

24th March 2005

BBC Charter Review  
dcms  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5DH

Dear Sirs

## Your BBC, Your Say

We have no doubt the BBC television and radio programmes are outstanding when compared to those of other such programme producers.

Notwithstanding the above, the main concern we have with current TV programmes, and the BBC is nowadays no exception, is the high incidence of obscene language, scenes of violence and of a sexual nature; much of which presumably is targeted at a specific but minority viewing public. If such programming is to attract particularly those who would purchase the products advertised through this media this is no reason why the BBC should similarly reduce it's standards indeed, the BBC has absolutely no reason to compete with other channels for viewing ratings whilst their funding is so generous and guaranteed.

We believe much of the gutter culture and anti social behaviour so prevalent today, not restricted to children, has been brought about by example and in the main from the media and we believe stricter directives on programme content should be issued to all TV companies (certainly those accessible at no additional cost to the statutory licence fee) with a view to tackling such problems in future generations. For example, the 21. 00 hours watershed should not be seen as a time after which anything goes as appears to be current practice.

If the BBC is unwilling to conform to standards of decency then they should no longer expect the public to pay their keep.

In closing, we are surprised that your department has not already come down hard on all the TV companies for the progressively increasing amount of programmes which we believe are of an offensive nature to all decent people.

Yours sincerely



Philip S. and Brenda Marriott

# Why David swears but not cursing

**B** RITAIN'S most popular actor is keen to get a few things off his chest. David Jason, whose mantelpiece groans under the weight of his multi-award-winning status, is determined to restore the family drama to its rightful place.

His first project is *Diamond Geezer*, a one-off comedy drama that is almost devoid of bad language and violence. That's quite a feat, given that it's set in a prison. *The Shawshank Redemption* it is not. Think more *The Italian Job* or *How To Steal A Million* and you would be closer.

At the show's launch in London he told me: "I liked the idea of a caper from the outset. It was nice to read material that was about a robbery and a scam but had very little violence and swearing."

"It's the sort of thing I carry a flag about, which is trying to entertain people with the least amount of violence, sex and swearing. We live in a modern world and you have to have some of it, but I thought it would make enjoyable family entertainment."

It does have that quality Jason plays Des, a loveable old lag coming to the end of a three-year stretch in prison, but there is slightly more to the apparently simple, stammering soul than meets the eye. Into this world comes young wag Phil, played by Stephen Wright, who has enough attitude for the entire prison.

Jason says: "This drama shows that you can have a modern drama about tough guys and hold

**David Jason wants to put Del Boy behind him to concentrate on good, solid family entertainment with no sex, violence or bad language, as tells DAVID STEPHENSON**

an audience without the swearing. I don't think you need it. It doesn't make you any less realistic but most things are now beginning to use really hard language. They think that, if you don't, you're not being realistic or entertaining. They're wrong."

The three-time Best Actor winner at the National Television Awards says this is the criteria by which he now chooses what work he does. "The audience perception of the work I do is that it is basically family orientated and I would feel very strongly if I thought I'd let an audience down. Our job is to entertain, not to teach them how to swear or beat up people."

Doesn't that lead to sentimental drama? "Yes, there is a danger, but I don't think we've done it. If you do miss the violence and swearing, I guess we have a different point of view."

Jason confirms that he will be doing another episode of *A Touch Of Frost*. "We got a good script for the Inspector, so I was seduced

into coming back. I know we're criticised for always doing cops and docs, so I have a new project I'm looking at for over the summer: again, more family-style entertainment."

"We need to be more adventurous, rather than have someone's ceiling painted again. We have to help our audiences aspire to better things."

**S** PEAKING of self-improvers, what about *Del Boy*? "I would like to put the *Del Boy* years behind me, but *Only Fools And Horses* is repeated so much. If I was in charge, I would not allow programmes to be repeated as much. That's just cheap television. I'm very proud of my years on *Fools And Horses* but there comes a time when I must move on."

Would he do another episode? "It's unlikely, but never say never."

Jason, now 65, has a daughter, Sophie Mae, four, with his partner Gill Hinchcliffe. His first partner, the Welsh actress Myfanwy Talog, died of cancer, aged 49, in 1990.

Jason took time off to nurse her. Despite insisting "I like to keep my private life private," he does concede: "I have slowed down. I still want to do the work. I enjoy it but I am now insisting on more time between projects so I do have more time at home with the family. Retirement is not a word I am ready for yet."

● *Diamond Geezer*, ITV1, Sunday, March 20, 9pm.