

Geography Coursework Investigation of Drewsteignton.

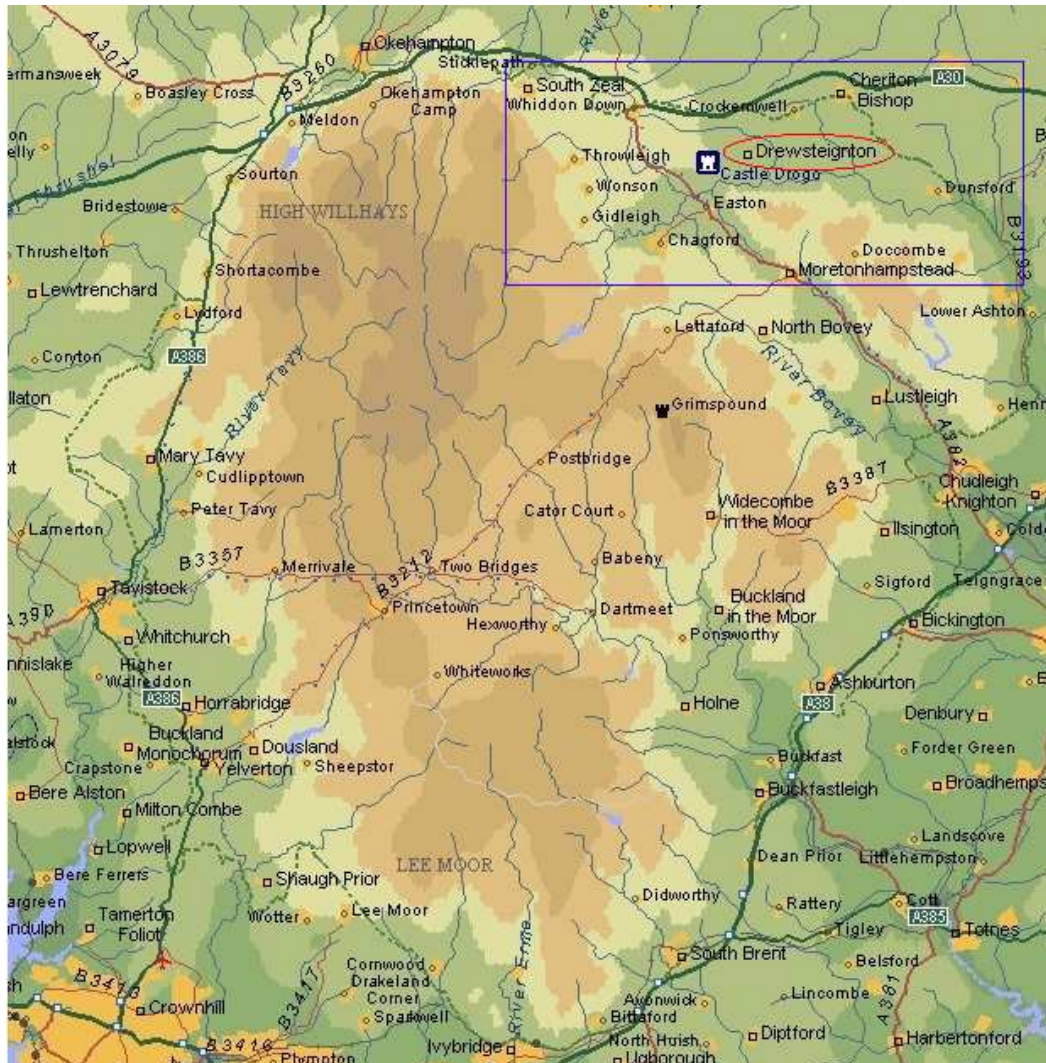
Introduction:

My investigation can be summed up by the question: **“How has the age and sex structure changed from 1981 to 2001 in the village Drewsteignton and what possible effects has this had upon the village?”**

I chose this particular line of enquiry because I live just outside this particular village so it was very accessible and I have also heard a lot about the various changes of the village through my grandparents who have lived there for over forty years; so I decided that it would be worthwhile and quite interesting to investigate the changes of people in the village and how it has affected the village in more detail.

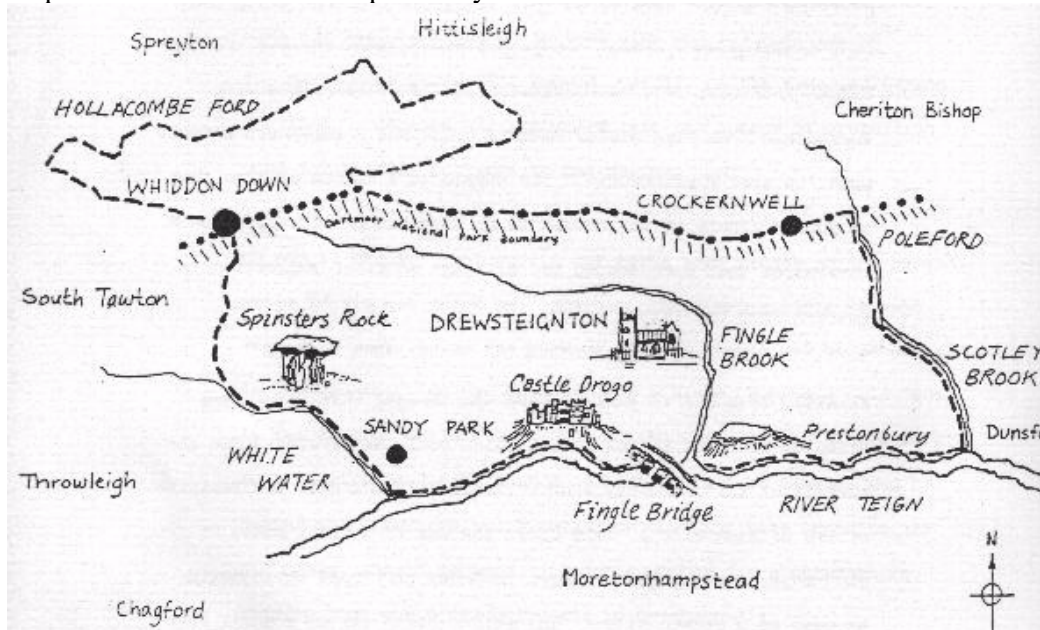
This particular investigation can be categorised in the syllabus as an investigation in **“Growth and decline of settlements”** area (**“An investigation about changes on the edge of a large town or village”**).

Drewsteignton is a village in the very north of Dartmoor National Park as ringed in red on this map of Dartmoor (North is vertically upwards – towards the top of the page):



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The area ringed in blue is the area surrounding Drewsteignton and this next map shows this area in closer proximity:



Looking at records from libraries, the internet and other sources (books in my family and what I already know): Drewsteignton has developed typically as a village, for instance the impact of both the farming and industrial revolutions with the population diminishing rapidly during the industrial revolution (rural – urban migration) and then beginning to increase more noticeably in the last twenty to thirty years as it became more attractive to have a house or second house in the country.

Drewsteignton, similar to many English parishes, originated from an early manor (a collective farm and administrative centre). During the Saxon period most of what is the present parish was part of the Manor of Treable and at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 was called Taintonia.

As time progressed, agriculture progressed and the Lord of Manor's authority (which most people in the parish were bound to) became replaced by that of the church which became the local government. Public meetings were carried out in the church and it became the village meeting place. Unfortunately the meetings and what they were about became corrupt and so moves were made to open them up by annual elections.

Also at this time the agricultural revolution was taking effect and enclosures had replaced the collective farms but even then they were controlled by the church.

The system whereby the church was in control was changed as it was ceasing to work and to help the parish progress economically so on 4th December 1894 Drewsteignton Parish Council was formed and became responsible for running civil, but not ecclesiastical, affairs. However, the power of the Parish Council declined between the two world wars as the District and County Councils were formed. Following that was of course the beginning of the decline of agriculture due to cheaper and budget imports became possible from places such as Canada and Botswana: this greatly reduced the population of the parish and changed the structure of the parish.

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More recently the National Park has come to power in the area controlling planning permission (over riding the Parish Council), conservation etc and the Parish Council have had a lot of power returned to them.

Method of Data Collection:

I collected the primary data from the people of Drewsteignton with the use of a questionnaire: I walked through the village knocking on people's doors and asking them to fill in the questions or I would take down their answers myself, whatever they preferred. I did this on Wednesday 22nd October of this year (2003) before and after lunch for about 2 hours each way. In total I surveyed twenty people. I had hoped to survey more people but only in about one in three houses was there anybody at home. The questionnaire I created is shown on the following page (note: for question 3, I did not actually ask them this; I simply ticked the corresponding answer myself!). The questions which I asked generated quite a thorough profile of the person I interviewed which made it more possible to interpret results.

I interviewed the parish archivist who himself had been in the village for many years and had written many reports and appraisals of the village in his time including a book celebrating the millennium: about the history of the village. This interview supplied me with many details about the village and its people over the years and it assisted me in asking the appropriate types of question: I have applied the information which I gathered from this interview to some of my analysis of results.

I obtained census figures from Exeter library and the maps of Dartmoor and the area in close proximity surrounding Drewsteignton I obtained from Chagford library (all of this secondary data except the map of the area around Drewsteignton (which I photocopied from an appraisal of the parish) was collected through an internet connection.

Collecting the data presented few problems but it took me a while to find the maps of Dartmoor and Drewsteignton I wanted. It was also difficult getting the appropriate census figures and all too often they would be too general or not covering the area I wanted them to cover (Drewsteignton).

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1. For how many years have you lived in this village?

(Please tick the appropriate group)

Under 1 year__

Between 1 – 3 years__

Between 4 – 6 years__

Between 7 – 12 years__

Between 13 – 18 years__

Between 19 – 25 years__

25 + years_____

2. Which age group do you fit into?

(Please tick the appropriate age group)

18-25_____

26 – 30_____

31 - 40_

41 – 50_____

51 - 65

66 – 75

76 +

3. Are you Male or Female?

Male_____

Female_____

4. Do you have any children under 18?

Yes

No

5. How Many People are there in your household?

1 2 3 4 5 6+

6. What do you think should be in the village which is not there already?

Please state.....

Reason.....

.....

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7. What do you think should be improved in the village, if anything?

Improvement.....
Reason.....
.....

8. Reason of move to village:

Work___ Retirement___ Peaceful and/or secluded___
2nd Home___ Can commute to work___ Born here___
Other___ Reason:

9. Do you work from home?

Yes___ No___

10. How do you view the 2nd and/or holiday homes in the village?

Positively___ Why?.....
Negatively___ Why?.....

11. Do you feel involved enough in the village community?

Yes___ No___

12. Does the social difference between the locals and the newcomers bother you?

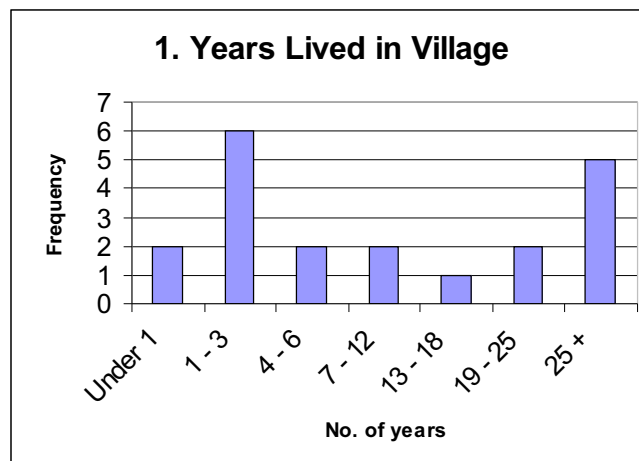
Yes___ Reason..... No___ Reason.....

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Results:

Presentation of data:

| 1. Years Lived in Village | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Under 1 | 2 |
| 1 - 3 | 6 |
| 4 - 6 | 2 |
| 7 - 12 | 2 |
| 13 - 18 | 1 |
| 19 - 25 | 2 |
| 25 + | 5 |

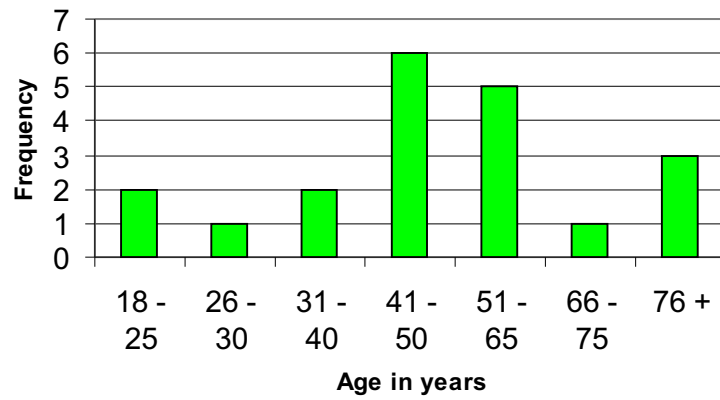


(Relevant to graph on following page)

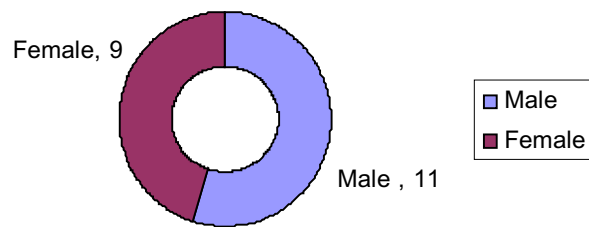
| 2. Age Group | |
|----------------|---|
| 18 - 25 | 2 |
| 26 - 30 | 1 |
| 31 - 40 | 2 |
| 41 - 50 | 6 |
| 51 - 65 | 5 |
| 66 - 75 | 1 |
| 76 + | 3 |

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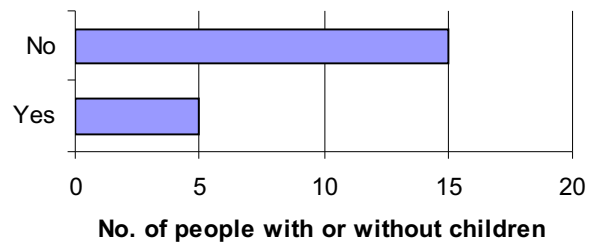
2. Age Group



3. Gender



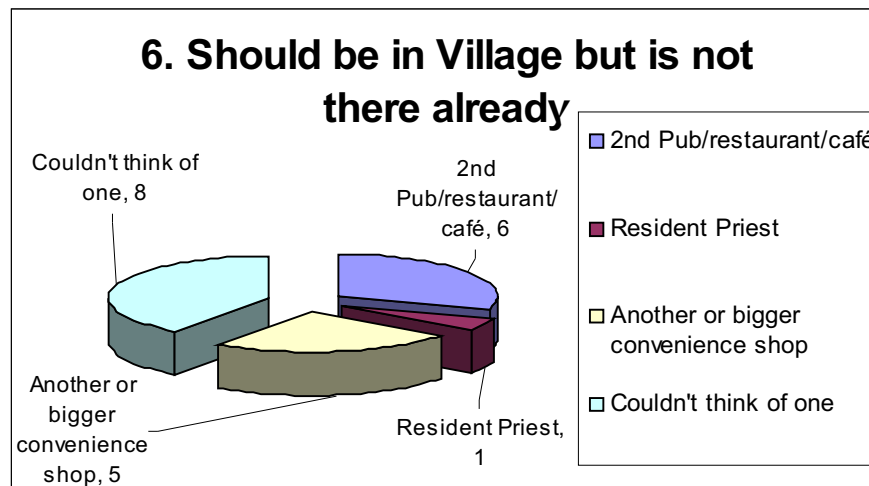
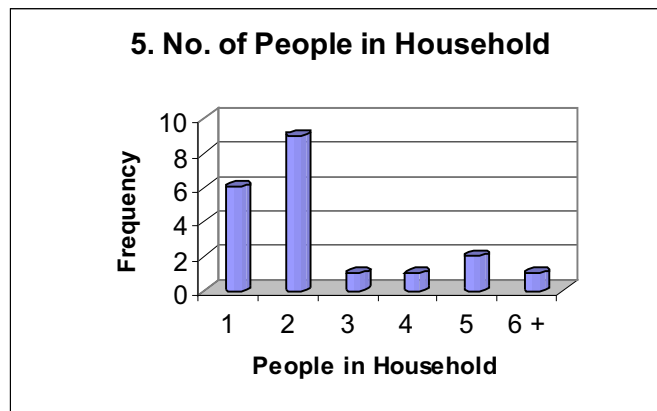
4. Children



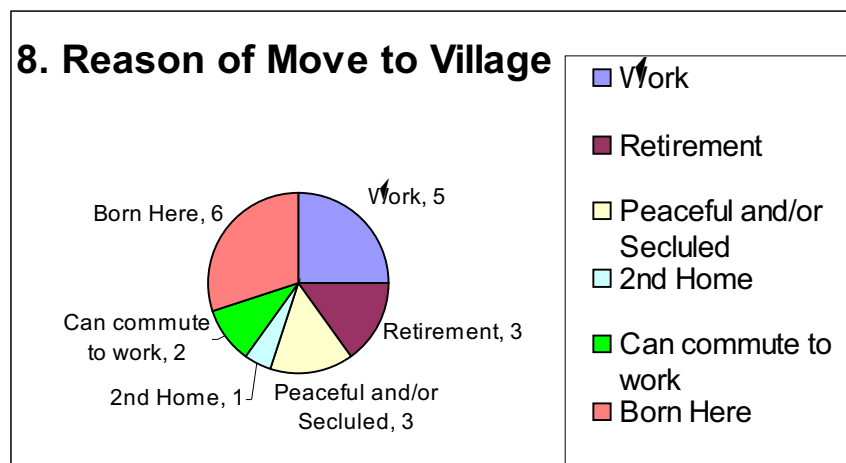
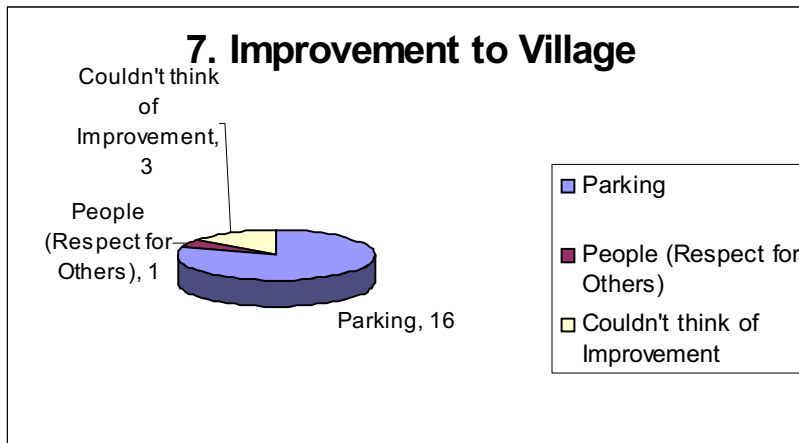
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5. No. of People in Household

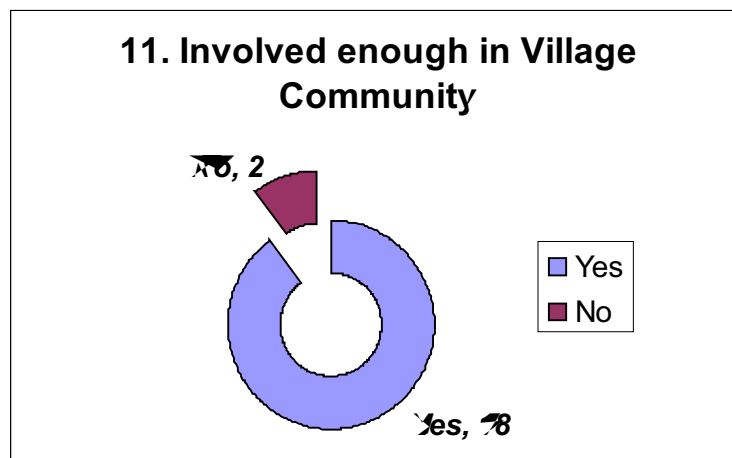
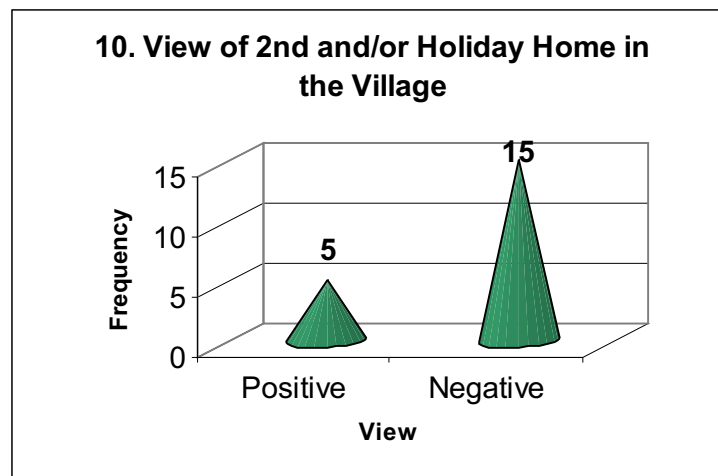
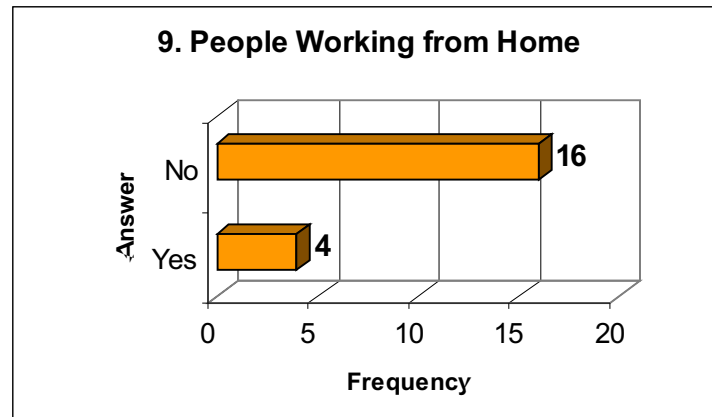
| | |
|-----|---|
| 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 9 |
| 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 1 |
| 5 | 2 |
| 6 + | 1 |



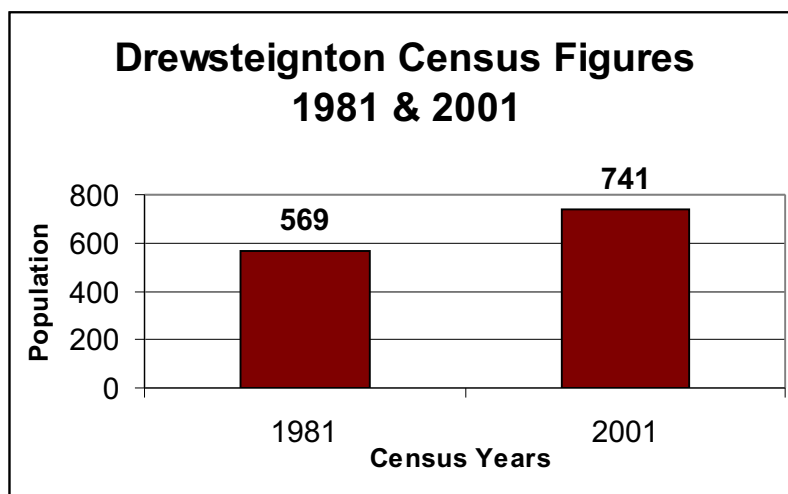
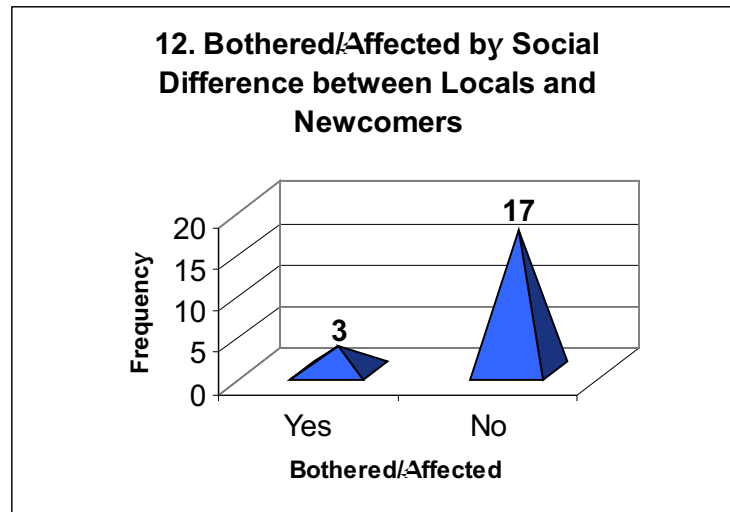
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Analysis:

Firstly, studying the data demonstrating the initial question on my questionnaire: it is evident that the majority of the people I questioned have lived in the village for 1 -3 years and oddly there is almost the same amount of people who have lived there for 25 + years. The other categories surrounding these two are almost all the same. This might suggest that over the last few years a lot of people have moved to the village due to the attractions of its position (looking at the data reflecting question 8). For example there are lot of people who moved to the village because “work”, I think when they were referring to work they were talking about its proximity to there place of work which obviously ties in to the category “can commute to work”. However it is likely not just be proximity to work that people moved to the village before; they have been attracted by its peacefulness and seclusion (looking at “peaceful and/or secluded” category) which probably overrides the proximity i.e. they could have a house nearer to their work but it would mean living in a more suburbanised area and they don’t mind having to go that bit further when they commute because of the pleasantness of living in a village.

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Looking at the data from question 2 (age of the people) and question 3 (gender), the impression is given that the majority of the population are males between the ages of 41 – 50 (males are only just in the majority) who appear to be married (data from question 5 – majority of number of people in household is 2) and live there due to employment relatively nearby. Looking back again at the number of years that the people have lived in the village for (data from question 1) it suggests to me that as a result of these professional people living in the village a want for more facilities has arisen (data from question 6) and another shop and another place to eat seems to be wanted.

According to the parish archivist, there was no such demand for anything of the sort which according to my results seems to be as a result of two main factors: the population of the parish has increased (not a vast amount) over the last twenty years (looking at the census figures graph) and the type of person has changed – as discussed in the previous paragraph. Again from my interview with the parish archivist I discover that there were a lot less children about than there are now and the ones who were around worked on the numerous farms in the parish. At present a quarter of the people in my survey had children (graph reflecting question 4) and due to this new type of person in the village who tries to drive things forward, it is likely that certain recent projects have been executed such as the playing field which is home to a children's assault course and a football pitch, here are two photos showing this:

Photo 1, photograph picturing the recently constructed children's assault course:

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Photo 2, photograph showing the recently created football pitch, which is just next to the assault course.

Modern ways of life and technology have also affected these people do in relation to the village through a considerable amount of people who work from home (referring to the graph showing the information from question 9) – almost a quarter of the people which I surveyed worked from home. This is ideal for them because they don't have to commute to work and they get the peace and seclusion of being in a village and this also means they have more of a chance of being involved with the village and its development (i.e. getting on the parish council and helping to drive forward projects such as the football pitch and the assault course): hence the high rate of people feeling involved enough in the village community (data from question 11).

The older more 'local' people of the community seem to fit into the results with the more recent 'newcomer' type of person (graph of data representing question 12) because I think that if some are split into two separate groups then they are unlikely to bother each other (reflecting the results from question 12) and if they are together and working in harmony then they are unlikely to bother or affect each other (again reflecting question 12 results). This new "newcomer" type of person (the old type being one who does not involve themselves much in the village community), like the older more 'local' people, seem to view the 2nd and/or holiday homes more negatively than positively (data received from question 10) because they have become involved and 'local' quickly. These types of houses are disliked because they prevent locals buying local houses and it increases the houses prices considerably.

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The final point I shall make for the analysis is this: there seems to be a desperate want for the improvement of parking in the village (looking at the results from question 7) due to the congestion in the summer (I have not given formal results for this because I see it myself every year in the summer) when tourists come to visit the area for the beautiful scenery and/or head off towards “Fingle Bridge”, a local well known medieval bridge crossing the river Teign. This generally leads to a lot of congestion in the main square of Drewsteignton and along the narrow roads towards “Fingle Bridge”.

Here are three photos showing these two places:

Photo 3, photograph showing the main square in Drewsteignton where it often gets congested:

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Photos 4/5, photograph showing the road leading to “Fingle Bridge” where it becomes frequently blocked:

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Discussion of Results:

To summarise my results: the type of person has changed over the last twenty years and as a result the development of the village has increased rapidly and so produced big projects in its wake. There're a lot more young professional people living in the village now; changing the social structure of the village dramatically.

When collecting the results I did encounter a few problems. I was away for a lot of my half term I was on so I only had a limited period of time when I could carry out my survey so I will have missed some people who work during the week (I carried out my survey on a weekday). The size of the sample I took was not really sufficient enough to back up points as thoroughly as they needed to be. Finally, there were only two people who I questioned who were not willing to talk, one of which I did squeeze answers out of after a while and the other simply refused to answer any of the questions at all.

Conclusion & Evaluation:

To conclude this investigation, I can now answer my original question: **"How has the age and sex structure changed from 1981 to 2001 in the village Drewsteignton and what possible effects has this had upon the village?"**

The age and structure has changed from 1981 to 2001 in such a way to change the type of person and this has affected the village by increasing the speed of developments in the village, changing the social structure, increasing the movement of the village economically and increasing a traffic problem.

The main improvement I could make to this investigation would be increasing the sample size which would result in more accurate results with more credibility.

This investigation could be expanded by carrying out a similar survey to neighbouring villages and comparing results.

This investigation might be useful for the parish and the county council as a means of keeping track of the progress of a certain village. In fact my grandmother (chairman of Drewsteignton Parish Council) has used part of the survey already to help back a project for the building of new car park (the opposition is environmentally based) which is now under construction.