

P.C. Yarranton / Body

## Conservative and Unionist Central Office

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DJB/cjo

22nd August 1979

Richard Ryder, Esq.,  
Political Office,  
10 Downing Street,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your letter of 16th August enclosing the transcript of the BBC World Service programme "About Britain" broadcast on July 14th.\* *One Man's View of Britain This Week.*

Your correspondent certainly does seem correct in his analysis that the programme was anti government and anti Mrs Thatcher.

Unfortunately over a month has elapsed since the broadcast and so it would be difficult to make any progress with a formal complaint. However, I will endeavour to find out more about this particular programme and in particular about Mr. Robert Hewison, the presenter. It could be that this was one of a series of talks from different personalities with different political views. If so, the balance may have been corrected by some other talk. These points I won't be able to establish until I have done some investigation.

On your second point about a complaints system, let me briefly outline the way I see this developing. Both the BBC and the IBA have people whose main responsibility is liaison with the political parties. These are Peter Hardiman Scott for the BBC and David Glencross for the IBA. In the past John Lindsey has used his judgement as to whether or not a formal protest is lodged in the form of a letter or, where we are seeking immediate action, by telephone. These complaints are normally taken seriously because both authorities know that we have an effective monitoring system and that we are not crying wolf. One of my main objects now is to build and develop a relationship with these two people, so that I too can continue to have an effective working liaison with them.

We keep here at Central Office a full file of all complaints and it has been a practice in the past to keep the authorities on their toes by bringing to their attention, either formally or informally, our points of view on either specific programmes or the general picture. I feel this is the best way of handling complaints because when both sides fully understand each other's position, then complaints are likely to be listened to with more attention and action is more likely to result.

One final point. We also encourage the people who are in contact with us complaining about the political content of a programme to write directly to the relevant authority. If enough of them do this, greater weight is placed behind our protest.

All the best,

David.

David Boddy  
Press Office