The Mass Observation Project
Summer 2007 Directive

Part 1: Shopping & making a difference

Today we are surrounded by various ways to 'make a difference' when we shop. Examples include ways to help
the environment (e.g. Ecover, Body Shop); or protect the
welfare of animals (free range eggs or dolphin friendly tuna). Ethical initiatives like Fair Trade
make a difference by ensuring that the producer or farmer in poorer countries gets a fair
wage. Even if you don't buy Fair Trade or similar products we would like to know what you
think about their growing popularity.

Shopping memories
Over the years, there have been calls to boycott certain products, eg French Golden Delicious apples; Nestlé foods. Do you remember any boycotts? Please note whether you
took part or not and why.
Can you remember specific shopping experiences, and any reactions of family and friends or
the news coverage at the time?
Some ethical initiatives now rely more on buying certain things rather than boycotting them.
Fair Trade is a good example of this.
When did you become aware of Fair Trade? Do Fair Trade and other similar initiatives make
a difference to the way you think and feel about shopping?
Do you remember buying things to 'make a difference' before Fair Trade came along?

A Shopping Project
Next time you go on a fairly substantial shopping expedition, record your views and feelings
on the following points:
• Why you make the choices you do (what thoughts and feelings are involved in making a
choice).
• Any health, moral or political reasons for choosing certain products?
• Look in other people’s baskets or trolleys! What do you think their choices say about
them as a person?
• Are you fickle? Are there occasions when you know you could buy something for moral
or political reasons but you don’t? Say something about the feelings involved in your
choices.

Wider issues
Do you think the things you buy reflect your own values? What other ways are there of being
moral/ethical in your everyday life? Do you think these are more or less effective in ‘making
a difference’?

Imagine there was a campaign to ‘make a difference’ to the lives of poor people based in the
UK or even in your local area. If you were the advertising manager for this campaign, what
images do you think would or wouldn't work? Can you tell us about why you think this
imagery would or wouldn’t appeal to people?

P.T.O
Part 2: 
You and gardens

Not everyone has a garden and we apologise in advance to those of you who don't have anything to say in response to these questions. You may still be interested in gardening of course and may want to comment anyway. We'd like to hear about allotments and about growing things indoors. You may also have experiences from your younger days which are relevant - so please look at the questions just in case.

Your ideal garden
What would your ideal garden look like? Write as much as you can on this and explain in detail where your ideas and inspiration come from.

Gardening on TV and radio
Do you have a favourite television or radio programme on gardening? Tell us why you like it. Are there certain gardening programmes you don’t like? Why not?

The “English” garden is often portrayed in the media: how do you picture it?

Growing things
Do you like growing things? If so, do you have a special flower, plant (including houseplants), fruit or vegetable that you like to grow? Tell us what it is and why it is so special. If you do not like to grow things, tell us why not.

Environmental issues
There is much concern nowadays about the environment. Have your gardening habits changed in response to environmental issues?

Is there a ‘tip’ you would like to pass onto other gardeners to help them garden in an environmentally friendly way?

A special place in your garden
Do you have a special place in your garden? If so, please send us a photograph* and say why it is so special?

If you were to no longer have a garden, how would you feel?

If you used to have a garden, but do not have one now, describe what you miss about it.

*A special place in your garden

Please post your response to: The Mass Observation Archive
FREEPOST BR 2112
The Library
University of Sussex
Brighton BN1 1ZX

Or by email to: moa@sussex.ac.uk

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