

# Tony Parsons

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

22nd March 2005

Dear Sirs,

In the announcements that appeared in the national press, yesterday, you invited comments from licence payers regarding the current performance of the BBC and how that performance might be improved in the future.

My main complaint about the current output of the BBC is that they seem unable to cover certain events in moderation. May I give two recent examples of what I object to -

**1. Comic Relief.** While this event unquestionably raises large sums of money for the most deserving of causes, the BBC went completely "over the top" and saturated their main channel - BBC1 - at prime time, not only on "Red Nose Day" but for at least 10 days before. This year, an associated programme "Comic Relief does Fame Academy" was screened, nightly, for ten days prior to the main fund raising event - a total of more than 21 hours of repetitive viewing. Little wonder that when Red Nose Day itself arrived many viewers took the attitude "I don't mind supporting the cause just so long as I don't have to watch another minute of this dross"!

**2. Six Nations Rugby Football.** Once again, the BBC coverage of this event was totally excessive. And it went on, week after week. Culminating last Saturday, March 19th, when, between 12.45 and 7.45 pm the only breaks from rugby football came with two five minute soccer slots - around the grounds at 2.55 and an update of scores at 4.20 - and a 20 minute news bulletin at 5.25. A total of no less than six and a half hours of solid rugby. Nobody is a keener sports enthusiast than I am, but this is hardly "balanced" programming.

While a case might be made to have shown both matches featuring home sides, why on earth was it necessary to screen the Italy v France match live on BBC 1 as well? If that game really had to be shown, could it not have gone out on one of the new digital channels or a recording transmitted later for the benefit of those rugby enthusiasts capable of watching three matches in one day?

Yours faithfully,



J.A. Parsons