

7th April 2005

BBC Charter Review
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2/4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1Y 5DH

Dear Whoever

I happened to see the notice *Your BBC, Your Say* in the paper recently and would like to put on paper a few thoughts about the corporation.

On the whole the BBC does a marvellous job, consistently good news coverage, perhaps not in depth enough sometimes, but I have a few gripes. These are specifically: Radio Bristol in the mornings. There used to be a presenter called Roger Bennett whose spoken English was clear and grammatical, now there are at least two presenters every morning and their English and sentence construction is often quite slapdash and the reporting often inaccurate.

News 24 Do we really need to hear and see news 24 hours a day? I don't. If anything really important happens, you interrupt normal programmes with a news flash which is perfectly adequate.

Bad Language Do we really need to have so much cussing on TV; I'm thinking of Gordon Ramsey for instance. What a poor example to set people, especially young and impressionable kids. Everyone must now think to work in a commercial kitchen and be a good cook, you have to cuss, swear and bully everyone from noon till night. Incidentally, this is often called strong language. It's not. It's crude, foul, violent language. In the good old days, Mrs Patten, Delia Smith, Fanny Cradock, the Two Fat Ladies, had no need to swear when they were demonstrating cookery.

The Weakest Link with Anne Robinson. I thought we were trying to discourage bullying but whenever I watch the Weakest Link Ms Robinson often tries to bully, make fun of, put down and belittle the contestants. I can remember a time when presenters were always nice and kind to people appearing on shows, realising that people were often ill at ease in an unfamiliar environment. Remember dear old Bruce Forsyth on Beat the Clock, he would never have made fun of people's appearance, belittled their jobs, or generally criticised them. Even Michael Barrymore was usually pleasant to those appearing on his shows. There are different forms of bullying, unkind and unnecessary verbal comments is one. Ms Robinson's programme is on at teatime when children will be watching and I think her example is a bad one to set.

Some things the BBS should be congratulated for - Antiques Roadhog, Gardeners World, some costume dramas, local radio, discovering interesting people e.g. Barbara Woodhouse, Fred Dimah. The BBC sets the benchmark in good broadcasting, its spoken English should be clear and mostly correct, never misleading, it must be remembered you are actually teaching as well as broadcasting.

That will do for now,

Yours sincerely
M Patten (Mrs)