

March 10, 2004

Dear Lord Mackintosh,

With regard to the current review of the BBC , I would like to put a few points to you regarding news coverage.

At present we receive half an hour's coverage from London followed by half an hour from BBC Scotland. Following some discussion in 1999 about a "Scottish Six", the BBC took some action to address Scottish concerns. Firstly it rejected the idea of a Scottish Six, very much against the wishes of a panel, specifically set up to monitor and advise on broadcasting in Scotland. Secondly it introduced an opt-out half hour in Newsnight, which nobody wanted. Typical of the arrogance of the Corporation - "we know better than you what's good for you!"

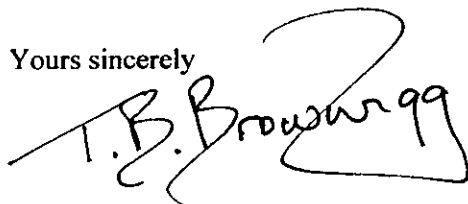
One of the changes introduced was to preface items of interest south of the border with a phrase such as "in England and Wales". This is all well and good, but it in no way increases the relevance of such items here. Thus we can be subjected to up to five minutes reporting on the English school results, which are as relevant to us as the racing results from Dubai or perhaps even less so.

Furthermore, if a Scottish news item has broken it gets covered twice first in the "national" news and secondly in the "regional" news, which is so inadequately funded that it can barely cover a story on the swans in Hoggansfield loch!

In truth the situation is such that I no longer watch BBC news, I get my news from the radio. This is not good enough. We pay the same licences as anyone else and we deserve better. The vast bulk of Scottish licence fees go to London and swell the vast mechanism there. A much greater proportion of the fees should stay in Scotland to help build a vibrant and relevant service north of the border. We should have a Scottish Six and we should have a lot more current affairs and news programming that is created and edited here.

It is not that we are not interested in English affairs but English news items should be prioritized appropriately along with world and other news and reports such as the English school results would doubtless have a very low priority if they even featured.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. B. Brownrigg'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

T. B. Brownrigg