

26 February 2004

FAO Mr Mark Briscoe
BBC GMR

Dear Sir

I listened with great interest to the discussion with Allan Beswick on Friday last but unfortunately I was unable to take part, hence this letter.

There are so many things I would like to criticise about the BBC and I have discussed these with my family and friends who are in total agreement with me.

The quality of the programmes on the BBC is very poor, the Christmas programmes were abysmal, in fact, the quality of the TV programmes Christmas and otherwise was and is often commented upon by your own presenters. What has happened to the period dramas, good films and programmes which don't contain crude language? This 'language', because of constant usage, is becoming commonplace even in the playground and I feel the BBC is, in part, responsible for this. Chris Moyes has a programme containing so much filth I feel he should not be given any airtime. I was absolutely amazed when my grandson put on his radio to hear the gutter language, which was broadcast throughout the programme. Sarah Cox is coming a close second trying to keep up. Do you consider a discussion on the length of willies, even if they do belong to animals a suitable subject for discussion? The BBC has an enormous amount of money derived from the public and should be much more accountable to the same, the people who like to hear this type of language are few. I know we have a switch to turn off but isn't the point of having radio and TV to listen and watch without being assaulted by verbal pornography?

There are presenters who do not seem able to speak the English language correctly, they appear to be unaware of tenses – a very common error is they were 'sat' which should be sitting. Another mispronunciation is 'insure' where the correct word is 'ensure'. You have an 'amount' of money but a 'number' of people. 'Except' is frequently used instead of 'accept'. I wonder how you would spell something and anything. Even the name Deborah was mispronounced recently when talking about Deborah Kerr. I understood the BBC had a department which corrected the grammar and pronunciation of their staff.

The credits on most of the TV programmes now do not contain capital letters when using proper nouns. Do you have children or grandchildren who are

currently being taught to use a lower case initial for a proper noun – I do hope not? There are so many adults and children who are now unaware of correct grammar, a situation the government is now trying to rectify. The BBC has a great role to play in assisting in the education of their viewers - every member of your staff – particularly the presenters of children's programmes - should be made aware of the power they have over the minds of children and adults – 'I see and I remember' is an old adage but a correct one. One of the most popular buys on the Christmas book list was a book on English grammar and punctuation, which was actually discussed with its author on GMR. Perhaps a few of these should be made available to your staff! I found my students very confused when learning one way at college and seeing our language incorrectly displayed on their screens at home.

Costs – why do we need so many local radio programmes? One station could cover, for instance, the whole of Lancashire, it would, in fact, be interesting to hear news of other counties. Why do we have separate news presenters? Is it not possible just to link up to News 24 for the regular updates if indeed we need News 24. There are so many news broadcasts throughout the day we surely do not need such duplication. Why cannot Paul Graham continue to broadcast on all stations until 6.30am rather than have individual stations branching out on their own with separate presenters, involving more costs. Why do we have freeview programmes when you cannot provide good quality on the channels you already have? Why spread the income so thinly when by reducing the number of channels you could increase the quality of your programmes? Why not just four channels including one for sport and one for children? Why so many repeats or perhaps an extra channel dedicated to repeat programmes?

Income – is it not possible to generate income by allowing sponsorship of films plays and dramas. No breaks for advertisements but an acknowledgement at the beginning and end of the production. There is much advertising during football/cricket matches around the grounds and on the clothes of the players. Is this exposure given freely by the BBC or do you claim a fee?

Finally my own pet hate, how about a memo to all writers, editors and presenters to refer to our children as children and not the offspring of goats?

I could go on but, in spite of your claims to the contrary, is anybody listening? Time alone will tell.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Appleby (Mrs)