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## *A GREEN PERSPECTIVE*

*Eurotunnel and the environment*



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When the seeds of today's Channel Tunnel project were germinating in the minds of ambitious designers and engineers, it was recognised that environmental factors required detailed consideration if one of the most significant engineering initiatives of the century was to successfully conclude in a transportation system integrated with the needs of its users and closest neighbours in the 1990s.

Thus the Eurotunnel doctrine of consultation, conservation and co-operation was established long before it became popular for industry to adopt high profile environmental priorities. The sweeping measures subsequently implemented set new standards for incorporating environmental policies into the overall strategy for a major development project.

A 3,000 page Environmental Impact Assessment provided a comprehensive foundation for Eurotunnel's environmental policy. It was the first of its kind to be prepared under a regulatory European Community Directive on environmental assessment, which was then in draft form.

In 1987 Eurotunnel issued a policy statement which summarised the company's environmental aims: "...to minimise and, where practicable, to avoid undue damage to the environment, risk to health or nuisance to the nearby population arising from all stages of planning, design, construction, commissioning and operation of the Channel Tunnel and to control the environmental impact of the project consistent with the need to maintain the viability of the project and its programme."

This publication provides a perspective of Eurotunnel's environmental activity in the UK and has been published at a time when the results of earlier environmental initiatives are apparent. It covers the history, present state and future of the three major UK construction sites - Folkestone Terminal, Holywell and Shakespeare Cliff, near Dover, demonstrating the objectives of the most comprehensive environmental policy ever adopted during a major construction project in the UK.

The first stage of this policy required the establishment of a consultation process to ensure environmental groups and other interested parties were able to express their views and concerns as well as participate in a two-way exchange of ideas. In addition to consultation with local authorities and other statutory bodies, conservation groups involved in this process included Kent Trust for Nature Conservation, the Nature Conservancy Council (now known as English Nature), the Countryside Commission and many smaller local organisations, such as amenity groups and Parish Councils.

From 1985, information has been gathered to describe and analyse existing environmental conditions, identify priorities, anticipate problems and implement plans to minimise impact. This enabled the designers of the transport system to apply environmental criteria and lay the ground for measures to be taken alongside the construction programme. The long term aim of integrating a major transport system with a varied and attractive landscape is more than simply a damage control exercise and the skilled efforts to meet this goal will become increasingly apparent in years to come.

Some of the environmental activity on Eurotunnel land close to the construction sites has been assisted by the White Cliffs Countryside Project, a joint venture created and funded by Eurotunnel, local authorities and conservation groups to manage the historic countryside around Folkestone and Dover.

As well as protecting and enhancing the nature conservation value of the areas under management, the Project aims to increase public awareness of the countryside.

With volunteer assistance, the small but dedicated team of full-time Project Officers carry out tasks including scrub clearance, footpath maintenance, fencing land for grazing where appropriate and providing interpretation information in public access areas.