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## AUTUMN/WINTER DIRECTIVE 1987

Dear Observer,

The response to the Summer Directive on holidays was very impressive indeed. In sheer quantity it was one of the biggest in six years, and the quality of the reports was deeply satisfying. My only regret has been the consequent delay in sending out individual thanks. This has resulted not only from the volume of mail (about which, be sure, I don't complain) but also from some long-standing trouble with my writing arm which makes handwriting impossible and typewriting not much better. I have now started to experiment with the word processor: the results may be politely described as mixed. However, I shall persevere because I attach great importance to these personal contacts.

And now to business. This Directive is in two parts. Please begin your answer to Part II on a separate sheet of paper.

### **PART I: THE CAR**

The theme for Part I is the car from all possible points of view, including that of the pedestrian and non-driver. This topic may not interest you immediately but keep on reading.

Different people will obviously find different aspects of the Directive interesting, but no one is unaffected by the existence of the car in our society. Please read it through before you write anything and please try to write as concretely as you can from your own experience. First a few facts: If you own a car please give details of your present one: how old is it, how long have you had it, what did you pay for it? What are its good and bad points? And a 'sky's the limit' question: What car would you ideally like to own and why? what colour would you choose? Also please log mileage and all costs for a period of thirty days from receipt of this Directive. You may care to note the extent to which either mileage or costs are not typical. If you used to own a car but do not now please say when and why you abandoned it.

Now some more general points that you might like to consider.

Your experience of Driving Tests - your sensations when you passed yours - should people be required to take the test again? If so, on what basis?

The social effects of the car on your relations with kin and friends; to what extent does your life depend on the car - driving as part of your job - driving to work - driving children to school etc - and more general social effects, e.g is the use of public transport a more sociable activity?; effects on shopping habits; effects on health, e.g lack of exercise and effects of long-distance and motorway driving.

Driving and drinking: what are your personal rules about this? What about other people's rules - give details but name no names

The effects of the car on the environment - economics of lead-free petrol - the demand for roads and effects of new roads. Questions for non-drivers: Do you find that universal car ownership is all too commonly assumed? Locally, do you think that pedestrian amenities, pavement repairs, attention to overhanging trees etc are properly catered for? Are car drivers inconsiderate?

Parking: what's it like in your street? How does the quality of facilities for parking affect your decision to travel anywhere? Other people's parking habits.

'Car Psychology' - the image of the car and its owner in car advertising - the language of car advertising and associated images - instances of good and bad driving manners - instances of 'motorway madness' - dreams in which cars feature.

May we have observations on and from hitch-hikers, cyclists, motor-cyclists, and equestrians?

Speculate about the future: Can the number of cars on the road continue to increase indefinitely? What kind of public transport (if any) would reduce your own driving? Feel free to fantasize about travel in this country in the year 2087.

I have certainly not exhausted all the possibilities of comment about the car, and its role, and its effects in Britain in the 1980s. I hope that I have got you started.

## **PART II: THE HURRICANE AND FLOODS**

The theme of Part II is the hurricane in the South East and the floods in Wales. Even if you were not directly affected, please feel free to interpret the questions in the light of comparable experiences that you may have had. Personal experiences, please including feelings during and after. As regards the South East do you think that the media reflects a North/South divide?

Tidying up: local community support - the insurance angle - experience of 'Cowboy' repairers and charges - coping with mess, and lack of electricity, gas, water, telephone etc.

After effects: Is there any action about your way of living that you will now take as a result of the disaster, eg moving house, felling large trees, increasing insurance etc? What government action, short or long term should be taken? In what ways has your immediate environment changed?

The next Directive will be in the spring so all of us here wish you a happy Christmas, a peaceful New year, good health and fair weather.

David Pocock

### **POSTSCRIPT (from Dorothy)**

You should find enclosed a leaflet about our next M-0 publication, Mass-Observation at the Movies which is to be published on 10 December. It's a large book and has turned out to be very expensive I'm afraid but there is a special discount for current Mass-Observers. Please use the form to order copies and send it to the address on the form - **NOT to the Archive.**

We would also like to thank everyone for putting their numbers on their contributions and attaching their names and addresses separately. It really helps Judy and Ann's work at this end. If possible, could you send in your answers to Part I and Part II at the same time: this not only helps us deal with your contribution more quickly but also keeps postage costs down. And remember, NO staples, please.