



A Coronation mug and a glimpse of the back of the Queen's head

By Diana Cormack

One of my earliest memories is of my father returning early from work in the RAF one February afternoon and announcing: "The boss is dead." I thought that meant his squadron leader, but in fact it was King George VI.

Sixteen months later in June 1953 came the coronation of his daughter Elizabeth, with celebrations throughout the land. The children on our RAF camp in North Yorkshire were treated to an outdoor party. Of course it rained, so we had to be contained in the Sergeants' Mess. At some point we were each given a commemorative mug, which I still have.

First-ever TV

Another memory of that June day is watching television for the first time. Whilst wondering how our next door neighbours could afford it, we squashed into their front room to stare at the small black and white screen showing endless processions of bandsmen, marching military, mounted troops and fairy-tale coaches. Numb from sitting on the hard floor, we were relieved to be allowed eventually to escape from that historical event.

Waiting to wave

At the time of the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 I was teaching in a primary school on

wave their flags and cheer was not a pleasant one. Some were sick, others were thirsty and of course there were no toilet facilities nearby. Suddenly the royal car appeared and just as swiftly disappeared, with my only memory of it being the back of the queen's hat-clad head. To this day I wonder why it could not have slowed down for those children to see her properly.

Do you have any memories of the coronation, jubilees or special occasions during the Queen's 70-year reign which you could share with our readers? Post them to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE, or email news@the-archer.co.uk to reach us by Thursday 12 May. Thank you.



Tea up: Diana's Coronation mug

the Hackney-Islington border not far from the Balls Pond Road. This formed part of the route designated for local children to see Her Majesty as her car passed by.

It was a really hot day and the combination of heat plus a very long wait for the chance to



Easy rider: Estate agent Miles Ponder out and about on his e-bike.

Fourth time lucky for art fair

After being forced by Covid to cancel their planned Art Fair no less than three times, Hampstead Garden Suburb Art has announced that their 2022 fair will take place this month.

More than 30 local artists will be displaying their work, including painting, ceramics, jewellery, photography, textiles and glass, and refreshments will be provided by volunteers from the charity Combat Stress.

It takes place at Fellowship House, Willifield Way, NW11 6YD, between 11am and 5pm on Saturday 21 May and Sunday 22 May. Entry is free.

Two wheels good, four wheels bad

A team of estate agents is bucking the trend of branded cars in favour of electric bikes to conduct their property viewings around East Finchley and north London.

Taylor Gibbs, an independent firm based in Highgate, said it had been looking for ways to become more environmentally friendly and transport was high on its list due to heavily congested roads.

Director Zia Taylor said: "E-bikes won't entirely replace car trips, but it is safe to say they will reduce costs and the time staff take to commute to appointments. It is good business sense coupled with green benefits."

A bug palace for the Jubilee

To commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the East Finchley Pollinator Project in conjunction with the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are going to make a Bug Palace for the Queen on Saturday 4 June.

The palatial insect residence will be constructed near the tube station entrance to the Wood between 10am and 2pm. Everyone is welcome to come along to help on the day. For more details, contact: efpollinators@gmail.com

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Ziggy played guitar

In a world where everyone is getting excited about an elderly woman celebrating 70 years on the throne, I'm not. What I'm celebrating happened 50 years ago, because 1972 was the year that the world really discovered David Bowie, or at least his alter ego Ziggy Stardust.

It wasn't just that Bowie wrote music for the confused and deranged, it was the way that he caused the net curtain twitchers of suburbia to foam at the mouth that I loved. Here was a man in a multi-coloured cat suit draping an arm round his blonde guitarist singing about aliens on *Top of the Pops*. For otherworldly teens there really was a starman waiting in the sky.

Before that Bowie had been a one-hit wonder with a minor cult following who'd been knocking around for seven years with no one noticing. He wasn't the first to grab the glitter and satin to get himself seen. Marc Bolan, complete with eye shadow, electric blue outfit and silver boots, had got there the year before. But Bowie was different; he made being weird cool.

In the summer of 72 onwards he became the cutting edge of the charts; this skinny guy from south London made you believe that there really was an alien just around the corner to rearrange your world. And it wasn't just the looks, it was the music. Albums like *Ziggy Stardust*, *Aladdin Sane* and *Diamond Dogs*, songs like *Suffragette City*, *Jean Genie*, *John*, *I'm Only Dancing* and loads more made him the teen hero the serious rock fan could get behind.

This was Bowie time, a time when just about everything he touched turned to gold records. He had the taste and vision to turn the forgotten and discarded into icons. Lou Reed was a washed-up leftover from The Velvet Underground until Bowie produced his classic *Transformer* album. He also gave Iggy Pop a second chance and wrote the immortal teen anthem *All the Young Dudes* that rescued Mott the Hoople.

I guess it couldn't last. Somewhere between announcing the end of Ziggy Stardust in mid-1973 and releasing *Young Americans* in 1975, Bowie changed, moved on and moved to America. It didn't mean that the music stopped; he remained an iconic innovator for the rest of his life. At various points he was chameleon, Corinthian and caricature. In 1972, he was all three, so when everyone else is going on about the Jubilee, I'll have my headphones on and be listening to Bowie.

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