

15th. April 2005

BBC Charter Review
Dept. for Culture, Media & Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to make a few points about the BBC which I find either disturbing or frustrating - sometimes both.

1. When news readers and programme announcers employed "received English pronunciation" not only was that a good example to those who had not had the benefit of a decent education but those, numbering many hundreds of thousands, who have a hearing defect such as noise induced deafness, of whom I am one, had a reasonable chance of understanding what was being said.

Nowadays not only do we have many "regional" accents [and Scottish seems to preponderate] but a great number of female announcers have foul high pitched "estuary" accents which cause considerable discomfort to people like me. Often I simply have to turn-off the programme as I either cannot distinguish what is being said or the pitch of the voice is such that listening is torture.

2. These same criticisms apply to the dramas on all channels: for example I cannot understand a single word spoken by the character Havers in the Inspector Lynley Mysteries. The actress concerned speaks with her teeth firmly clamped together - the very opposite of what she would have been taught to do in the past. But matters are made worse by the drowning-out of voices by, often inappropriate, intrusive background "music".

In these days of extreme technical sophistication it is not difficult to ensure that vocal sounds are capable of being heard clearly and understood and I can only presume that the technicians are only interested in producing "trendy" soundtracks without regard for clarity.

3. Is there any wonder that we have developed a "job culture" in this country when programmes for young people encourage loud, uncouth, behaviour? In fact many programmes seem to be conducted by jobs. Why do children's show presenters have to shout? Are all children deaf?

Manners [well the good kind] seem to be actively discouraged. Do we really think Dick & Dom are suitable presenters for the BBC? A recent programme of which I caught a ghastly glimpse had these two jump onto a settee - sit on the backrest with their dirty shoes on the seat. [Would there be an Antiques Roadshow today if children in the past had been allowed to treat furniture in this way?]

4. Why is the wearing of ties now, seemingly, forbidden on TV? Why are presenters so badly paid [particularly children's presenters] that they have to be so scruffy?

I could go on but, doubtless, I've already been written off as a stuffshirt - or worse.

Yours faithfully

DENNIS AMBROSE