

Sustrans School Travel Case Study  
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## Ysgol Maes-y-Dderwen, The Acorn Project and Gurnos C.P. School

**Title of project:** SRS joint underpass project

**Local Authority:** Powys County Council

**Partners:** Powys County Council, Cywaith Cymru, The Acorn Project,  
Dave Symons

**Key Features:** Walking, Community Involvement, Art, Pupil Involvement,  
Curriculum links

### **Summary:**

**Refurbishment of underpass as part of a Safe Routes to School Project.**  
Local pupils asked paint the underpass to their own design.

The underpass links two communities and was in a poor state of repair.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness regarding walking and cycling to school
- Encourage use of the underpass
- Improvement of local surroundings
- Prevent vandalism in the area

### **Initiative:**

1. **Involve as many people as possible** from the start – keep them informed.  
This is important because people need to have ownership of the project.

2. The project involved an artist in residence – a Person Specification was agreed with the County Council, the schools and Cywaith Cymru/Artworks Wales and the person we engaged was ideal, he was a key element in the success of the project. **The artist, David Symons, really motivated all the pupils** and helped them put their ideas together for the final design.

3. It was agreed that the pupil's design would be the one painted on the underpass, there would be **no interference from adults**. Despite the pupils' incredulity this is what happened.

4. Year 10 pupils from Ysgol Maes-y-Dderwen and years 5 and 6 pupils from Gurnos County Primary together with 15-16 year olds from the Acorn Project

created some **ideas and themes** including local history, personal interest and road safety awareness issues, which were then scaled up to fit the tunnel plan. Then they transferred their designs on acetate sheets, these were then put over a scaled 3D model of the tunnel to give an idea of how their work would look in real life.

5. The **responsibility for various parts of the tunnel design was given to different groups**. The Acorn Group were responsible for the inside tunnel design, whilst Ysgol Maes-y-Dderwen and Gurnos County Primary Schools were responsible for the design of the outer walls of the tunnel.

6. All the participants' acetate sheet designs were exhibited in Ysgol Maes-y-Dderwen art classroom, where artist David Symons created a number of preliminary designs using and including all the participants' ideas. The finished design was drawn to scale and transferred on to the tunnel by the artist and then the participants painted the entire thing. The entire project from start to finish took 10 weeks.

7. **The project was used as part of the Art G.C.S.E.** requirements by Y10 pupils in Ysgol Maes-y-Dderwen and was linked into the Primary School curriculum. Increased use of underpass both for the school journey and by local residents.

#### **Future Targets:**

1. The refurbishment of the underpass was part of a Safe Routes to School scheme in the town. The third phase of this initiative will be completed during 2004/5 although there has been some disappointment regarding funding from the Welsh Assembly Government.
2. Increasing use of the routes by both pedestrians and cyclists.

#### **Outcomes:**

**Increased use of underpass** both for the school journey and by local residents. The more people that use the underpass the less likely it is to be vandalised. **It has become a talking point** and has helped to raise the profile of the whole area. **There has been no vandalism/graffiti** in the underpass.

#### **Costs and Funding:**

- Welsh Assembly Government
- Welsh Development Agency
- Arts Council for Wales
- Transport Grant
- Road Safety Grant
- Powys County Council

TOTAL £14,743.00

N.B. the refurbishment of the underpass was part of a Safe Routes to School project; the above costs are just for the underpass.

**Problems and solutions:**

**Problem:** The corrugated surface of the underpass made it difficult to draw straight lines/ lifelike images.

**Solution:** Abstract design.

**Problem:** People hanging around the underpass discouraging the general public from using it.

**Solution:** Bright “flowing” design to encourage people to pass through rather than hang around looking at the images.

**Problem:** Graffiti and vandalism around the area of the underpass.

**Solution:** Abstract design so that any graffiti would be less obvious.  
Installation of vandal proof lighting in the underpass

**Case study contact details:**