

Methodology.

On Friday 20th September 2002, thirty-six year eleven G.C.S.E. Geography candidates from Alderley Edge School for Girls visited Wilmslow town centre to carry out a data collection survey between the hours of 9:15 and 12:15. This was to establish the most popular mode of transport used to reach Wilmslow, assess the pedestrian density in Grove Street and its surrounding areas, and to establish whether or not there is a distinct pattern of land use within the centre of Wilmslow. Below is a photograph of Wilmslow's pedestrianised high street, Grove Street.

We collected various pieces of information, from both primary and secondary sources. We interviewed members of the general public to get their views on Wilmslow using a questionnaire consisting of five closed questions that would identify for us where they lived, their mode of transport in visiting the town centre for that day, the frequency of their visits, the purpose of their visits and a final question in which they can write or their personal comments on car parking, pedestrianisation and the type of shops available in Wilmslow.

There are however some limitations to this method of data collection as it did not ask for gender or age, which are vital pieces of information as this could have a big effect on our final results. As we carried out our investigation on a Friday morning when all teenagers were in school, and possibly most adults were at work, this means that the only people we interviewed were pensioners, the unemployed or people who were on a break.

As we walked around the town, we filled in a landuse map (a ground floor plan of all the shops in the centre of Wilmslow. This will help us determine whether or not there is a distinct land use pattern within Wilmslow. As well as telling us what types of shops are positioned where, we will be able to see if the services are situated together, if some streets have a more distinct pattern than others, if in fact there is no pattern at all, and where there are vacant shops for which we can assess why. There were however some problems that occurred whilst carrying out the landuse map, as there had been some shops missed off the map, and I found it extremely difficult to write on the map as it was so small and cramped.

The third and final method of data collection was a pedestrian count, which took place 11:00am for fifteen minutes. During this time we counted how many people walked past us and recorded the information in the form of a tally chart. We did this to detect which were the busiest places in Wilmslow so we could analyse why this was so, looking at which shops were in this specific area and determine why so many people were interested in those shops. With the use of the pedestrian count we will be able to draw a density shading choropleth map which will easily show where the most people were within the time limit. Out of the three data collection methods, I would say that this is the one with the most room for fault as it asked for the most precise levels of accuracy. As some areas are too busy it would have been extremely easy to miscount or forget to count people. Also it was not specified whether or not to count babies in prams, and as a result of this, some girls did, whereas others did not. Also it was very hard to stay within the designated time, as no bell was rang at the start or end, and so consequently the participating girls had to rely on themselves and many started a minute too early or ran too late, which will have altered the results.

For further investigation, I chose to interview shopkeepers from both Wilmslow and Alderley Edge, to assess whether or not, they feel, that the Alderley Edge Bypass will effect trade in these two nearby towns. I asked questions to find out if they felt trade from Alderley Edge would go to Wilmslow once the bypass is built, which would therefore change our findings greatly if we were to go back and reinvestigate once the bypass has been built.