year island-wide management plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of the island's wildlife and habitats, a partnership of conservation organisations, volunteers and the local community to deliver the island management plan and the Portland Quarries Nature Park as a focus for local nature conservation.

Growing success on Portland.

The exposed limestone of 80 abandoned quarries on Portland forms part of a rich history of industrial quarrying heritage, but also creates a valuable network of habitats in which rare plants and wildlife thrive. To help ensure its survival, 2011 saw the launch of this project to combat the Cotoneaster (a waxy leafy bush) which was smothering and destroying the native limestone grassland and its associated communities of species.

With grateful thanks, the project was supported by a number of funders and landowners including Albion Stone, Portland Stone, Natural England, the Court Leet of the Island and Royal Manor of Portland, and Viridor Credits, who provided cornerstone funding of £850,000. With the help of local volunteers and Portland based contractors cotoneaster is now all but gone from key sites, and what remains is the Portland Quarries Nature Park – a haven for both wildlife and people.

This brief report illustrates just some of the project highlights

Project Achievements

- 200 hectares of Biodiversity Action Plan Limestone grassland restored from impact of invasive Cotoneaster.
- 200 tonnes of cotoneaster has been removed since 2011. The largest single patch Cotoneaster measured over 3600m².
- Butterflies like Lulworth Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Small Blue, Chalkhill Blue, Adonis Blue and Grayling were all recorded in higher numbers from 2012-2015.
- The Silver Studded Blue has seen a tenfold increase in numbers.
- In 2014 there was a 120% increase from 2011 in plant species such as horseshoe vetch and salad burnet.
- 3,500 volunteer days were carried out over the three year project. Including placement students, corporate members and local people.
- Employment opportunities created for local people.
- Portland Quarries Nature Park has been formed to focus local nature conservation efforts, interpret Portland's quarry ecology and historical history, as a legacy to local residents and visitors.
- A 10 year island-wide management plan has been established to ensure the long-term sustainability of the island's wildlife and habitats.

Management in action



Spraying Cotoneaster



Burning Cotoneaster in situ



Moving water for chemical treatment by zipline and hose to the most remote areas



DWT Staff and Volunteers removing dead Cotoneaster



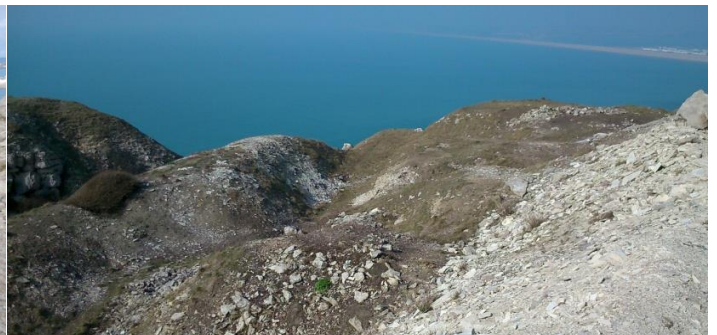
*Blue Box showing area which contained a metric Ton of dead Cotoneaster biomass
(Inmasthay North Quarry)*

A sample of pictures from Bowers Quarry

Bowers Quarry Facing North North East



Before Management April 2013



After treatment and removal March 2014

Bowers Quarry Facing South West



After treatment June 2013



After removal February 2014

Bowers Quarry Facing West



After treatment June 2013



After removal February 2014

Bowers Quarry facing North West



After treatment June 2013



After removal February 2014



View from the Tout Quarry looking over West Weare



Cotoneaster treated on the Verne Slopes Local Nature Reserve



Large dead Cotoneaster Patches on Bowers Quarry

Measurable recovery



A summary report of quadrat monitoring across plots which were previously covered with Cotoneaster shows evidence of a positive trend of recovery, with very few plots in need of significant follow up treatment.

Year	Recording rate (no. priority species recorded / hr survey effort)	Recording rate (no. other grassland species recorded / hr survey effort)
2012	46	62
2013	66	78
2014	56	102

Data: The recording rate (number recorded/hr survey effort) was greater in 2013 for the priority species but greater in 2014 for the widespread grassland butterflies. The abundance of both priority and widespread butterflies increased since surveys began in 2012.



*Photos: The work of volunteers on Portland to expose the bare scree slopes, an important habitat for endemic species, such as the micro-moth, *Eudarcia richardsoni**

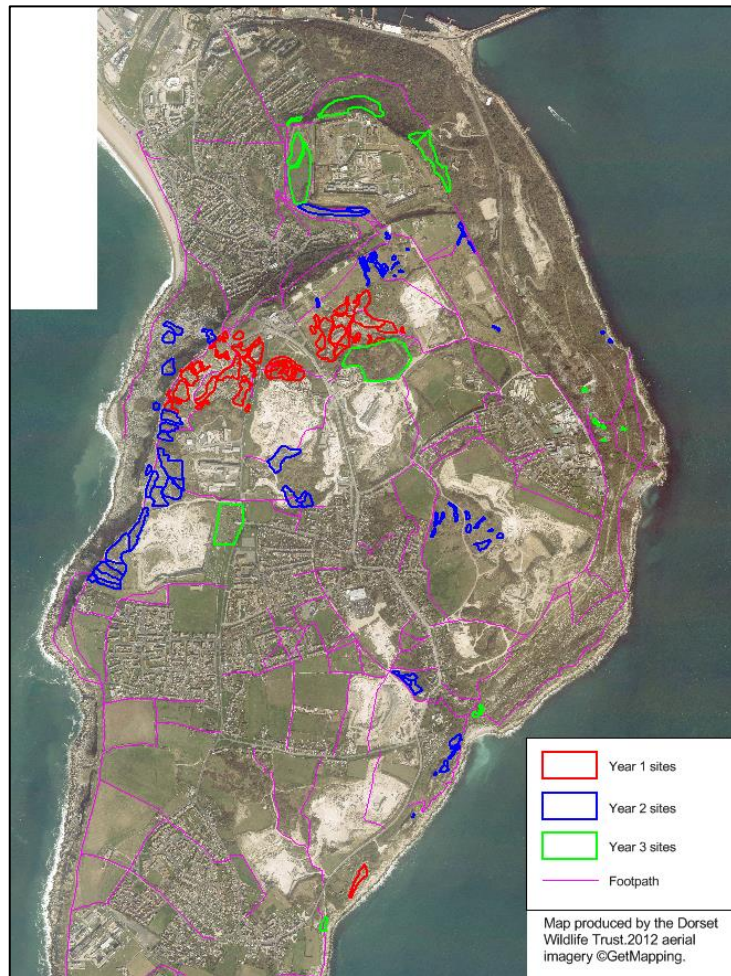


Photo: Map showing the footpaths and work sites on Portland over the duration of the project