

## **YOUR BBC YOUR SAY**

### **What do you value most about the BBC?**

When I take a look at the number of hours I spend watching TV I reckon I spend about 90% watching BBC and 10% watching the commercial programmes. I do not have satellite TV. I value BBC for news, informative, educational, some drama and some comedy programmes. I loathe pop music, watch no soaps or reality shows and very few sports programmes. I appreciate that there are numerous people who do enjoy these type of programmes and they have to be catered for - so when they are being shown it gives me a chance to do the washing up, make a cup of tea or read a book.

I don't know how well the BBC serves the different nations, regions or communities. The local NW regional programmes seem to cover anything of interest.

But on the subject of the various nationalities and communities - is it my imagination or is there an over-representation of Black, Asian and Irish presenters, newsreaders, reporters, panellists and commentators? Even among the White British front-of-camera people there seems to be a preponderance of Northern Irish, Scots and Welsh rather than English. I am part Scots, part Welsh and part English - and I am very happy to be called British. So as it is the BRITISH Broadcasting Company I think the employment of the various national, racial and religious groups should be in proportion to their percentage of the population as in the latest Census. Wasn't that something like 92 whites and 8 blacks per hundred? I've no idea what the proportions were for English, N.I, Welsh and Scots nor what the figures were for Protestant, R.C, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or Sikh. But it would be interesting to know if the BBC staff reflect those proportions. Can we be told?

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

It seems to me that whenever the Internet, Digital TV or Text are mentioned it favours the involvement of the young and/or the well-off. Older viewers who haven't caught on to new technology (and realistically probably never will) and those people on limited incomes are immediately sidelined and their opinions not valued and not asked for. The only thing I'd say is that the BBC should not assume that everyone has access to new technology or the technical knowledge as to how to use it. I for one certainly don't.

### **What do you think of the television services the BBC provides?**

I'd like to see an opera every now and again - a traditional, well-loved favourite, not some "jazzed-up" or modern offering. It wouldn't have to feature world-renowned stars - there must be hundreds of newly graduated singers and musicians from Music Colleges up and down the country who would love to have the opportunity to show off their talents. I've heard the Beggars Opera for instance being sung by actors with good singing voices rather than conventional opera singers.

I'd like to see a regular health/medical programme which would discuss the latest medical developments. There was one many years ago with Dr Rob Buckman, Miriam Stoppard and others where viewers wrote in with their queries which would be answered in an easy-to-understand way. Following on in the health theme I'd like to see a few minutes a day on exercises like aerobics, yoga, Tai Chi - with a relevant expert showing us how it should be done.

I'd like to see a proper Christian service on Sunday mornings, a Saturday service at the synagogue and a Friday service at the mosque, which I think would lead to a greater understanding, acceptance and tolerance between the faiths.

I'd like to see more costume dramas. I know that will be a really boring suggestion that most people will make. But if the BBC does them better than anyone else - why not do what you do best? Now that Animal Hospital is off the air perhaps we could have a programme about pet care. All Creatures Great and Small was hugely popular, there was also some years ago a programme about a Zoo vet. Can we have something like that again?

I'd like to see a programme about the UN. Not just the history - how it was set up etc. But how it is run today. How is it funded? Is every country in the world represented? Does every country have the same number of delegates? Who pays them? Who pays for the UN building, the maintenance, upkeep and security? And UN Peacekeepers - do they volunteer direct to the UN or are they seconded from the regular armies of the member states? Who pays for them? Who decides when peacekeepers should be sent to a war zone and which peacekeepers should be sent? There has been so much in the news recently about Britain's relationship with the UN but I bet that there are a lot of people like me who don't understand the UN set-up.

I'd like to see programmes like "Drop the Dead Donkey" and "Yes Minister" again (Bernard could have been promoted to be the new Sir Humphrey). And "Have I Got News for You" (the jewel in the crown in my opinion) should be on permanently. No Government of whatever political persuasion should be allowed to get away with what the current lot have got away with recently without programmes like the above pointing out their hypocrisy and inconsistencies.

Can we have a few comfort breaks every now and then? Not necessarily a return to the Potters Wheel or the kitten playing with the wool - but a break which you know is going to be long enough for a visit to the loo or to make a cup of tea.

What should the BBC not do? Reality shows - Leave that rubbish on the commercial channels where it belongs.

I see that Kilroy albeit with a different title is back with us again. I wish the opportunity had been taken to bin it altogether. The kind of dysfunctional weirdos that this programme attracts shouldn't be given the oxygen of publicity. Let them go on the Trisha (anagram of Trashi) programme on ITV where they belong.

Are all the make-over shows really necessary? It seems to be that a lot of the people featured have deliberately destroyed their houses or gardens in order to have their repairs and improvements done at the expense of the licence-payers when a good many of them could well afford to simply pay a builder or gardener to come in and do the work. The present gang spend so much time just fooling around - it would be better if they gave us a demonstration or a bit of advice on how to do some of the DIY jobs. And as for the "designers" - Oh Please! What are they on? No thought at all is given to how practical the finished product will be - like can it be cleaned?

We are always being told of the health dangers and cost to the NHS of smoking, drinking to excess and casual sex etc. But most of the plays on TV show this as "normal" behaviour by the central characters. I'm convinced this has a brain-washing effect on viewers who think if they're not a chain-smoking drunk ready to bonk anything with a heartbeat, they're not interesting or normal.

When we are warned before a programme of "strong" language or "adult" content, the words strong and adult convey something good and positive. Wouldn't it be more accurate to warn of "bad language and swearing" and "sex scenes"?

And can the BBC stop minimising the end credits so they are unreadable and stop the announcers talking over the end music?

### **Should the BBC run commercial services?**

If the BBC's commercial operations are profitable - then keep them. But maybe more publicity could be given to what Videos, CDs and DVDs are available and where they can be purchased. All the latest

ones are advertised in the Radio Times - but what about older ones? Is there a catalogue available? Where can we get one?

But the BBC should never consider adverts or how could any programme be made which was critical of an advertiser? Loss of revenue would always have to be considered.

### **How should we pay for the BBC?**

The licence seems good value to me so I wouldn't like to see any change.

If the BBC needs to economise - get rid of over-paid, over-used "celebs" like Terry Wogan, Anne Robinson, Jonathan Ross, Bruce Forsyth etc and I understand Cilla Black and Graham Norton are being given their own shows. I give up! Please give some new talent a chance.

The BBC could also get rid of the musicians (for want of a better word) who provide background music to some programmes, which seems to consist mainly of loud drumming and discordant racket. This so-called music is often not kept in the background but is so intrusive as to drown out the narrative or dialogue. I'm often very grateful for the teletext subtitles.

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

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

How do people get to be Governors? Who appoints them? What criteria do they have to meet? What experience do they need? Who appoints the Director General, Chief Executive and all the various Heads of the various Departments of the BBC?

When do the licence payers have a say in who is appointed to these positions? I certainly don't recall ever being asked to vote for anyone - and as a licence payer I think I'd like a say. We have general elections every 4 or 5 years and council elections nearly every year, so I don't see why licence payers shouldn't be sent some voting papers, listing the candidates, their views, likes, dislikes etc and then the people who pay for it would get a say in who they want to run the BBC.

When we get our licence we could be sent a list of all the Governors and senior Staff with their CVs stating their education, experience, business and commercial interests, hobbies, political affiliations, ethnic origins and religious background -whether we've had the opportunity to elect them or not. Personally I think I'd be quite happy to appoint David Attenborough as Head of Everything and let him appoint everyone else.



Miss Jean Stockton