

# Winter 2019 Directive

## Part 1: Mantelpieces and treasured objects

Part.1 of this Directive is inspired by the very first task that volunteers for Mass Observation were given in 1937. They were asked to write down 'in order of left to right' what was on their mantelpiece.

Since the 1930s with changes in architecture and central heating we now live in places that may not have a mantelpiece. However, there could be an equivalent surface where you place items of importance such as clocks, ornaments, books, photographs, cards and bills etc.

Please start each part of your Directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number, gender identity, age, marital status, the town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Remember *not to identify yourself or other people inadvertently within your reply. It is best to use initials instead of real names.*

### Task

We would like you to choose a room in your home (this could be more than one) that has a surface where you place items of importance. Please:

- Describe this surface
- Write down from left to right what there is on display
- Is there a particular order to how the items are arranged? If so is this for a practical purpose, for decoration or because an item is of special importance?
- Are any of the items hidden? For example bills or receipts
- Who placed these items on there? Is there more than one person who utilises this space and arranges the items?
- How often do the items and the arrangement change?

As this is a Winter Directive you may have festive decorations on display, so please note if some items are temporary for the season.

We welcome any photographs and drawings.

### Treasured objects

Are any of the items of personal significance to you or another family/person in your home? If so could you tell us what it means to have this item on display? What is its story? Has it always been in this position?

## Part 2: Unlocking Sound

This Directive asks you to think about the sounds that you hear around your usual environment. What is the soundscape of your daily life? Are you aware of the sounds around you?

In partnership with Unlocking Our Sound Heritage, we would like to invite you to take 10 minutes (or longer) at some point during your day to write about the sounds that you can hear. It can be anywhere, whether quiet, noisy, full of people, empty, busy, still.

### A listening task

Find somewhere comfortable to sit and write a brief description of where you are and note the time of day. Slowly begin to tune into what you can hear. Just listen. Take a moment to relax into the activity of listening.

- List and describe the sounds that you hear: these may be natural sounds, manmade, frequent or occasional, loud and disturbing or just on the edge of your hearing. Are they all identifiable?
- How do these sounds make you feel?
- Are there unexpected sounds that you hadn't previously noticed?

### Further thoughts

Are there sounds that you no longer hear in your daily life? This could be due to changes in where you live, technology, working practices, travel etc. or due to changes in your hearing. If so, are there any sounds you are pleased you no longer hear? Or are there any that you miss?

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# Part 3: Election Day (12<sup>th</sup> December 2019)

Two years since the last election, and a change of Prime Minister, the UK is off to the voting booth again. We would like you to keep a day diary to be included in the archive. Please write about your actions throughout the day from waking to sleeping. We hope to capture the mood of the British public on this day, so even if you do not vote, or have little interest in politics, please still keep a diary.

Some general points for you to reflect upon:

- What are the main issues for you in this election?
- Do you feel that your vote counts?
- What expectations do you have of the next government?
- How do you feel about
  - Boris Johnson
  - Jeremy Corbyn
  - Jo Swinson
  - Please feel free to share any other comments about any other politicians.

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## After the election

Please keep your response until after the results of the election are known and share your thoughts on the outcome.

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Please post your response to: **Freepost: RTGU-AYJE-YSSC, The Mass Observation Archive, The Keep, Woollards Way, Brighton, BN1 9BP** or by email to: [moa@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:moa@sussex.ac.uk)  
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