

*Students are now involved in decision-making in their communities as a direct result of schools who use their own data, showing 'home-to-school' journeys, to examine safe alternatives to car travel.*

## Juliette Balding talks to Carolyn Shelley

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# 'Travelwise' - from survey to classroom materials

*Its aims were to understand the travel patterns and travel aspirations of students on the 'home-to-school' journey.*

*Could you provide a little bit of background to the Devon TravelWise Project?*

During the Summer of 1997, 15 secondary schools from Devon LEA took part in the TravelWise Survey. The survey was initiated by Peter Gimber, Manager of the Devon County Council Road Safety Unit.

Its aims were to understand the travel patterns and travel aspirations of secondary students on the 'home-to-school' journey and in doing so, to examine where possibilities existed to provide or encourage safe alternatives to car travel to school.

The survey provides baseline data examining students journey's to school, and in addition, insights on their lifestyles and attitudes relating to travel.

The results of this phase demonstrated that about a quarter of all the students came to school by car (26%), 39% walked to school, 31% came on the school bus.

Fewer than 2% of the secondary students cycled to school, although 13% responded that they would like to. The results are presented in more detail on page 77.

*How did you first get involved with TravelWise?*

I became involved in the second phase of TravelWise. In 1999, Bill Prendergast, Devon Road Safety Officer approached the Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) to use the Travelwise Survey again, and, in addition, to create and pilot a survey for primary schools. The questionnaires were completed by students at Exmouth Community College and its feeder primary schools.

After the results were sent back to schools, a meeting was set up for the Exmouth schools, for those interested in interpreting the results and

finding ways for working with the schools (and students) to encourage more walking, cycling and use of public transport, as alternatives to the car.

I went with John Balding (Director of SHEU) to present the data. The meeting was well attended by representatives of many different bodies, including Bill Prendergast (Devon Road

### Safer Travel to School

A Government initiative which focuses on strategies to reduce car journeys to school where safer, healthy alternatives exist. Developed in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) these strategies include the School Travel Advisory Group (STAG). STAG - a commitment to the DETR White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for everyone' was established to raise the profile of school travel issues. STAG's 1998/99 report was launched in January 2000 and identifies practical ways of reducing car use and ensuring that policy and initiatives affecting school travel are integrated across transport, health and education.

STAG brings together experts in education, road safety, child health and accident prevention as well as transport co-ordination. Among its recommendations are aims, by 2010, to return to the level of walking, cycling and bus use of the mid 1980s. The scope for each will vary between areas but at the national level would mean 80% of primary students and 90% of secondary students cycling, walking or using the bus.

Further details:

[www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/healthy/healthtravel.html](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/healthy/healthtravel.html)

See also...[www.travelwise.org.uk](http://www.travelwise.org.uk)

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Safety Officer), the Facilities Manager Exmouth Community College, teachers, the Exercise and Health Development Officer, Alison McGregor from Global Action Plan, Chair of the Governors, Sustrans, and a local Bus Network representative.

I selected some interesting results to present at the meeting, and created an example classroom worksheet entitled 'Cycling to School' to show how the data results could be used with students.

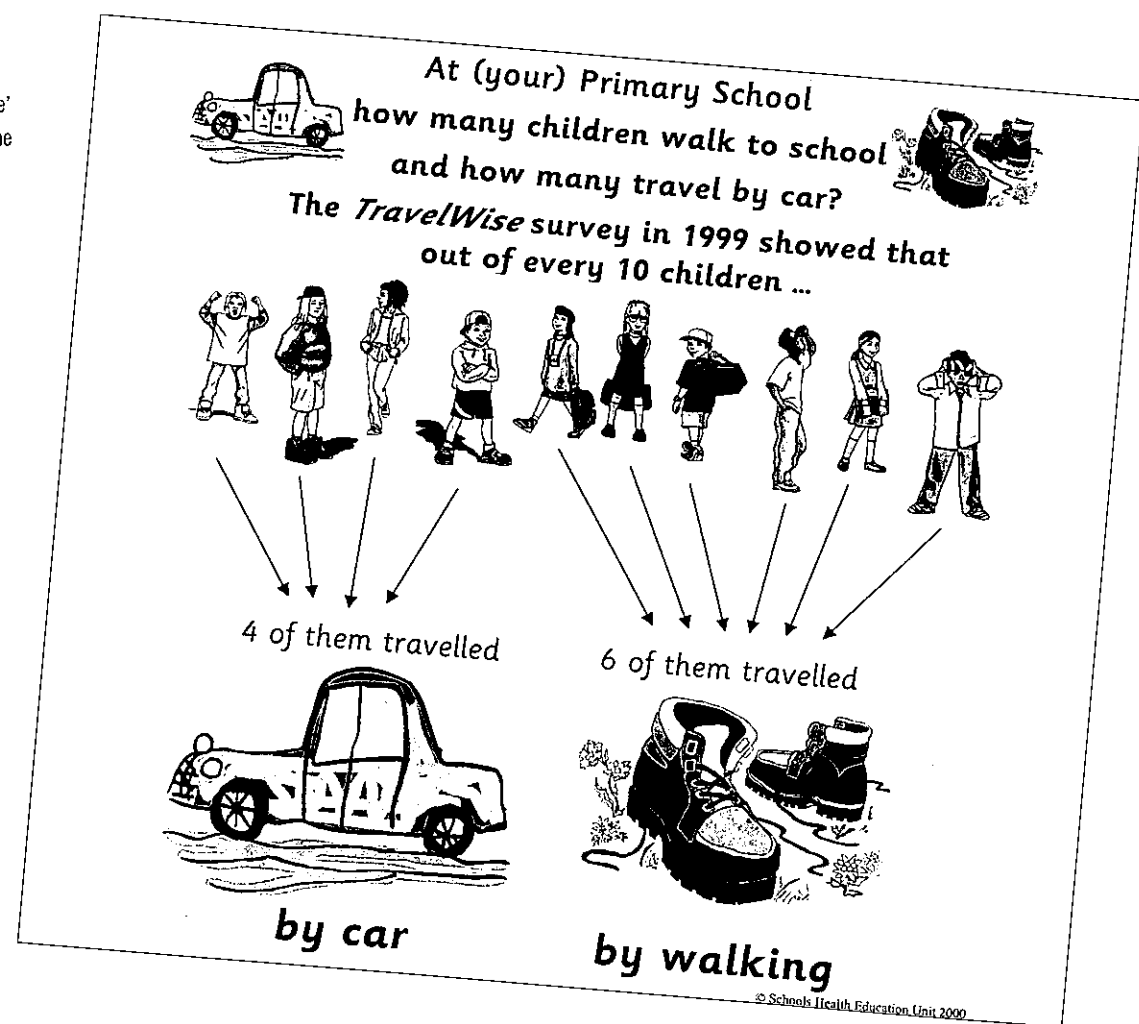
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After the meeting Bill Prendergast expressed an interest in commissioning SHEU to create a pack of resources for primary and secondary schools, that would use the data, and continue to give the aims of TravelWise a high profile in school.

*What happened next?*

I set to work creating a pack of materials for assembly, classroom lessons and tutorials. The pack used the schools data and I liaised with teachers:

An example from the 'TravelWise' pack for primary schools - Theme 1 Active lifestyles...the exercise benefits of walking to school (Assembly)



Anne Gough - then Year 7 Head (Exmouth Community College); Eileen Pusey, PSHE Co-ordinator (Bassetts Farm Primary School); and Mike Endicott, Year 7 Head (Clyst Vale Community College).

The packs were then piloted in the schools.

*Could you describe the format and content of the TravelWise pack?*

The materials present the data in a ready to use format, and can slot into the PSHE/ Assembly programme with ease.

The packs take the format of lesson/assembly outlines with follow-up activities, to enable the children to understand the data from their survey and use it as a basis for discussion and follow-up work.

Activities include worksheets, physical fitness activities, games, role play ideas, poster design. The students and teachers can examine their own survey results, decide on the target areas for action and then promote action within their schools and communities.

In the primary materials, the themes include 'Active lifestyles - the benefits of walking to school', 'Less pollution and damage to the environment', 'Less traffic - safer journeys to school'.

An example from 'TravelWise' for secondary schools -

Theme 1 What's it all about?

3. How can we become even better...?

(Year group assembly - resource sheet)

Secondary themes include exploring possibilities for changing travel patterns, cycling, walking, using buses and planning a TravelWise week.

*How do schools benefit from using the materials?*

During the activities the students will increase their knowledge and awareness of many important issues, including the effect on the environment, social issues, effects on health and economic issues. Many aspects of the curriculum are targeted by the activities including Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, PSHE and Citizenship. The aim is that they will also act on the information, resulting in practical solutions to problems facing children travelling to and from schools.

Examples of activities that have come about from using the materials, include the highlighting of important issues, such as the need for safe storage of bikes and designated cycle routes, more safe crossing areas for pedestrians, and better parking areas for school buses.

Exmouth Community College students formed a 'Transport Action Team' to tackle issues which arose out of the TravelWise and GAP projects. The team highlighted areas of concern and listed suggested action. These are some of the team's projects, in their own words,

*"We have plans to buy or have donated bicycle lockers to set at different locations on the College site. The lockers are large enough to store bikes of any size plus any extra baggage. The users will get a key to the padlock for their locker. We anticipate that this will encourage students to cycle to College as they can rest assured that their bikes will be 100% safe."*

*"Another of our up-and-coming projects is the widening of a very narrow footpath leading from a well built-up area. The path will become a cycle path and footpath running adjacently. It will provide another safe way into school."*

*"At the other end of the track there are plans to reshape the pavement opposite. This will reduce the risks of a very sharp corner so that there will be considerable visibility improvement."*

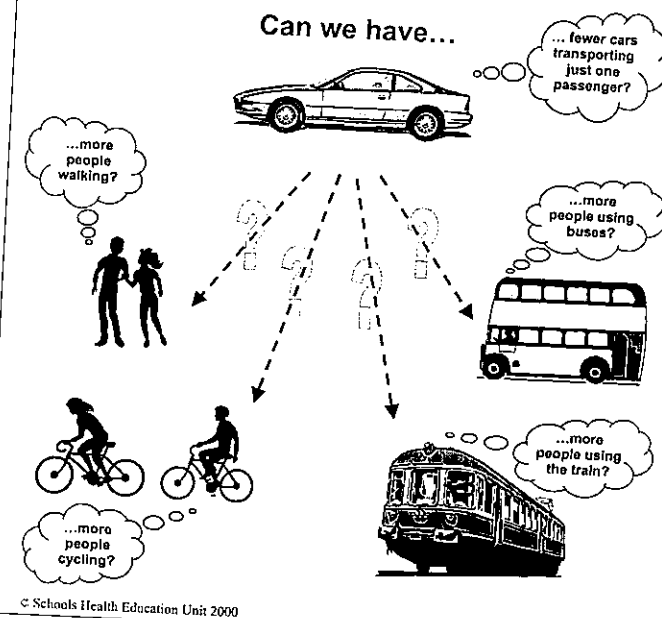
*That's encouraging! Were there any other interesting outcomes?*

At Clyst Vale Community College, modes of travel were plotted on a map according to where students were living, and a particular cluster was discovered less than 3 miles away from the college. Children living in this area had to pay if they wanted to go by bus, yet did not, because the tickets were expensive (there were no daily return or weekly tickets

**How can we become even better and encourage even fewer pupils to travel to college by car?**

Can we find out the answers to the following questions:

- How does travelling by car and increased traffic affect our health and the environment?
- Are there any suitable alternatives for the car users? Are these alternatives cheap, safe and reliable?
- Do we need more alternatives like better buses and safe cycle paths?
- Do we need to change people's attitudes?
- Who can help us make these changes happen?



available). Only a few children from this area were cycling, as the route was busy and not very safe. To encourage greater use of the bus and less use of the cars, I approached the local bus company and persuaded them to provide a weekly ticket, with a special offer at the weekend for the family. This scheme still needs promoting to encourage more uptake, but it's a good start!

*Are there more plans for the future?*

In March 2001, Exmouth Community College and its primaries, are due to take part in the survey again, to monitor any changes. The TravelWise pack will be used again, and any recommendations incorporated. The eventual aim is to produce a pack, available for use across the country.

*How would you sum up the value of TravelWise?*

The TravelWise project has worked well in these Devon schools, and with the involvement of other agencies has really taken off. The survey and follow-up materials can involve students in decision-making in their communities, which is exciting and relevant for them. The success of TravelWise will really be measured by safer journeys to school and when more children are able to walk, cycle or take the bus.