

PRESS RELEASE



28 November 2014

Eurotunnel inaugurates new Education Shelter at Samphire Hoe in partnership with the Up On The Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme

A new Education Shelter has been opened on Samphire Hoe in Kent, today Friday 28 November 2014. The Education Shelter is the result of collaboration between Eurotunnel, owners of Samphire Hoe, the Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme, and White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, who manage the space.

Samphire Hoe is the platform at the base of Shakespeare Cliff near Dover which was built using spoil extracted during the construction of the Channel Tunnel. It has developed into one of the most vibrant natural spaces in the UK, with many unusual species of fauna and flora and winning many awards for its management and stewardship along the way.

Samphire Hoe is a haven of beauty accessible to all and regularly used by school and other groups for educational and cultural visits. Being exposed at the foot of the cliffs has meant that visits in poor weather conditions in the past could be quite exhilarating.

The construction of the Education Shelter, which has been funded jointly by Eurotunnel and the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme, means that there is now a fully equipped, all weather education and event space available for school and other groups.

The building has been designed to blend in with the natural environment at Samphire Hoe and has been constructed using sustainable building techniques and materials. It is clad in recycled sleepers from the Eurotunnel terminal and will be heated by wood burners using logs cut during expansion work at the terminal in Folkestone.

The first group to use the centre came from nearby Aycliffe Primary School, who attended an education workshop hosted by Samphire Hoe Head Ranger, Paul Holt.

Speaking after the ribbon was cut to officially open the Samphire Hoe Education Shelter, Eurotunnel's Commercial Director Jo Willacy said: *"Eurotunnel is delighted to be part of the partnership with Up On The Downs that has built this Education Shelter. We are proud that it will help expand the variety of educational resources available to young people in Kent and especially pleased that schools will now be able to visit Samphire Hoe all year round without fear of the weather"*

Richard Haynes, the Scheme Manager for Up on the Downs added: *"this fantastic education facility will become a focal point for people to learn about and celebrate the wonderful countryside and heritage of the Dover and Folkestone area."*

Notes for Editors:

- Eurotunnel operates the Channel Tunnel and provides Shuttle services for passenger and freight vehicles between Folkestone and Coquelles, in France. Eurotunnel also gives passage to freight and high speed passenger trains from railway operators.
- Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,000 projects, allocating £4.9bn across the UK. For more information, please see the HLF website
- The Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme involves a wide range of partners working together to conserve, enhance and increase access to the diverse range of natural and built heritage in the Dover and Folkestone area. They include Dover District Council, Shepway District Council, Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, National Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust, Kent County Council, Eurotunnel, Dover Town Council, Pent Valley Technology College, National Farmers' Union, Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Kent Police.
- For more information on the Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme, please visit the Up on the Downs website www.uponthedowns.org.uk
- The Samphire Hoe Education Shelter is an integral part of, and will act as a hub of the Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- Its primary uses are to provide an educational space for visitors (particularly schoolchildren) and an exhibition space giving a history of and the ecological importance of the site. Samphire Hoe was created from 4.9 million cubic metres of chalk marl excavated to form the Channel Tunnel. It was opened to the public in 1997 as a coastal country park, with the intention of balancing visitor pressure and ecological interest.
- The shelter has been funded by HLF and Eurotunnel, with additional support from Kent Downs and Marshes Leader, Dover Rotary Club and White Cliffs Countryside Partnership.
- The shelter has been designed by Lee Evans Partnership LLP and constructed by Coombs (Canterbury) Ltd. Cost consultants were Betteridge and Milsom.
- It has been designed to harmonise with its surroundings in its choice of materials, using mainly timber. Some reclaimed railway sleepers were transported from Eurotunnel's French Terminal site to form part of the wall construction of the shelter.
- The shelter will be heated by wood burners. Logs cut from trees recently felled as part of a large freight expansion project at Eurotunnel's UK Terminal will be used for this purpose.