Explore the history of Britain through three turbulent decades, written by those living through it.
INTRODUCTION

*Mass Observation Project 1981-2009* provides digital access to a unique life-writing archive, capturing the everyday experiences, thoughts and opinions of people living through the turbulent final decades of the 20th century and the advent of the 21st century. Writing in response to directives (questionnaires), hundreds of Mass Observers provide a unique insight into an extraordinary range of subjects, from the deeply personal (sex, family) to everyday life (shopping, holidays) to global affairs. The unique nature and matchless depth of this material makes *Mass Observation Project* an invaluable resource for anyone teaching or researching British history of the last forty years.

ABOUT THE MASS OBSERVATION PROJECT

The Mass Observation Project was launched in 1981 by the University of Sussex as a rebirth of the original 1937 Mass Observation, whose founders' aim was to document the social history of Britain by recruiting volunteers to write about their lives and opinions. Still growing, with new data from hundreds of volunteer subjects, it is one of the most important sources available for qualitative social data in the UK.

“If you’re interested in the social, cultural and emotional pulse of Britain at the end of the twentieth century, *Mass Observation Project* is the obvious place to look; it is an extraordinary resource.”

Matt Cook
Birkbeck, University of London

 February

directives

Hundreds of directives on subjects such as:

- 9/11
- AIDS
- Body piercing and tattooing
- BSE
- Christmas
- Criminal Justice Act
- Death of Princess Diana
- Falklands War
- First Gulf War
- Gardening
- General elections
- Holidays
- Iraq War
- Millennium
- Morality and religion
- National Lottery
- Natural disasters
- NHS
- Railway strikes
- Royal weddings
- Security and crime
- University

KEY THEMES

- Current affairs
- The family
- The home
- Leisure
- Politics
- Society, culture and the media
- Work, finance and the economy

HANDWRITTEN TEXT RECOGNITION

Although personal computers became ever more popular in the 1980s and 1990s, many thousands of the responses in *Mass Observation Project* are written by hand. We have used Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) technology to enable full-text searching of each of these manuscript submissions, making the thoughts and feelings of hundreds of Mass Observers more discoverable than ever for students and researchers.

“This is an indispensable resource for scholars of a turbulent few decades.”

James Vernon
University of California, Berkeley

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