

# Report on the

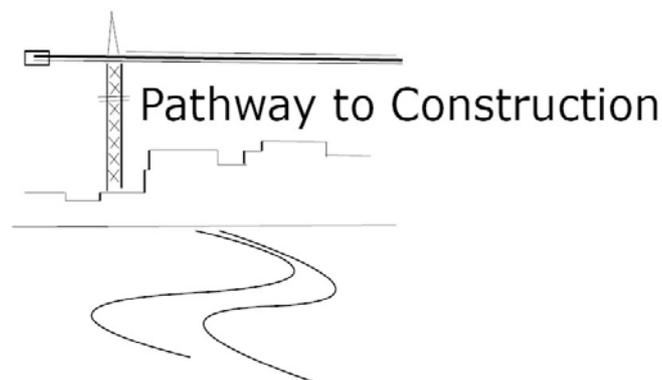
## EcoFab1

Interreg programme France (Channel)-England

# Hastings partners and the

# Pathway to Construction Event

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## ***ECOFAB***

2009 saw the beginning of a partnership between a representation of organisations from Normandy, several Hastings organisations and the Low Carbon Trust in Brighton. Following several preliminary meetings a cross channel project, led by GRETA, was developed reflecting the common interest in eco renovation and eco building. The resulting pilot project, EcoFab, set out to “bring together a network of trans-channel participants in order to set up jointly a more ambitious main project.” If successful, this project will follow on from the EcoFab1.

### ***EcoFab1***

The pilot project has been successful in bringing together a network of practitioners, trainers, and organisations representing community interest, to explore together aspects of eco renovation and eco building, and developing ways that together we can develop our sense of “belonging to a common space of citizenship through the sharing of approaches and the identification of common issues”.



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*Round table discussion on training, with a panel of English and French participants.*

*Amblie, April 2009*

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Over the course of the year since EcoFab1 began, there have been a number of meetings and discussions, with practical workshops and the key events in Amblie, and the Pathway to Construction in Hastings.

Some of the key issues discussed and implemented at these gatherings have been:

- ***Developing Trans- Channel mobility for trainees***

With key training organisations involved both sides of the Channel, student exchanges have been a focus for discussion. The possibility of exchanges of participants from the Amblie “Practical Eco Construction” event, and the Hastings “Pathway to Construction” event has also formed an important part of the discussion. This would be a way to involve representatives from community groups and school children from the less advantaged areas, who are coming together through an interest in the eco building aspects of the events.

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*Judging at the Practical Eco  
ConstructionEvent ,*

*Amblie, 2009.*

*Partners representing the  
British delegation participate  
as Judges alongside the  
French partners.*

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- *Creatings events around the themes of sustainable development.*

Both the Amblie event and the Pathway to Construction feature sustainable development as main features of the events. The Brighton Eco Homes is a showcase of sustainable development that will play a vital part in the EcoFab2 project. Representatives from this initiative have been involved at all stages of EcoFab1.

*L:*



*Exchanging methods and skills,  
Strawbale building  
Amblie left,  
Hastings- below.*





*Slaking lime*

*Exchanging skills and  
methods of traditional  
skills using natural  
materials*



*Rendering with earth mortar*



*Wattle and daub panels*



*Cleaving sweet chestnut*

- *Encouraging existing networks and activating links with them.*

Local partners brought together through GRETA and the Amblie event, and local partners brought together in Hastings around the Pathway to Construction Event, have interacted through an extensive programme of activities and discussions. Below is a brief summary of some of the main interventions throughout the time of EcoFab1.

### **Visit to Amblie, April 2009**

Construction employers involved in the Pathway to Construction event were part of the contingent that visited the event held in Amblie. Other representatives were from the Sussex Coast College Hastings, Hastings Borough Council, the Hastings Trust and the Low Carbon Trust.

Participation in this event provided the opportunity to meet and discuss different methods and techniques in the use of traditional and eco materials, as well as ways of involving young people in maintaining the traditional building skills that are being lost.



*Eating and meeting together- all partners in Amblie.*

Through the visit to Amblie, the construction employers from Hastings had a clearer idea of what the partnership entailed and how we might work together in the future. It had the effect of bringing a greater awareness of the European dimension to the Pathway to Construction event and the French party was welcomed when they came for the event in Hastings in June 2009. There is much enthusiasm to engage on a more interactive level and to organise exchange visits for young people, practitioners and others to share information and experience, and to consolidate a strong network.

### **French EcoFab Partners to Hastings and Brighton**

In connection to the Pathway to Construction event a delegation of 11 representatives from GRETA, Normandy visited Hastings on 5<sup>th</sup> June. A programme of activities was arranged.

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June

The group went to see the work of Chalk Down Lime and Reed Conservation, a father and son partnership that restores heritage buildings and slakes and supplies lime to the region. As part of the visit the group also saw a Chestnut coppice and were involved in a

demonstration of coppicing. This timber is widely used in the South East of England for a number of uses, but especially in this instance, for the lathes in lathe and plaster work in the older buildings.

In the evening the group was welcomed by the Mayor of Hastings and the Deputy Mayor from the French delegation responded. A lively discussion then followed with presentations from Alain Tambour from GRETA and Dan Ryan from Hastings Borough Council Youth Team. The discussion focused on the involvement of young people in the built environment and how to keep traditional building skills alive, in the context of environmental sustainability.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June

The next day was the Pathway to Construction event and the GRETA group participated by working with Chalk Down Lime to give demonstrations in lime plastering and flint napping.

A representative from the French delegation took part as one of the Schools Construction Challenge Judges.

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June

The French delegation visited Ore Valley and the Bridge Community Centre. The Bridge has community gardens run in a similar way to the project in Amblie. One representative from the group participated in a Straw bale building day running simultaneous to the visit.



*The Bridge Community Centre, Ore Valley welcomes EcoFab partners. (The Bridge Community Centre is now an active partner in EcoFab2)*

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June

The French delegation, together with representatives from Hastings Trust and Hastings Borough Council, went to the Earth Ship in Brighton to meet with the Low Carbon Trust and to hear about the main features of the Earth Ship.



*The Earthship*

An organisational meeting of the EcoFab project then took place in the Earth Ship. Feedback on the Pathway to Construction Project was given, and how more emphasis could be made on the international aspect was discussed.



*Partners meeting inside the Earthship.*

## ***Evaluation***

Feedback between the partners has been a constant feature of the meetings together. At the end of the Amblie event all active participants came together to give their impression of the event, the good the bad, what needs improvement and so on. Similarly, at the last meeting in Brighton, a session was held with the French partners giving some very valuable and detailed feedback on their experiences of the Pathway to Construction event. This information has all been included in the analysis of the event in order that aspects can be improved in the 2010.

A detailed evaluation of EcoFab1 has been produced by the lead partner, GRETA.

## **ECOFAB and the PATHWAY TO CONSTRUCTION**

Involvement in the EcoFab Pilot has brought an International dimension to the Pathway to Construction that will be developed through the major project to follow. The interaction between EcoFab partners for the 2009 highlighted the potential there is for developing closer links and the concept of European Eco Citizenship. By sharing the skills of traditional builders from the various partners, and bringing to the fore the Environmental concepts embedded in these skills, a truly cross channel project can result. The ensuing network and the exchanges between students, community groups, professionals and training practitioners can build on the connections already made through the pilot project. The similarities in socio-economic profile in the Caen region and the Hastings region with regard to high unemployment, low aspiration, and lack of higher skills levels provide a common ground for ensuring inclusion in order for the project to address some of these issues, which is the broader aim of EcoFab2.

The basis for this has already been established through EcoFab1 and the cross section of people involved in the Pathway to Construction and Amblie events has shown the potential this project has for appealing to the groups we seek to target.

### ***Introduction***

The Pathway to Construction event in June of this year saw an estimated 2000 visitors, of all ages and backgrounds, bringing the event into the realms of a celebratory festival, a fun day out for all the family. Construction related play activities for the young, youth bands playing for the teenagers, and interactive displays and demonstrations for all added together to bring a wide representation of the community, a cultural event with music and dance from local groups, and a display of the rich cultural heritage we have in our built environment here in Hastings.

### ***Background***

The Pathway to Construction event has developed over the last four years from an interactive project with one school and a local contractor, to a large “celebration” of the wide range of opportunities offered by the industry. Many aspects of construction are showcased in a one day event that follows several months of collaboration between schools and contractors.

For two years the event was held in Hastings Town Centre. It outgrew the space available and last year was held in Alexandra Park. The success was outstanding, and the Pathway to Construction became a Festival, drawing interest from all sectors of the community, not just the young people that are the main target.

Prior to this year the event has been organised through the voluntary input of a steering group comprised of local contractors, supported by HBC, Hastings Trust and Sussex Coast College. A small financial contribution was made by HBC but with the ending of their focus on the Construction Sector the funding support has now been withdrawn. Similarly, Construction Skills- the National Construction Training Body- had donated money for the Schools Construction Challenge prizes. Since their restructuring, this too, has been withdrawn. The EcoFab Interreg Funded pilot project enabled the Hastings Trust to continue its involvement

and to broaden the remit of the event, culminating in the successful event held this year (2009).

Whilst retaining the original aim of demonstrating the range of career opportunities in Construction, Environmental concerns have become an increasingly important aspect of the event, with Contractors acknowledging how essential an understanding of the interface between the built and wider environment has become. The School Construction Challenge has always embraced this, and there is the opportunity to develop this further. 2009 saw the beginnings of this with demonstrations in more traditional use of natural building materials. The connection was made with the wonderful heritage in buildings that we have here in Hastings with buildings dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Lime plastering and flint napping were demonstrated by local and Norman crafts people, along side strawbale building and timber framing- proven methods that are seeing a comeback in the present climate. The key target audience has always been young people, but the event is now attracting a far wider audience. This is leading to a greater sense of community cohesion through the celebratory nature that now brings together all ages and backgrounds.

### ***Organisation of Pathway to Construction Event, Hastings, June 2009***

The actual event is a culmination of an organising process that begins a month after the previous year's event finishes. The organising group made up of Construction Companies, Hastings Trust and Sussex Coast College, meets regularly to plan for the following year. The Schools Construction Challenge is launched in November/December so that schools can programme their timetable for the new term after the Christmas break. A formal launch is held, schools and contractors are invited, the process explained, and each school links with a contractor to start the project for the main event the following year.

### **Involving young people**

The contractors give advice and guidance to the school throughout the period, to ensure the school understands the brief, and to encourage the students to plan, design and build their house.

Smaller events are held throughout the year involving young people and community groups in eco build, and other activities concerning the Built Environment. There are a number of key building projects planned as part of the regeneration of Hastings, and the activities help to give the participants more knowledge and therefore confidence, in considering the many issues effecting their environment. The events are also a promotion to encourage participation in the main P2C event.

A key to attracting the number of young people who attended this year's event was to have youth bands playing throughout the day. This proved a great success and will be repeated in subsequent events. Moving the larger area of Alexandra Park enabled this to happen, the band stand being an appropriate stage for the music.

Creating more of a celebratory, festival atmosphere, made the event accessible to all ages and groups. We aimed to provide something of interest to everyone whilst maintaining, as much as possible, a construction related theme. Play activities for the very young included making shapes, and building simple structures with wood and paper. There were interactive

displays that everyone could try, and of course, the Schools Construction Challenge involved the school age children, and also creates its own community with parents, staff and supporters coming along too.

### ***Conclusion***

Many more opportunities are provided to the Pathway to Construction event through the partnership in EcoFab.

Bringing an International dimension to the young people of Hastings gives them a more informed way of seeing the world that adds to their confidence and understanding in their dealings with other people. It is hoped that some exchanges can be arranged, that are eco construction specific, but which will bring the added value of European citizenship to the participants. This also applies to the contractors that will be involved.

The potential to exchange and therefore, increase, knowledge and information concerning eco build techniques will have the practical advantage of keeping traditional skills alive and opening the possibility of more ecobuild projects taking place.

The partnership in the EcoFab project is welcomed by contractors as it gives an international recognition to the contribution that they are making through the Pathway to Construction.

## ***PATHWAY TO CONSTRUCTION 2009- EVALUATION***

### ***Participants***

Approx 2000 visitors

5 Secondary Schools participating in Construction Challenge

2 Primary Schools participating in Construction Challenge

7 Construction Companies

1 Architect

4 Traditional/eco builders

3 Training providers

5 Eco projects

2 Construction Material suppliers

### ***Analysis from Feedback Forms on the Event, including EcoFab partners.***

- **Communication prior to the event.**

This had a mixed response. Those who already knew of the event from previous years felt it was good, but knew companies/schools etc felt it was quite difficult to find out about.

Action:

Schools:

To produce leaflets that are sent to every school in the area, and to follow this up with a phone call.

To try and get a named contact for each school.

To link the event more closely to the school curriculum

All participating contractors and suppliers to pass information to any schools they have contact with

A business card to be produced with contact numbers

General:

To get more media coverage and to put leaflets in Builders Merchants etc

- **Publicity of the Event**

In general the response was good- poor. The local paper had not promoted the event very well, and there was not the extent of radio advertising that there had been the year before. The banners and leaflets didn't give a clear idea of what the event was about. Mainly people heard through the participating schools and/or contractors, and the Youth Bands. However, there was still a surprisingly good turn out and the Observer ran two very positive articles afterwards.

Action: Have very clear leaflets produced, and revise the banners.

Try and get The Hastings Observer to promote it, maybe pay for this if funds available.

Engage Arrow FM to advertise in the lead up to the event.

- **Venue**

Mainly Very Good to Excellent- Alexandra Park provided was a far better venue than the Town Centre. People came for the event itself, rather than just passing through, there was plenty of space, in a safe, self contained environment.

Action: Use Alexandra Park again next year. Ensure discussions with Rangers etc start early to avoid conflicting information with regard to traffic circulation etc.

- **Pitch Placement**

Mainly Very Good- Most participants were very happy with their position. One felt it was very poor (due to lack of adequate provision for their display), and the yurt for presentations proved unsatisfactory due to its proximity to the loud speakers.

Action: Place yurt (or space for presentations) at opposite end to bands. Have alternative energy source to run projector etc.

Ensure all reasonable requests for resources on the day are supplied.

Have more chairs for the demonstrators.

- **Compere**

Poor- The compere failed to engage with the spirit of the day, and was unprepared. She worked well in introducing the bands etc but not in encouraging participation in the construction related events.

Action: Consider engaging the Arrow FM road show (as in previous years), but retain some input from young people, perhaps working on stage with the road show as it was felt it is important to keep the visible presence and involvement of the young people.

- **Bands**

Very good to excellent- Everyone felt having the bands worked really well. The varying degrees of competence were insignificant against the enthusiasm and energy they all brought to the day- as well as the attraction to other young people. It was still difficult to hear them at the other end of the field.

Action: Run similar programme next year. Review positioning of PA system. Having Arrow FM may resolve this, although the bands would still play from the bandstand if possible.

- **Organisation on the day**

Good- Overall this worked well, with setting up and breaking down going without problems. Traffic circulation needs to be improved- mainly confused by conflicting information from the Rangers.

Although, on the whole, everything went well, it was very hard on the key organisers.

Action: Engage with the Rangers early in the planning and involve them in drawing up the directions.

Recruit more help in stewarding on the day. Health and Safety of the overall site is covered mainly by one person from HBC- this needs at least two more people dedicated to it.

- **Catering Facilities**

Poor to Very Poor- This had nothing to do with the food, which was good, but to the exceptionally long waits everyone had. The café could not cope with the demand, having not anticipated such a large turn out.

Action: For the College and the café to discuss working together to increase the catering facilities, giving catering and hospitality students the opportunity to have some hands on experience.

- **Overall rating**

Good to very good- Almost everyone attending on the day, whether from the schools, contractors, visitors or organisers, felt it was a very successful day. Visitor numbers were far in excess of what had been anticipated, and the general atmosphere was one of a festival

focussing on the built environment in an imaginative way that gave pleasure, interest and enjoyment to all- old and young, from all community groups.

### ***Improvements planned for next year, based on feedback***

- Increase European aspect
- Involve more schools and contractors
- Have more emphasis on renewable energy and environmental building
- Increase the catering outlets (under the control of the Café in the Park)
- Improve PA system and compering
- The venue in Alexandra Park to be retained (has been booked for Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June)
- A new launch pack will be produced to be sent to more schools, including primary as well as secondary. EcoFab partners will receive a copy will be included.
- The Launch for the next Construction Challenge will be in December 2009 and more contractors and tradespeople will be invited to become involved.
- The action points from the evaluation of the previous year will be incorporated into the agenda of the organising meetings .  
The role of the EcoFab partners will be developed to ensure their full participation.
- The wider International aspect through exchanges, and other interventions.

*We would like to thank all the partners that have been involved, in particular the lead partners from GRETA. We look forward to working together in the future, for the future.*

*Giving feedback after the Amblie event.*

