

Spring Directive 2022

Part 1: Smell

The smells around us are often crucial to our sense of who we are. They often connect us to memories of times, places, and events that have been significant in our lives. However, we often don't think about the smells that are around us very much. In this Directive, we want to know which smells are important to people and why.

If you are unable to smell, we would welcome your response on how this has affected you. Have you ever been able to smell, or have you experienced times with a loss of smell? Are you someone who has lost your sense of smell after illness, such as Covid-19?

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Before you start your response, we would like you to complete two tasks to start you thinking about the subject of smell.

An object to smell

To begin with, we'd like you to locate an object in your home that you think has a detectable smell. It might be pleasing or unpleasing, unique, or quite ordinary, it might be an object with a special significance or something you don't often think about:

- Try and describe the object – what is it, what is it made from, how long has it been in your home?
- Describe what the object smells like – pleasant or unpleasant? What other things does the object smell similar to?
- Describe how the smell makes you feel.

A smell diary

We would like you to record the smells that you come into contact with during the course of a normal day. Throughout your day, note down any smells you come across. As you do, consider the following:

- What smells did you encounter? (if you can't identify them precisely, think about what they smell *like*).

- Where and when did you encounter these smells?
- Were these smells associated with particular objects, events, interactions, places or people?
- How does the smell make you feel? What do you think about when you smell it?
- How ordinary are these smells – do you encounter them regularly or are they unusual?

This is your (smelly) life

The smells around us are often crucial to our sense of who we are. They often connect us to memories of times, people, places, and events that have been significant in our lives. We would like to capture the smells that have been important to the lives of the British public throughout history. We would like you to tell us about which smells have been significant to you and why.

Some general points to consider:

- Are there smells that take you back to a particular time or place? Where and when was this? What feelings do you associate with that smell? Are there smells that you associate with particular years; decades; or key moments in your life?
- Are there smells that used to be common and that you no longer encounter regularly (or at all)? Are there smells that you miss? Are there smells that you are glad are no longer part of your life? Why do you think these smells disappeared?
- If you could archive and preserve a smell for future generations, what might smell this be? Why do you think that smell deserves to be preserved?

Part 2: Drones

In Part 2 of the Directive we are interested in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), or drones. Drones are aircraft without a pilot on board, which can be operated remotely or autonomously (an example is shown in the image below).



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While traditionally associated with warfare, drones are playing a growing role in domestic UK airspace. They are being used for security, emergency services and the delivery of goods and medical supplies. Drones can also be easily purchased by the public and are an increasingly popular device for recreational flying. We are interested in your understanding of drones, both how they are used now, and their future use in UK airspace.

To get you started: Please share what comes to mind when you think of the word 'drone'? You are welcome to write down words, phrases, or to include sketches.

Encountering drones

We would like you to imagine being in one, or more, of the below scenarios. Please choose a situation and describe the emotions you might feel, and any actions you might take. If you have already encountered drones in any of these settings, please share your experience.

- You see a drone flying above your local hospital. A hospital worker explains that the drone is being used to transport blood samples between hospital facilities.
- You see on the television that your local Fire Service, when fighting a fire at a nearby block of flats, has used a thermal sensor-equipped drone to identify the hottest part of a blaze.
- A nearby neighbour's children are flying a drone in their garden.

- Your local Police Force visit a nearby home to speak with a burglary suspect. The suspect flees but the police manage to capture them assisted by a drone overhead filming and following the suspect.

Risky drones

While drones can be beneficial, they are also associated with risks, including accidents and deliberate misuse. In the UK, drone use is regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). If you have concerns about drone use, the CAA recommends you contact local police.

The following are paraphrased snippets from real UK news stories:

- Unknown drone(s) sighted inside the perimeter of a major UK airport. The disruption lasts over a day, impacting thousands of passengers.
- An on-duty Police officer loses control of their drone. The drone is found a few miles away, crashed in a playground.
- A man is jailed for using a drone to spy on his ex-partner, watching where she lived.
- Gang members using drones to fly over £500,000 worth of drugs into UK prisons are sentenced.

Select one or more of these stories. How does the story make you feel about drones and the airspace above you?

Who, if anyone, do you think may be at risk from drone misuse? Can you think of any *other* potential drone risks?

Drones in the future

We would like to hear what you think about how drones could be used in the future, in the UK. We have provided some fictional scenarios below and would like you to share your thoughts on these. Pick one or more scenarios. How does the scenario make you feel? Can you identify any benefits or challenges it might bring?

- Your nearest neighbour begins using a commercial delivery drone service, with small parcels regularly being delivered to their back garden by drones.
- To assist with searches for suspects, your local Police Force flies drones equipped with facial recognition technology above city centre crowds [facial recognition captures visual data from our faces and compares this against a database, to search for particular individuals].
- A neighbour has concerns about home security. They buy an expensive drone home security system. Their drone routinely patrols both inside and outside their property.

- A large local park is concerned about conservation so deploys a swarm (group of drones flying collaboratively, in unison) to monitor wildlife.
- A friend buys a drone designed to help them with household chores. The drone sanitizes their kitchen surfaces and waters their plants.

Finally

Please can you imagine and describe any ways in which you would like to see drones used in the future? In your everyday life – what could drones do? If possible, it would be helpful to briefly detail what inspired you; how you'd like to see drones used; who you'd like to see drones used by; and who you would like to see drones used for.

Part 3: Second World War

Mass Observation was formed as the threat of the Second World War drew closer. Consequently, the Archive is often used by those researching the conflict. In this section of the Directive, we'd like to find out more about what people in 2022 understand about the conflict nearly eighty years after its conclusion, and how people have learned about events of the War. We are also keen to hear how different forms of media have played a part in shaping your views of the War.

Historical sources

Please tell us the ways in which you learned about the Second World War. Some points you might want to reflect on are personal experience, family, school, Higher Education, books, museums, television, film, documentaries, remembrance days, visits to memorials, the internet, computer games, meeting veterans.

Who or what do you feel are the most reliable sources of information when it comes to finding out about British and international history?

The legacy of the Second World War

We would like you to consider whether you think the Second World War remains a significant part of British national identity? Why is this?

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Do you think modern British perceptions of Germany and Europe in general are still influenced by the legacy of the Second World War? Please share your thoughts.

Films, popular culture, and history

Films are often cited as having a significant impact on national memories of historical events. Please share any films, television series, documentaries you associate with the Second World War.

Have you ever questioned the historical accuracy of films or television programmes? If so, what caused you to question these portrayals? We welcome your thoughts.

What do you think is more important, historical accuracy or entertainment value? Please explain why this is.

Online media

The internet is used daily by an increasingly large proportion of the British public. In what ways, if any, do you use online media to engage in content about historical events? For example, have you ever commented on or read online discussion forums, or engaged in debates on social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook.?

Do you think online opinions are more radical than in 'real life'? Please share your thoughts.

Do you think online articles and discussions help people develop their understanding of history, or instead does the internet do more to entrench pre-existing myths and stereotypes? If you feel the latter is more applicable, what do you think needs to change?

Part 4: The Russian invasion of Ukraine

On the 21st of February 2022 Russia invaded the Ukraine.

We would like you to share your thoughts and experiences of the recent conflict. Have you been following updates of the events and if so, where have you been getting your information from? How have you been feeling about the reports? Have you experienced any 'fake news'? If so please share this.

Please share any personal experiences of Russia or the Ukraine you may have. Do you have family, friends, or acquaintances in either country? What is your opinion of President Vladimir Putin and President Volodymyr Zelensky? Please share any thoughts about these politicians and other notable people associated with the region.

The international response

What are your thoughts on actions taken by other countries? Do you feel British support has been enough? Please explain why this is.

Nuclear and cyber threat

At the beginning of the conflict, President Putin made a threat that "Anyone who tries to get in our way, let alone tries to threaten us and our people, should know that Russia's answer will be immediate, and it will lead to consequences of the sort that you have not faced ever in your history." How did this make you feel? Have you considered taking any action to protect yourself in response to this threat?

As we write we have no knowledge of how long this conflict will last. What are your thoughts on the outcome and the long-term effects of the war?

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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. JS/KP Spring 2022 Directive/No. 124

