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12TH April 2005

Dear Sir/Madam

Your recent advertisement in the Observer invited the public to air their views on the BBC. Well here are mine.

The BBC is obsessed with celebrity.

The BBC is NOT fulfilling its remit on current affairs or the arts.

The BBC is caught up in the reality television spiral.

The BBC should NOT chase ratings — even when the government tells them to in order to justify the license fee.

Large amounts of monies are being wasted by the BBC.

Inform, educate and entertain. The BBC should stick to this maxim.

To add weight to my opinions I am enclosing a number of newspaper clippings from the last five years or so. Some of these refer to celebrities and the vast amounts of money being wasted on them. Graham Norton and Natasha Kaplinsky are the latest examples in a long list of non-entities being paid ridiculous amounts of license fee money.

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Why can't somebody realise that what makes a gardening program ~~are~~ the plants and gardens, not some airhead smiling or some bimbo letting it all hang out. The corporation reputedly paid over a million pounds to "prize" Graham Norton away from Channel 4. Why, for some unwatchable Saturday night dance fiasco. What an absolute waste of money.

A recent program called "Walking with Dinosaurs" attracted audiences of 19 million people and the only "living" things taking part were big ugly monsters! David Attenborough's "Blue Planet" and "Life of Birds" concentrated on their subject matters and were outstanding achievements in television. But two weeks ago on a "wildlife" program we get some bimbo in a bikini prancing about when we are told it is about the Amazon river.

Consider this short selection of recent offerings from the BBC. Jerry Springer the Opera, Tanny and Savannah, h h Bowen and DIY, David Dickenson cheap as chips, Badly behaved Kids, Jenny Eclair and celebrities discussing spots?, Hustle, Fame Academy, a couple of lesbian costume dramas, Flog it, interminable cookery programs with celebrity chefs - and this doesn't take BBC 3 into account at all. This

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Station is dire and must be aimed at 10-15 year olds as far as I can tell.

All this garbage and yet the BBC fails in other areas which it should be excelling in. Look at the E-mail I sent to POV in late July 2004 reminding them of the upcoming 300th anniversary of the Battle of Blenheim. What did Auntie do to cover this occasion --- ^{NEXT TO} NOTHING! A brief interview with Earl Spencer on Breakfast with Frost (because he had a book about Marlborough recently published) was all they could manage. Had Marlborough and his armies NOT won the War of Spanish Succession then Europe would have developed in a different manner than it has now. But the BBC didn't think it merited informing the public about this major historical landmark. An absolute disgrace in my opinion.

More current affairs, more programs on the arts (and not at 11:30 p.m. like the recent opus on Mozart). More dramas like The Lost Prince, Inspector Linley, Waking the Dead and Dad (with a wonderful Richard Briers). More comedies like Help and the Howe I got News for you team. ^{The Beeb should} Put John Sargeant in charge of the

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show permanently). Mind Games from BBC4, University Challenge, Life of Crime (in this country mind you), anything by David Attenborough - These are the programs that the BBC should be making. Let ITV chase ratings with Ant and Dec, Pol Idol, Celebrity Big eating, Fat People and Footballers Wives - all abysmal shows. Finally, two more clippings from the Times of Saturday 9th April

BBC coverage

From Mr Kenneth Wood

Sir, BBC coverage both before and after the Pope's death involved separate teams in Rome from Radios 4 and 5 Live. This latest example of unnecessary expenditure resulted in essentially similar reports and interviews being broadcast on the two channels, often simultaneously, by different reporters.

How does this square with the Director-General's stated objective (report, December 8, 2004) of a slimmed-down public service as a condition of the continuation of the licence fee?

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH WOOD,
16 Shelton Place, Exeter EX1 2RE.
April 6.

From Mrs M. K. Rowberry

Sir, The BBC has an election "battle bus" and Newsnight has a helicopter (report, April 6). Is this where my licence fee is going?

Regards,
M. K. ROWBERRY,
15 Black Bank Road, Little Downham,
Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2UA.
April 6.

These letters are concerning wasting licence fee monies. ^{Also} On two evenings in Rome on TV, the BBC had Huw Edwards, John Simpson, Dermot Murnaghan and Jeremy Bowen. Why? One would have sufficed to report on the sad events concerning the Pope.

And the recently announced payment to the criminal Brendan Heeron is an affront to common decency!

Now read this about racial tension. In the opinion of many people, the cricket coverage of test matches between England and Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and the West Indies was instrumental in forming a shared interest between the different

■ Tensions between Britain's religious communities have increased since September 11, 2001, the Home Affairs Select Committee said this week. "International terrorism and the response to it have contributed to this deterioration, particularly in relations between the majority community and the Muslim community," the committee said.

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ethnic groups. The BBC used to show all these matches but has now forsaken them completely. These should be brought back as they are a true public service. They would help to provide a major reference point for all the diverse communities - - - a thing to share for all - - - But No, the BBC wants to show cookery, soaps or bland celebrity presenters sitting on couches talking about botox or cellulite or some other trivial subject. A national disgrace.

I should say that I wrote to the BBC several years ago, giving my opinions to them and also suggesting ideas for several new programmes. They sent my suggestions back saying thanks but no thanks.

The BBC will go on far longer than you or I and it is essential that it maintains a high standard, distinguished from the other terrestrial channels. It is not to make its performers/presenters millionaires - - - rather to enrich the nation who provide the funds for its life blood.

Sincerely

Colin Davenport

P.S. I do not require any of the PAPERS BACK.