

30 March 2004

BBC Charter Review Consultation
Department for Culture, Media, and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

Dear BBC,

I believe that the very best programmes on the BBC are original dramas. I am impressed by the current Mozart programme on BBC2, and I found the Canterbury Tales amazing; each different, but excellent. There are not enough original dramas produced, dramas that assume an audience might want something unexpected, a story which has a life of its own, not written to a formula. The comedy programmes are also greatly enjoyed. What a shame "Dead Ringers" sold out and went downmarket, elsewhere. Keep the Big Impression going, please.

Factual programmes are also appreciated by our family; Horizon, Panorama, Newsnight, Days that Shook the World, and the series on surgeons on BBC1. We would like more programmes on the arts: art, photography, music, drama, dance. Why are there so few, and less interestingly produced as compared to the science programmes? The Learning Zone has given us some very interesting language programmes as well.

We do not have digital TV. There have been interesting programmes on BBC4 which we might have enjoyed, but too few to make us even consider buying the technology. There are too many programmes on too many channels that we have no interest in; programmes for 20-30-somethings, who are already well-catered for; programmes for children, irrelevant to us; programmes from the past, which we should not have to pay for **again**, however enjoyable. We think the emphasis should remain on terrestrial channels which reach everyone who pays the license fee. I believe the license fee is the best way of funding good programmes; I just wish it wouldn't be wasted on endless lifestyle programmes and "investigative" programmes about food safety, airports, etc. Especially when it seems that cheap terrestrial TV is funding the expensive launch of new channels on digital media. Have you considered that property programmes play a part in stimulating demand? For example, as

more people are inspired by such programmes to buy houses as investments, others can't afford to get on the housing ladder.

I can't comment so much on radio these days, alas; ask me next year when my son has gone to university. I used to have the radio on during the day, and I have appreciated plays, jazz and classical music programmes, as well as news items on the radio. As a parent and a support tutor at a sixth form college, I am very grateful for the Bitesize and AS Guru websites. And I have appreciated the Language websites as well.

I am happy for the BBC to run commercial services. With so many good programmes on such a variety of topics, it would be a waste to not make the information available to viewers and listeners in other formats, for example, through magazines and selling videos/DVDs of popular series and dramas.

Surely only those working for the BBC can assess how it is best and most efficiently organised. As for the running and regulation, there has long been a struggle between governments wanting to have more control over the BBC, and the BBC resisting the government. The BBC should fight in the boardrooms and committee rooms; it should never surrender. Journalists should be free to report their findings, but they must be trustworthy journalists. The viewers will suspect the government if it can influence reporting, and they will suspect the BBC if reports are not thoroughly verified or if the style is allowed to become tabloid-like.

I would be interested to hear views about how the BBC can be made accountable to the public and to Parliament. My husband and I once took part in a survey conducted on behalf of the BBC about 18 years ago, and have written once or twice with our views. Doesn't seem like much, does it? Perhaps the obvious answer would be to use the Internet, but despite having it myself, I only use email for personal messages as I don't wish to be vulnerable to spam. For this reason I don't register on sites, and I don't email organisations. I would need to know I wouldn't be contacted for any other purpose.

I am grateful for the BBC, as I am for the NHS. Public service organisations are rare in the world, and I don't take them for granted. However they might be improved, they can't be improved upon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gloria Brooke".

Gloria Brooke (Mrs.)