

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

20th May 2005

Dear Auntie, "Accountability to licence fee payers" begs the question. I am not a licence fee payer because I got rid of my TV set five years ago.

Commercial broadcasters distort accessible English for marketing purposes. The BBC tries to beat them at their own game and there is general denial about the consequent sadness of language.

It is not good enough to celebrate an eclectic mix of cascading fragments. If good English is regarded as exclusive then that is not a reflection on the language or its accessibility; it is prejudice and inverted snobbery.

For me, the principal role of the BBC is to promote ordinary good spoken English, which requires the gentle observance of strict grammatical rules and distinct enunciation.

"Who knows ought of art must learn ---
--- and then take his ease."

As David Colman said: "If I thought about what I am saying I would be lost."

Matters of professional discipline cannot be achieved by consumer choice or political correction because most people are wrong about most things most of the time.

Broadcasters routinely ignore sentence structure and balance. Offences against the language are legion and I could give countless examples but anyone at the BBC who doesn't already appreciate what is wrong is hardly competent to put it straight.

You may find the enclosed attempt at poetic expression relevant to your considerations.

I miss the late Humphrey Carpenter. I would mention the first programme in the series "Great Lives" as an outstanding example of English language broadcasting. My vicarious enjoyment of the exchanges between Humphrey Carpenter, Alexandra Shackleton and Rosie Boycott was a moving and cathartic experience; my tears flowed with the conversation.

Max Fierstein often used to quote Albert Schweitzer: "Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it is the only thing."

Yours faithfully,
J. E. Banks
MR. I. E. BANKS

A General Election Reflection

(050505)

Did I but cast my vote
It were a chance remote
That message understood
Would point a mandate good.

Executive interferes
With scrutiny by peers
So in the coming session
Hold valour with discretion!

Legislation ill-conceived
For a Nation thus deceived
Finds a Commons in disgrace
So respect Another Place!

All mortals must be wrong;
To none the Truth belong;
Democracy condemn
The Root from which Love stem.

Build not the Tower of Babel;
Let Government enable:
Humility's Confession
To Discipline's Profession!