

26 March 2004.

With the closing date fast approaching for receipt of the views of the general public regarding the forthcoming review of the BBC's Royal Charter it is time I put in order notes I have been making both before and after the publication of the Hulton report.

Firstly I must make clear that these are the views of a Senior citizen who grew up with the BBC, first with radio only and then with television - at present only through analogue transmission but as soon as finances allow will purchase a set top box to obtain Freeview.

In reply to your list of key questions.

- 1) I value more or less the whole spectrum of programmes with the particular exception of pop music but appreciate that it must be covered for younger people. I do really regret it being used as "background" to drama and such as Question of Sport. More than ever I greatly regret the lack of light classical music which used to be covered so well in the past. It was a delight to see the performers as distinct from hearing them on radio. Britain has so many excellent singers who, with the BBC Concert Orchestra, would give so much pleasure to the older generation and, who knows, might cultivate a new younger audience who have never had a chance to discover and enjoy that type of music.

I am very much grieved at the loss of so many of the great sporting events to the other channels - now even the boat race!

Living in the North West we are particularly blessed with our excellent award winning Regional programmes.

2/3 I wouldn't like to express an opinion on the advance of technology. This is an area with which my generation is completely out of touch, all I would hope for is that the BBC keeps abreast of or even ahead of its competitors.

4) Yes! Of course the BBC should continue to run all its commercial services. Why even not? Surely all profits gained from the commercial enterprise should be used to improve the general standard of both public service broadcasting and the wider range of entertainment etc.

5) The licence fee must stay. To those who oppose it I would say two things. Firstly, speaking as one who benefits from the free licence for the over 75s, would they really want to deny us, probably the least well off, this wonderful asset? Secondly, are they really incapable of dividing the fee by 52 and finding out how much, or should it be how little, this amounts to if only one programme is watched or one hour of radio is listened to in the course of the week.

6/7 Until the Hutton affair I doubt if many even thought very much about the board of governors and their duties, everything seemed to jog along in a completely satisfactory manner, try as I will I cannot think of any other circumstance when an error by one staff member, even with its tragic result, caused the resignation of the chairman of any organisation. Then following the departure of Mr. Davies, the other board members turned into a liver-livered group in forcing the resignation of Greg Dyke who had performed such a wonderful task, restoring the BBC to its best for many years and at the same time, if reports are to be believed, had restored the morale of all the workforce. No mean task in view of the troubled preceding years. If common sense could prevail a great magnanimous gesture would be for him to return to his post.

8) Regarding the point as to whether the general public should have more influence on the BBC, This is a very vexed question, just think of the inability of many people to put forward a view in any reasonably constructed manner, also so many completely entrenched outlooks surface - this letter being a glaring example for a start.

There are two further remarks I would like to make. I have many visitors and much correspondence from overseas and am repeatedly told how envious they are of a television service uninterrupted by advertisements. Finally I was in Europe at the time of the New York terrorist attack and was watching the horror as the second plane hit the building. The channel being watched in the public area of the hotel was BBC World regardless of the fact that English was far from the first language being spoken but no one wanted to have a channel change because when anything important occurs everyone, everywhere, turns to the BBC.

Yours sincerely,  
Barbara Charles