

8th March 2004

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

Dear Sir,

I apologise for becoming agitated on my document and supplying information that wasn't even requested. I can only hope that you believe me when I say that usually I'm quite a normal individual!

It's just that I considered the BBC was needlessly humiliated over the Hutton report.

Surely no one is trying to assert that the BBC has ever been perfect, but surely one political mistake shouldn't engender such a fuss.

I appreciate that the licence fee has always been a contentious issue, but I really appreciate watching an intelligent programme without having frequent commercial breaks disturbing the flow.

Although, to be absolutely fair, I think that BBC programmes would be enjoyed even more without their own advertising - especially when these trailers are aired so frequently.

Well, I sincerely trust that something amongst the enclosed details will be useful for your deliberations.

Yours faithfully
Graham Cooper

1) WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT THE B.B.C.? This is probably an eccentric choice, but vintage feature films from Britain and America which BBC 2 shows during the day (thankfully without commercials!)

I think news programmes are the most depressing (so I pray well away from them) and sports the most boring - but I look around for interesting documentaries on varying subjects (some of which are extremely good)

Generally speaking, I miss "soaps" and bother more with serious items involving English people.

2) HOW SHOULD THE B.B.C. ADAPT TO COPE WITH CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE? Since a most unfortunate encounter with the complex aspects of ITV Digital which nearly drove me crazy, I am extremely reluctant to get involved with all this "wonderful" manipulation.

I did get Freeview by misunderstanding a newspaper article that TCM would therefore be available, but have never used it because of insufficient interest in the digital schedules.

Recently, I read an article concerning "Top-Up TV" and am extremely annoyed at how modern technology seems to change practically every fortnight - entailing even more cost and inconvenience to customers - and feel that manufacturers consistently overestimate the abilities of buyers to understand - and therefore operate - their equipment.

Finally, I resent licence holders' subscriptions being utilised for political purposes (it is already well-known that somebody is hoping to make a fortune by selling off analogue facilities soon) whereas it ought to have been possible to utilise five terrestrial TV channels for most reasonable tastes!

3) WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE TELEVISION, RADIO AND ONLINE SERVICES THE B.B.C. PROVIDES? Personally, I don't think about them at all, because all I want from my television is the opportunity of watching excellent programmes. For me, Britain used to be provided with the best TV in the world, and all these unwanted extras have spoilt that wonderful situation.

4) SHOULD THE B.B.C. RUN COMMERCIAL SERVICES? The "Radio Times" now provides the best radio pages anywhere, but for me, is too much of a

magazine full of chit-chat. I assume this buff is read by people who love trivia. However, I suppose anything that helps reduce BBC expenses elsewhere must be beneficial.

Nevertheless, I do get very irritated by frequently advertised items that merely spin out waiting time before the programme begins.

There ought to be some law restricting the number of times an item may be shown because constant repetition is liable to cause viewers to switch OFF!

In an ideal world, I'd love absolutely no advertisements or trailers on BBC TV or radio - but I assume that there's absolutely no chance of that.

5) HOW SHOULD WE PAY FOR THE B.B.C.? If an agreed sum could be provided by Parliament (which greedy and sinister politicians couldn't get their hands on), this would at least provide for a reliable future for the BBC - but I already realise that the BBC itself rejects this idea. However, just think of the savings on detector vans, snooping staff and unreasonable regulations and procedures which, I think, give the Corporation a bad name.

Personally, I don't favour the American system of public service TV provision because if insufficient funds come in, it doesn't give producers any sense of continuity.

Neither do I favour individual contributions on the TV itself. Who will watch the BBC if all other channels are free? Also, would viewers have to save up for change, or pay a lot later? No, I think not!

6) IS THE B.B.C. ORGANISED IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WAY?

I wasn't very impressed by John Birt's costly switch of radio news to White City - which I gather has all been undone - even more expensively!

7) HOW SHOULD THE B.B.C. BE RUN? HOW SHOULD IT BE REGULATED? I was perfectly satisfied with Greg Dyke before he was ignominiously ousted.

8) HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT THE B.B.C. IS PROPERLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENT? One could try passing laws, but I don't trust politicians. I listen to "Feedback" frequently and BBC staff might care to take more notice of sensible comments by valid licenceholders.

A) RADIO ONE As I absolutely detest so-called "pop music", I have no use for this station - nevertheless, I do take a "live and let live" attitude toward other peoples' differing tastes.

In my opinion, Radio 1 material could easily be operated outside the B.B.C.'s jurisdiction - as commercial interests could so easily transmit this stuff to current audiences.

Either that or confine all "pop music" to Radio 1, because I resent it being broadcast elsewhere (Radio 2, but especially Radio 4)

B) RADIO FIVE LIVE As I'm completely disinterested by sport, I never bother with this station - but think it should continue for fans.

C) RADIO THREE For most of its years on air, I resolutely ignored this station because its intellectual output was hopelessly beyond my tiny brain, but recently, I have derived pleasure from:

Sunday 4-5.45pm: Three For All with Brian Kay

Monday 4-5pm: Stage And Screen (Edward Seckerson)

Thursday 4-5pm: Brian Kay's Light Programme

Monday To Friday: Noon-1pm Composer Of The Week (from shows)

D) RADIO TWO I usually listen to this station when nostalgic items are on, but currently find most music too modern for my taste.

Sunday 3-4pm: Russell Davies

Sunday 7-8.30pm: Brian Kay (Melodies For You)

Sunday 9-10pm: Richard Baker (Your Hundred Best Tunes)

Sunday 10-11pm: Malcolm Laycock

Tuesday 7-8pm: Sir Andrew Davis

Tuesday 8-8.30pm: Nigel Ogden (The Organist Entertains)

Tuesday 8.30-9.30pm: Glenn Miller, but not George Michael

Friday 7-7.30pm: Hubert Gregg, Michael Frieskein but rarely others

Friday 9.30-10pm: Frank Renton (Listen To The Band)

E) RADIO FOUR

Saturday 10.30-11am: Sometimes, depending on the subject

Saturday 11-11.30am: Week In Westminster

Saturday Noon-12.30pm: Money Box

Saturday 3.30-4pm: Sometimes, depending on the subject

Saturday 8-9pm: The Archive Hours (sometimes, depending on subject)

Sunday 11.15am-Noon: Desert Island Discs (depending on the guest)

Monday 9-9.45am: Start The Week (Andrew Marr)

Monday To Friday Noon-12.30pm: You And Yours

Tuesday 9-9.30am: Whatever

Tuesday 11.30am-Noon: Betty Marsden

Tuesday 3-3.30pm: Home Planet

Tuesday ~~7-8pm: Sir Andrew Davis~~ 8-8.40pm: File On Four (or rpt Sun)

Tuesday ~~8-8.30~~ 9-9.30pm: Life In Old Age

Wednesday 11-11.30am: Mapping The Town

Wednesday 8-8.45pm: The Moral Maze

Wednesday 8.45-9pm: Politics

Thursday 9-9.45am: Mewyn Bragg

Thursday 4.30-5pm: The Material World

Thursday 8.30-9pm: Analysis

Friday 1.30-2pm: Feedbacks

Friday 4-4.30pm: Law In Action

Friday 4.30-5pm: The Message

Friday 6.30-7pm: When it's "The News Quiz"

Friday 8.45-9pm: Alistair Cooke

I apologise for poor presentation and corrections on the above list / additionally because no such request for programme listening was made on your leaflet entitled "Your BBC, Your Say".

However, I wish to impress upon influential people concerned in this survey how much BBC radio (I hate commercial stations twaddle) still means to me. It would mean a real loss to me should Radios 2 3 and 4 cease - and should the occasion arise, I would willingly pay the BBC TV licence for BBC radio alone - it is a remarkable bargain.

Of course, this isn't an exhaustive selection. As terrestrial TV seems to cater more and more nowadays for other generations, I am forever searching around the "Radio Times" pages for anything remotely interesting for me - and wish to thank staff efforts to please.