

MASS OBSERVATION
AUTUMN/WINTER
DIRECTIVE 1994

Part 1: Sport:

Watching It

Doing It

Keeping Fit & Healthy.....

You may hate sport or you may love it....even if you hate it, please say so. Use the notes below to get you writing. I can never think of all the questions to ask, so you must write what you think it is important to say about your experience of sport.

Please give your opinions, but also your experiences, and as much detail as you have time and energy for. Don't forget to start with your M-O number and a note about yourself.

SPECTATOR SPORTS: TV, RADIO & NEWSPAPERS

In this first section, please describe any sports you enjoy watching on TV or listening to on the radio. Include information about which programmes you prefer, which are regular, which special, and whether you watch them alone or with other people (mention who your companions usually are). What do you like/dislike about the media coverage of sport?

Do you watch/listen at home? At friends' homes? In the pub or club? At work? While travelling?

What about the sport sections of newspapers and magazines? What do you follow? How regularly? What do you like/dislike?

Do you have favourite teams, or sportsmen and women you admire? Please describe.

What do you think about the behaviour of sportsmen and women? Do you feel they are - or should be - role models?

BEING A SPECTATOR AT SPORTING EVENTS

Do you go to watch sporting events? Please tell us about them. Are you a regular, a fan? Do you have a team you support? If you are a supporter, please describe the way you show your support (eg in what you wear, sing, shout etc!) Who did you support in the World Cup this year?

The sorts of things you might like to describe:

Events, whether special or regular, near to home or far away,

The company of friends and family, the cost, the pleasures and pains.....anything you feel is relevant.

Please also comment on the behaviour of spectators at sporting events.

TAKING PART IN SPORT YOURSELF

Did you (or do you) enjoy sport at school? Stories please....

What kinds of sport do you do now, if any?

Please think very broadly - from bowls to darts, from football to cycling, from swimming to aerobics, from javelin throwing to jogging, from surfing to cricket, walking to bungee jumping, from deep-sea diving to stock car racing, weight lifting to the marathon.....if you are in doubt about what counts as sport, please include it anyway. If you did certain sports when you were younger, please write about those.

Please, if you can, write about the details.

Some ideas to get you going: the equipment, the training, the social side, the competitiveness, the health aspects (and risks?), the costs, the clothes and shoes, the provision of facilities for sporting activities. Also, changes over time in your own activities.

Do you think some sports are more suitable for men and some for women, or do you think any one can do any sport if they wish?

KEEPING FIT & HEALTHY

Not everyone will think this is necessarily relevant to sport, but I would be interested to hear your views and about your experiences on this question.

If you do take part in sporting activities, can you say what you get out of them, and how far you do it to keep fit? Is keeping fit important to you?

Do you belong to a health club? Have you ever attended a health farm? Would you (if you haven't)?

Apart from the obvious kinds of sporting activities, do you have other ways of keeping fit: eg walking and cycling to work or to the shops? Eating in a particular way? Losing or gaining weight? Following special diets (please say which).

Do you attend keep fit classes, or any kind of dance classes or aerobics?

Do you work out in a gym? Or at home? (Please say what equipment you own and use).

Do you use books, tapes, videos for guidance? Please describe and say which ones you like.

Do you have methods of relaxation or ways of achieving a sense of well-being using other or "alternative" methods? Massage? Saunas? Jacuzzis? Aromatherapy? Yoga? Other therapies?

There is a saying from a Latin proverb "A healthy mind in a healthy body". What do you think?

Part 2: Drugs, Society and the Law

(Please start a new sheet of paper for your reply, and don't forget your M-O number)

This section deals partly with your views on the issue of drugs de-criminalisation (recently in the news) but also with your own experiences. Dr Geoff Lowe of Hull University has asked for this subject to be included in the directive and will be analysing your replies as part of his research.

Some police officers nowadays do not regard smoking 'pot' or cannabis as a serious offence, and are, in effect, turning a blind eye. There are also reports of elderly people using cannabis for medical purposes - for pain relief and glaucoma for example. What do think about this? Do you think cannabis is less harmful (and possibly more helpful) than certain legal and socially acceptable substances such as tobacco, alcohol and caffeine?

Do you think current restrictions on alcohol and tobacco adequate?

Do you have any views (or personal knowledge) of the Amsterdam scene where cannabis varieties are available in bars and shops on a legal commercial basis?

Do you think "soft" drugs should be legalised in Britain?

Do you think "hard" drugs (heroin, cocaine) should be legalised?

Which substances do think are addictive? Which not addictive? If you have personal or professional experience of such issues, please do say so.

Do you think the causes of addiction are **particular substances/drugs** or is it that **certain people** are addiction prone?

Do you think that the relaxation of drug laws will lead to an escalation of drug use and abuse? Or do you think that people are sensible enough to make the right choices for themselves?

Think of Britain 20 years from now. What do you imagine the "drugs situation" will be like?

Finally, **intoxication.....**

What do you think? Does a substance have to produce "intoxication" before you'd call it a drug?

Do you think you have ever been intoxicated? How come? And what did it feel like? Stories please.....

Part 3: Current Events

(Please start a new sheet of paper for your reply, and don't forget your M-O number)

I began by thinking that I really should get you to write about both the recent **RAIL STRIKE** (your views but also how you were affected personally) and the present developments on **IRELAND**. If we had been able to send you a directive in the summer, these might have been key themes. There is also the issue of the **CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL** and you may want to add other subjects of importance.

However, the big news as I write is about **CHARLES AND DIANA**, and since Mass-Observation began partly because of the Abdication Crisis in 1937, and has always collected people's views on Royalty, (including one of our first requests in 1981 to keep a diary on the day that C & D got married!), I think I have to ask you about this!

So, choose your topic, or all of them, and take it wherever it suits you.....

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