

Case Study: A3 Hindhead

Status: Completed Winter 2014/2015

Type: Conventional Seeding, Hydroseeding and seed collection.

After working with McArdle on several road schemes such as the M1 Widening Junctions 6-10 and the M25 Widening at Heathrow, CDTs were selected as the specialist seeding contractor for this project. The A3 Bypass also included the new tunnel under the Devils Punchbowl, meaning that the old A3 could be removed from this SSSI area and restored using locally harvested seed.

The contract commenced in 2007 with the seeding of grass on some initial areas but more importantly with the instigation of a phased programme of seed collection from local heathland donor sites using our brush seed harvester. This involved the harvesting of both acid grassland species and heather, which were subsequently hydroseeded onto both areas alongside the new A3 and onto the line of the old A3.

As the contract progressed through 2007-2010, not only were areas hydroseeded on some of the steeper sections, such as the tunnel portals, but also off-site areas (such as those used for topsoil storage), which involved liaison with local landowners to restore their fields and meadows. Important also was the subsequent maintenance of these areas to ensure their successful establishment.

The seeding programme also saw large, reinforced slopes hydroseeded with fast-establishing grass mixtures, plus the conventional seeding of a variety of site-specific native wildflower mixtures, carefully chosen to suit the very sandy woodland soils. Once sown, a maintenance schedule of weed control was instigated to keep the invasion of gorse at bay.

2011 saw the opening of the road and tunnel, which then allowed the restoration of the Devils Punchbowl section of the old A3 over the next 3 years. Areas were hydroseeded using seed collected from the previous 4 years, combined with the collection of heather cuttings from Hindhead Common, which were subsequently spread onto other areas on the old A3 sited within the SSSI. This should allow the regeneration of heather and other species in an area of high scenic value.



Brush Seed harvesting on Hindhead common (left) and the southern tunnel portals after hydroseeding and in early germination (right).



The northern tunnel portals once completed and growth well established.



Looking across the Devils punchbowl back down the old A3 towards London.



ARTS
EAST