

Probing the Media 4

Today, 26 May 2005

Ever since James Naughtie said on the BBC Radio Four Today programme just before the 2005 general election that he hoped 'we' (meaning the Blairites) would win the election I have thought of the BBC as the Blairite Broadcasting Corporation. I first exposed Blair and the Blairites in my book *The Blight of Blairism*, and shall go on doing so whenever I can.

However I am writing now on another aspect of the Today programme, namely its propensity suddenly to abandon serious news and treat us to current affairs snippets, often boring and sometimes very noisy. I am in a sensitive state in the early morning and do not like sudden shocks.

On 26 May 2005 I sent Today the following rude message-

The Today programme, at around 7.45 after discussing the newspapers, always has some silly item that makes me switch off. Today it was the voices of South American tribes speaking their barbarous tongue. It's not what we want to hear as we struggle to start the day. Please give us sensible news items about things that actually matter to us (not OUGHT to matter).

I was rather surprised to get a civilised reply from a named individual. This led to an interchange in which I learnt something. Today is not, as I had thought, a news programme. It is a news and current affairs programme. That's official.

The BBC also put this another way, distinguishing 'hard' news and 'soft' news. This translates as follows-

Hard news = genuine news

Soft news = current affairs items that are not real news.

Today is both a hard news and a soft news programme. I wish it wasn't.

This is developed at greater length in [Blog FBBB119](#)