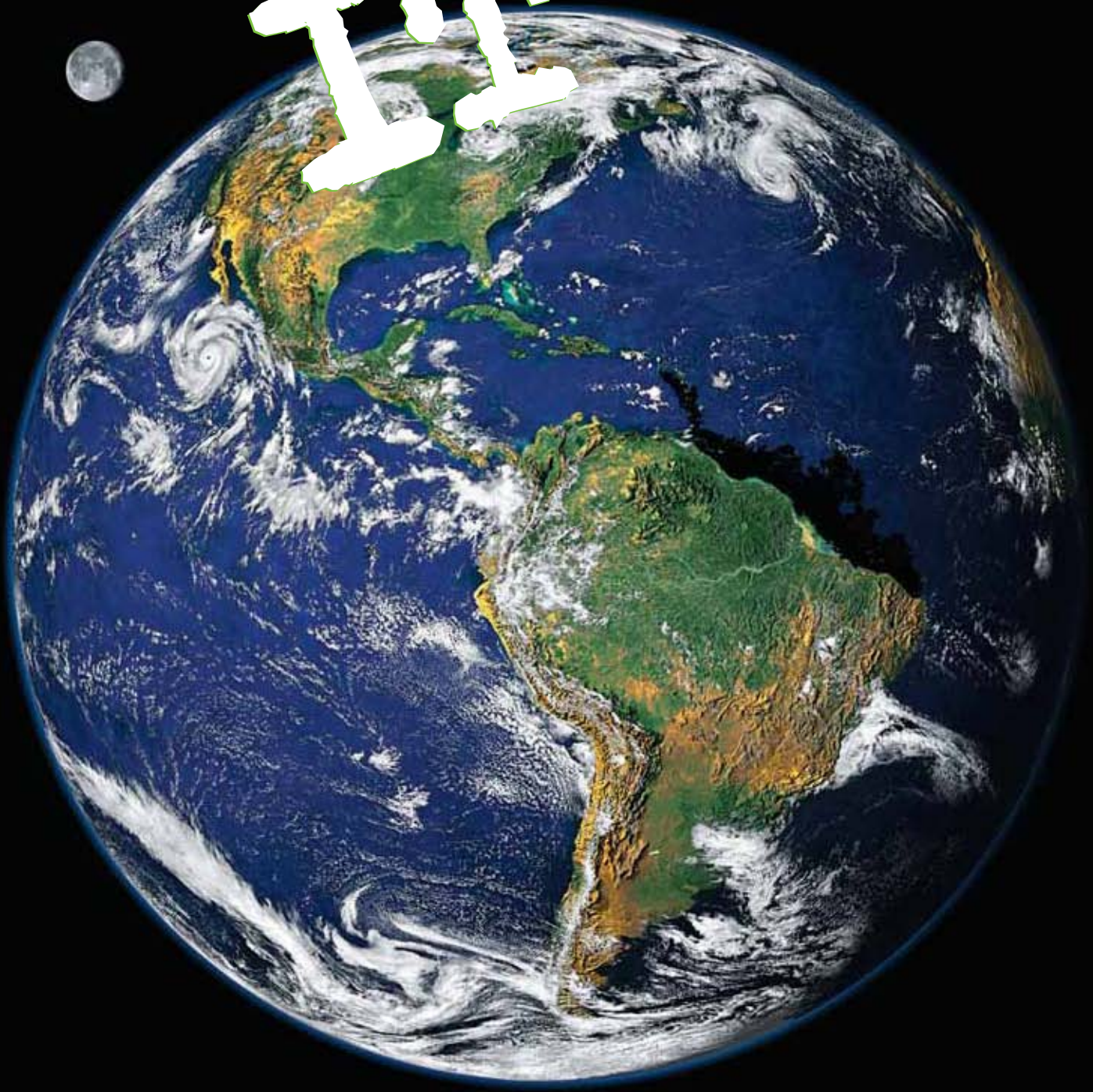


SAVE IT



Contents

On the bins pages 4–5

Purbeck under attack pages 6–7

The Eden Project pages 8–9

These texts focus on the impact we have on our environment and how we can learn to protect it.

This country produces an ever-growing mountain of rubbish. In this article from The Guardian newspaper, journalist Emma Brockes investigates the problem and meets two people who actually have to deal with it every day of their working lives, the bin men.

On the bins

Had their reasons for rising at dawn been different, Mark Andrews and Dave McCormack might have sniffed the spring air and felt glorious. However, Mark and Dave did not inhale deeply. Day after day, they lift the lids off bins and experience the death stench, the sordid reek of things falling in on themselves in darkness. ‘Bin men?’ grunts Dave and rolls his eyes. ‘People take the mickey. They have no idea.’

He and Andrews set out on the dustcart at 7.30am. McCormack drives, Andrews is the loader. Before 3pm, he will have walked nine miles and covered 2,000 houses. He is burned red by the wind. ‘He’s not much of a talker,’ says McCormack. ‘But when it comes to loading rubbish, he’s the best there is.’



In Britain, 435 million tonnes of rubbish are disposed of every year – some 400kg per person. Britain is one of the most wasteful societies in Europe and its trash output is rising by roughly 4% annually. Landfill sites are filling up faster than anyone expected. Incinerators are highly unpopular; recycling is expensive and impractical. The question of what we are going to do with our refuse grows increasingly urgent, although never, it seems, quite urgent enough to bother the people who actually create it in such huge quantities – that is, every one of us.

McCormack thinks that people are thoughtless when it comes to rubbish. He reckons that if they could imagine what one million tonnes of rubbish looks like, they might think twice about so casually and filthily adding to the heap. He suggests ‘tipping it in front of their houses’. When people throw food scraps in the wheelie-bin without putting them in a bag, especially in summer, the bin starts crawling with maggots; they produce evil-smelling waste. McCormack flares his nostrils. ‘This is the worst smell in the world – maggot juice. Once you get it in the cruncher, you can’t shift the smell all day. It’s disgusting. That’s the public being uneducated.’



The worst smell in the world, says McCormack, is something he calls 'maggot juice'.

Both men enjoy their work. McCormack likes the job, he says, because 'you never get bored. No two days are ever the same. Traffic is never the same, parking is never the same, you turn down the same streets, but you never know if you're going to be able to get through in the truck.' Andrews likes the challenge of doing the round faster than anyone else. Apart from the maggot juice, the greatest irritation to him is small children. During school holidays he is fearful of catching one in the cruncher. 'Thing is, they're fascinated by the dustcart. They're always asking for rides.'

Well-off households produce an average of 5kg more waste per week than poorer ones; people in cities throw more away than those in the country; people who live alone waste more than those who live together. Since single, middle-class city-dwellers feeding off meals for one is a rapidly growing phenomenon, the waste mountain looks likely to keep increasing in Britain.

On the other hand, some countries have developed schemes to cut down the amount of rubbish to be collected. In Maastricht, in the Netherlands, they have to pay £1 a go for each rubbish bag. In southern Germany, dustbins are fitted with measuring devices to weigh the waste and the consumer has to pay a tax according to the weight. Meanwhile, on a larger scale, the global giants of the waste industry are investigating new ways of rubbish disposal, including dumping it in space and burying it under the seabed.

For Andrews and McCormack waste management has to start with the individual. 'People think their responsibility ends when they put their bins out,' says McCormack, 'but it doesn't. You get paper blowing everywhere. The lids on the boxes don't fit and people don't tie up their rubbish properly.' Andrews explains, 'People can't be bothered.' 'It's so bad,' adds McCormack, 'that sometimes it's comical.'

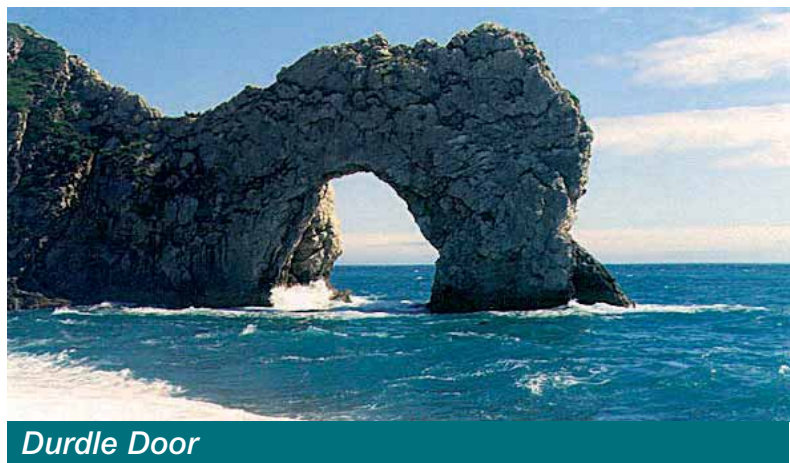
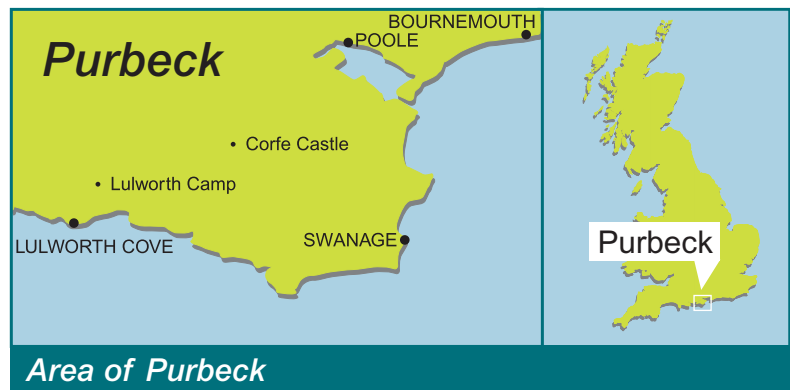
Are some tourist spots just too popular for their own good? This case study, from a textbook written by Jonathan Croall, looks at the problems caused by tourism in Purbeck, an area in Dorset.

Purbeck unde

The place

It is, there's no doubt about it, a gem of a bay, Lulworth Cove. Within the sheltered cove lie a scattering of small yachts, dinghies, fishing boats and the occasional motor boat, interspersed with blue and red buoys, touched here and there by the bright May sun. For a moment the tranquil scene is broken by the sudden appearance of a pleasure cruiser, which stops briefly at the edge of the bay. A man booms out information about its history through a loudspeaker, before the cruiser backs out again into open water, and heads over to Weymouth.

Walking up here on the cliffs, the feeling is one of calm and space. But this is deceptive, as you quickly realise if you look across to the cliff on the other side of the cove. There, an almost unbroken line of people is moving relentlessly, like an unending snake, up the steep and clearly eroded path to Durdle Door, determined in their hundreds to catch a glimpse of another unique formation that the sea has carved out of the local stone.



r attack

The problem

Lulworth Cove, like many other small but beautiful places, has a visitor problem. Nearly half a million visits are made here every year. Over the last two summers repairs have had to be made to the badly eroded footpaths that wind up and along the cliffs. The car park is often full to overflowing, as it is on this early summer Sunday. At such times it becomes a severe intrusion on the lovely and dramatic landscape.

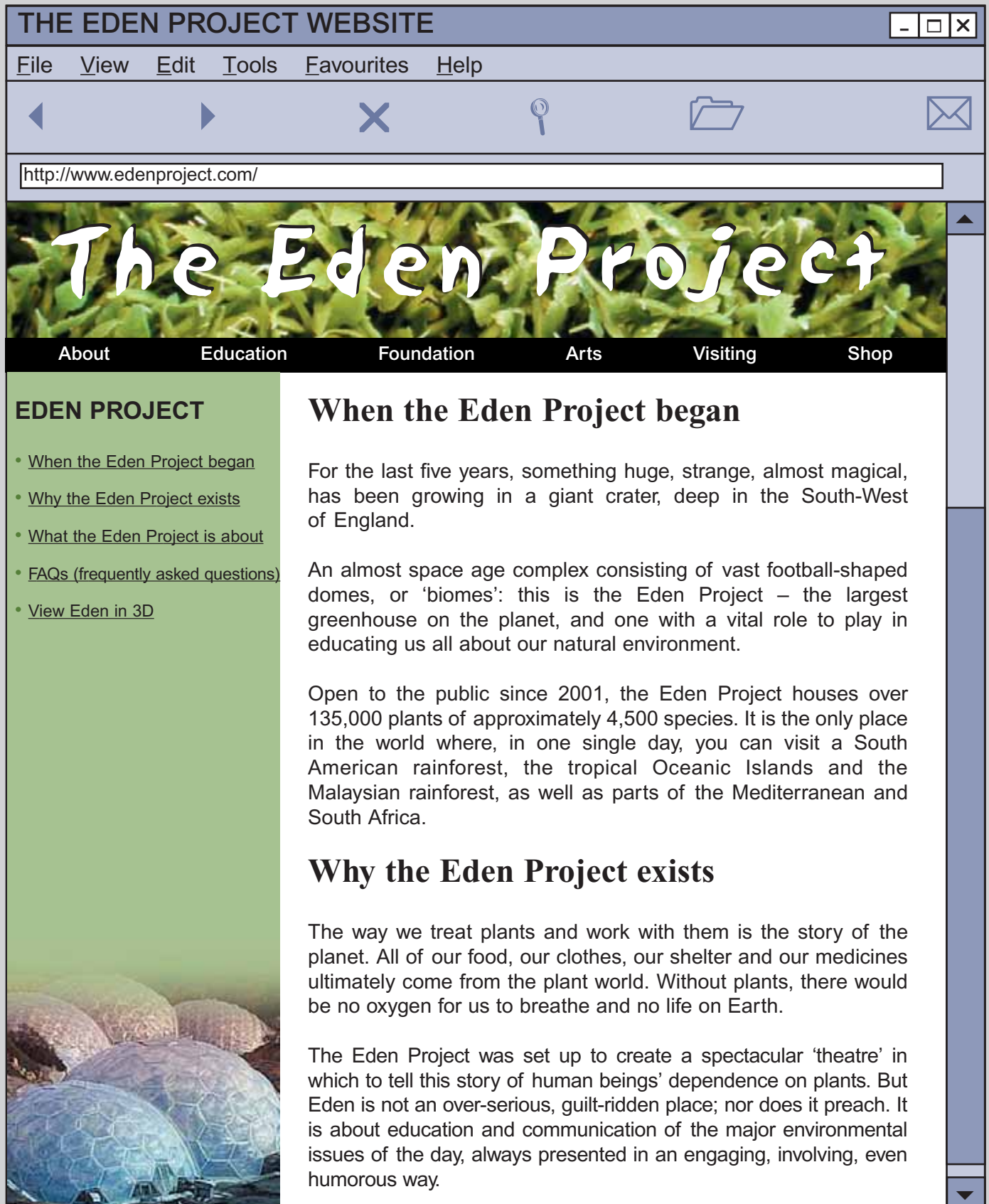
But the problems at Lulworth merely reflect what is happening throughout Purbeck, this very popular part of Dorset. Four and a half million visits are made here every year, a figure predicted to grow to five million. Most people come to relax on the sandy beaches or to sample the unique coastline and heathlands.

Tourism is a crucial part of the local economy in many parts of Purbeck. Encouraging more visitors to come here is obviously good for business, but the area is now seriously at risk because of the huge numbers attracted to it. Many locals in Purbeck feel that, in particular spots at certain times of the year, saturation point has been reached. It was the realisation that action was urgently needed that led to the setting up of the Purbeck Heritage Committee.

One of the problems for Purbeck is that most tourists come at the busiest times of the year, and visit certain well-known spots on the coast, including Lulworth Cove. Yet there are many beautiful areas inland – old stone villages within the Purbeck Hills, such as Corfe Castle – that visitors almost ignore. So the Purbeck Heritage Committee is now considering how to persuade people to come and enjoy the Purbeck countryside as well as the beaches, and how to convince tourists that it's better to visit the most popular areas out of season. The majority of visitors come to Purbeck for the day, many driving in from Bournemouth or Poole, where they may already be on holiday. So one aim of the committee is to get visitors to consider alternative forms of transport – for instance, to use the train for their day trips.

Only time will tell whether the Purbeck Heritage Committee will be able to save beautiful places like Lulworth Cove from destruction at the hands – and feet – of the masses of visitors who love it so much.

The Eden Project, Cornwall's biggest tourist attraction, was set up to develop understanding of the importance of the natural world. These pages from the Eden Project website outline what the project is trying to achieve.



The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "THE EDEN PROJECT WEBSITE". The address bar contains "http://www.edenproject.com/". The main content area features a large green background with the text "The Eden Project" in white. Below this is a navigation menu with links for "About", "Education", "Foundation", "Arts", "Visiting", and "Shop". The left sidebar has a green background with the heading "EDEN PROJECT" and a list of links: "When the Eden Project began", "Why the Eden Project exists", "What the Eden Project is about", "FAQs (frequently asked questions)", and "View Eden in 3D". The main content area has a white background and contains the following text:

When the Eden Project began

For the last five years, something huge, strange, almost magical, has been growing in a giant crater, deep in the South-West of England.


An almost space age complex consisting of vast football-shaped domes, or 'biomes': this is the Eden Project – the largest greenhouse on the planet, and one with a vital role to play in educating us all about our natural environment.

Open to the public since 2001, the Eden Project houses over 135,000 plants of approximately 4,500 species. It is the only place in the world where, in one single day, you can visit a South American rainforest, the tropical Oceanic Islands and the Malaysian rainforest, as well as parts of the Mediterranean and South Africa.

Why the Eden Project exists

The way we treat plants and work with them is the story of the planet. All of our food, our clothes, our shelter and our medicines ultimately come from the plant world. Without plants, there would be no oxygen for us to breathe and no life on Earth.

The Eden Project was set up to create a spectacular 'theatre' in which to tell this story of human beings' dependence on plants. But Eden is not an over-serious, guilt-ridden place; nor does it preach. It is about education and communication of the major environmental issues of the day, always presented in an engaging, involving, even humorous way.





What the Eden Project is about

- understanding the world we live in and the part we play in it better;
- realising that the environment is important to us in a thousand ways, from the food we eat, to the clothes we wear, to the weather we enjoy or suffer;
- celebrating the beauty and richness of other countries besides our own;
- educating people so they understand the special relationship between people and plants.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Is there anything for kids?

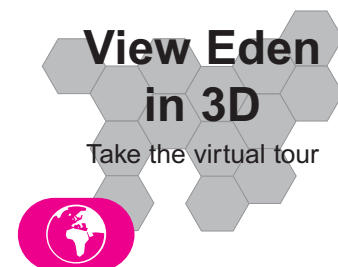
Kids of all ages have been bowled over by Eden, and schools are literally queuing up to experience the Eden magic here. There are no white-knuckle rides but at every turn we have something to engage and entertain children. Art, sculpture, storytelling, performance, music and a whole range of events make Eden a dynamic experience.

Isn't it all just a big green theme park?

To many it will indeed be a green theme park – great. Naturally that expression has a slightly negative ring to it for many of our staff but it's easy shorthand for the public. But the real difference between the Eden Project and a theme park, of course, lies in its concern with science and research, with many partnerships set up with universities and individuals across the world. This ensures Eden is much more than just a theme park, and attracts visitors. More people through the gates means more money to fund that science and better science will ensure even more happy people through the gates and more money to the science. A virtuous circle. Clever.

How is the Eden Project affecting the economy of the local community?

The Eden Project has generated substantial economic and other benefits for the region. The Eden Project's team currently stands at around 600 permanent staff. Of those, 95% were recruited locally, and 50% were previously unemployed. The ages of employees range from 16 to 72.



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'Purbeck under attack', extract from *Preserve or Destroy: Tourism and the Environment* by Jonathan Croall, published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

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