

Editorial Complaints to the BBC, April to June 2005

The BBC handled over 49,000 editorial complaints between April and June 2005. As usual these ranged from a small number of complaints about potentially serious breaches of editorial guidelines through to a much larger collection of views about programme content and scheduling.

Key themes which emerged are detailed below. The BBC's response to these and other issues can be found at : http://www.bbc.co.uk/complaints/read_responses.shtml

Weather : There was a surge in complaints when the new television weather format was launched in May. Some viewers told us that they preferred the old format while others had more specific concerns. There were objections, particularly from viewers in Scotland, that the perspective or tilt of the map gave the south undue prominence compared with the north. Others felt that the dynamic tours round the country were too fast to take in all the information. Some viewers had a particular interest in more information about isobars and wind speed and direction. A number of changes were made in response to this feedback : the tilt of the map was altered, the tours of the country were slowed down and new wind speed and direction symbols were introduced.

General Election Coverage : Three issues in particular prompted complaints from the audience. Some viewers objected – mostly before transmission – to a **Party Election Broadcast by the British National Party** being broadcast. Others complained about **The Paxman Interviews** with party leaders, expressing the view that Jeremy Paxman was too confrontational and aggressive towards his guests. There were also complaints about Jeremy Paxman's line of questioning on **Election Night** when he asked George Galloway if he was 'proud of having got rid of one of the very few black women in Parliament?'. This is currently being investigated by the Editorial Complaints Unit.

Other News : There was also lobby activity alleging an error in a report about the West Bank in **From Our Own Correspondent** on 28 April. This was investigated and the report was found to be correct.

Saturation / Insufficient Coverage : Viewers and listeners have different views about the level of coverage which should be devoted to any given subject. For instance, coverage of the **death of Pope John Paul II** resulted in both higher viewing figures and complaints about excessive coverage. Other viewers felt that there was too much news coverage of Michael Jackson's trial. There were complaints that the **Wimbledon** match between Roger Federer and Juan Carlos Ferrero was not shown to its conclusion on BBC TWO on 27 June. Some viewers were able to follow it on BBC Interactive and, for others, there were highlights later in the evening. In contrast, coverage of Wimbledon on both BBC ONE and BBC TWO at the same time was a source of frustration for those not interested in tennis. There were also complaints about lack of coverage of the **200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar** - particularly analogue TV coverage of the Fleet Review. The BBC responded with a number of schedule changes, including two special highlights programmes about The Fleet Review.

Offence : A number of viewers felt that the television **trail for Wimbledon** was upsetting and too violent , especially for children. In response to this feedback, the trail was taken out of all children's programmes, and programmes of which more than ten per cent of the audience are children. Quips about the collapse of MG Rover on **Have I Got News For You** on 15 April also offended some viewers.

Further details of themes prompting complaint, and the BBC's responses, can be found on the BBC Complaints website at www.bbc.co.uk/complaints.