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BBC Charter Review Consultation
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
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My Personal Profile

My name is Mary Lumb (Mrs) and I am a very ordinary listener and viewer but I think I'm discriminating in what I find helpful, acceptable and entertaining. In that respect I am probably as typical as any others who respond to the BBC Charter Review Consultation.

I listen to the radio far more than I watch Television. This is because I rarely just sit and watch or listen. I am usually busy doing something else which does not take up my entire attention, e.g. washing up, ironing, sewing etc.. If I am doing something which demands real attention I do not try to watch or listen at same time. This also applies when I am driving. I do not listen to the car radio for either spoken or musical programmes. It distracts me from my driving. I do not normally use music as a background. I use music to listen to because of its value as music or else not at all. I don't take the radio into the garden when I am working outside partly because it is antisocial and because I am moving about and out of earshot part of the time.

What do I value most about the BBC?

I value the programmes which are informative, thought provoking, and/or wholesomely amusing and diverting.

On Radio I normally listen to Radio 4 or Classic FM

Those programmes which I listen to regularly are:-

- Sunday
- Sunday Worship
- Alistair Cook's Letter from America
- Start the Week

i.e. those programmes which are transmitted in the early part of the day. As the day progresses I am far too occupied with other things or I am out of the house.

When cooking in the evening I often listen to

- P.M. and news programmes

Among the programmes which I listen to with less regularity are those which happen to be broadcasting when I'm doing one of those boring jobs in life such as ironing, cooking and sewing:-

- Yesterday in Parliament
- From Your Own Correspondent
- The Moral Maze
- You and Yours
- Word of Mouth
- The Food Programme
- Beyond Belief
- Gardeners' Question Time

and a number of similar programmes.

I don't listen much to serial dramas, soaps, and book readings because I so often miss episodes but I do enjoy the occasional episode of programmes like Ring around the Bath which are self contained entities.

The one Television programme I watch regularly is the 10 o'clock news but I usually start on my way to bed when the sports part takes over!

Otherwise, the programmes I see are those which my husband video records. Our tastes are very similar. Apart from the news we rarely see programmes when they are actually transmitted although my husband watches some sports events. He very much values the TEXT cricket progress and results. If we are on holiday we may not see some programmes until some weeks late. We record the BBC's deservedly renowned wild life films presented by people like Bill Oddy, Simon King and others. The films presented by David Attenborough are also gripping although his heavy emphasis on evolutionary explanations is not to be recommended. There *are* other valid points of view on this subject.

Dramas on both Radio and TV are not high on my Listening and Viewing time. So many involve profane and obscene language, excessive or even gratuitous violence, marital infidelity, and sexual promiscuity. I start by listening or watching and then I'm so sickened by what's on that I switch off but not before I feel my mind has been polluted.

How should the BBC adapt to cope with changes in technology and culture?

I can't give an opinion on technology but I do think that the BBC should be very wary of adapting its standards to the LCD (Lowest Common Denominator) of the existing culture/s in our country. This is probably particularly relevant to the moral content of programmes and most especially in matters of sex, violence and criminal activities.

Should the BBC run commercial services?

How should we pay for the BBC?

These seem to me to have some connection with each other. From my limited knowledge it seems right that the BBC should have commercial projects and that some of the profit from this should be ploughed back into paying for the running of the BBC.

I think that the licence fee should continue to be the major method of financing the BBC and that it should be set at a level which is adequate to fund the wonderful and comprehensive service which we enjoy. If we want the quality of the BBC to continue and indeed improve we have to be prepared to pay for it. Perhaps there is a need to impress upon all of us what it costs and our obligation to contribute.

Maybe some more centralised way of collecting the money could be devised but it would need to be totally separate from, say the Inland Revenue or any similar body. It is imperative that the BBC is seen to be completely independent of any Government or other similar authority. Whether we are those who watch very little TV or are among the tiny minority who do not have a TV set, we are all still affected in some way by what is broadcast on both the radio and on TV, although it may be indirectly. We should therefore all contribute.

Is the BBC organised in the most effective and efficient way?

I can't really say, but it is likely that people have their radios tuned in to a particular channel and stick with it. Digital tuning may make it easier to change channels rather than having to tune in with a knob. I certainly change channels more readily on my little portable radio on which I can pre-set the buttons to the channels I want.

How do we ensure that the BBC is properly accountable to the public and Parliament?

More listening could be given to the complaints, and praises, of individual members of the public when they contact the BBC or programme producers and makers. It sometimes feels as though their voice is not listened to. Perhaps not enough of them shout loudly enough. Does the BBC take enough notice of bodies like mediawatch-uk, CARE and similar monitoring organisations.

The death of Dr David Kelly and the out come of the Hutton enquiry would indicate that the activities of the BBC journalists, and the way they go about them, need more control.

How should the BBC be run? How should it be regulated?

I do not know enough to make sensible comments on these but I **DO** have strong opinions that the present arrangements for monitoring and regulating the content of programmes certainly does **NOT** ensure that **all** programmes meet the highest standards on decency, honesty, justice and morality.

I understand that these words are written up over one of the entrance doors to Broadcasting House. It is a great pity they are in Latin. Perhaps it would be right to have an English translation placed beside them - *large and bold*.

"This temple of the Arts and Muses is dedicated to Almighty God by the first Governors of Broadcasting House in the year 1931, Sir John Reith being Director-General. It is their prayer that good seed sown may bring forth a good harvest, that all things hostile to peace and purity may be banished from this house and that people inclining their ear to whatever things are beautiful and honest and of good report, may tread the path of wisdom and uprightness."

Perhaps something to include "inclining their eyes" as well as their ear could be inserted now that we have television. Could they be recited at the annual Reith lectures?!?!

The closing words of this plaque are taken from the words of St. Paul to the Christians in Philippi, chapter 4 verse 8. (King James version)

"Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."