

Celebrating
20 years of
the new
Mass-
Observation
Project
1981-2001

Summer 2001 Directive



Part 1: Courting and dating

This part of the directive is intended to find out about your experiences of courtship and dating. You do not have to answer all of the questions or answer them in the same order. Please add any additional thoughts on courtship which we have not covered. If you don't have any personal experiences to recount, perhaps you could describe your views and thoughts on courting today and in the past. Please bear in mind that we are interested in both heterosexual and homosexual experiences, and it would be helpful if you made it clear whether your loved one is/was male or female.

What does the word 'courtship' mean to you?

- ♥ What other words would you use to describe this type of behaviour?
- ♥ What were/are your criteria for the 'perfect' partner?
- ♥ What is your understanding of the concept 'love'?

As usual, please remember to start your reply with a very brief mini-biography: your M-O number, (NOT name), sex, age, marital status, town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Personal experiences of courtship

- ♥ How old were you when you first started dating? Please make sure you say where you live/were living as we are particularly interested in uncovering regional differences in courtship behaviour.
- ♥ Did anybody try to control whom you could date and where you could go?

- ♥ Please describe the things you did when courting. Think very widely and include everything from dancing and cinema-going to just sitting and talking.
- ♥ On a date, who would pay for activities? Yourself, your partner or did you share?
- ♥ If your courtship ended in marriage (or a committed living together type of relationship)
 - how far into the relationship did you decide to marry/live together?
 - how many months/years did you date before marriage/living together?
- ♥ If your courtship led to you living with your partner, but not marrying, how many months/years did you date before moving in together?
- ♥ If you resumed courtship behaviour at a later stage in your life, how old were you, and how did the experience differ from earlier courting experiences?
- ♥ Have you ever used a matchmaker or have you ever acted as a matchmaker? Stories please.
- ♥ Was your marriage arranged? Please tell us about this. And whether courtship played any role.
- ♥ Have you ever been on a blind date and if so was it successful?
- ♥ Have you ever made use of a dating agency or escort agency?

Sex and Courtship

- ♥ What forms of physical intimacy did you think were/are appropriate for each stage of courtship?
- ♥ Have you ever ended a relationship because of a difference of opinion about the role of sex in courtship?

♥

Courtship Today



- ♥ How do you think the behaviour of courting couples has changed over the course of your life?
- ♥ Do you think that your own courting experiences have influenced your attitude towards the courting activities of other family members?
- ♥ Do you have any experience of how electronic communication has changed courting behaviour (use of e-mail, dating via the web, chatrooms)? Do you think it might have superseded writing love letters?

If you have time, please add any other reflections or stories about courting or dating from your own experience.

Part 2: "Reality" television and radio

There has been a lot of discussion recently about TV programmes like "Big Brother" and "Survivor" which claim to capture some aspect of real lives and over the years there have been a range of programmes, more or less "confessional", biographical or autobiographical. The longest running as far I can recall are "This is Your Life" on TV and "Desert Island Discs" on the radio. Other examples include "In the Psychiatrist's Chair" and the Oprey Winfrey series. There was also the ill-fated TV show hosted by Vanessa Feltz. Some of the documentaries ("fly on the wall" style) can also be very revealing about people's personal lives.



What's your reaction to these programmes? Do you like to watch or listen to them? What do you feel about them? What do you find yourself commenting upon? Have you any views on the ethics or morals of such programmes? How do you think appearing in such programmes affects people's lives? Would you volunteer to take part in such a programme?

You write about your everyday life for us, usually in a candid and detailed way. Do you feel there is any connection between writing for Mass-Observation and taking part in one of these programmes?

Part 3: Election Postmortem

Comments please on the last stages of the run up to the Election and an account of your reaction to the outcome. How did you vote? Were you influenced by the debates about tactical voting? What do you think the key issues were for the voters?



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