

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, BRITAIN?

CWG runs the first of an occasional series designed to find out what people in the UK really think. We organised a national panel of Volunteer Diarists to record local events and reactions to them. Inevitably, this first selection of Reports is dominated by the Coronation. Anxiety, doubt, even terror, can be found. But so can love, devotion and excellent swordsmanship.

What I saw last night chilled my blood. Now I don't know if I can ever work again.

I am a Tarologist. I combine the best aspects of Tarot reading with Astrology to yield the most accurate forecast of the future. I do it before every Royal event and send a report to Buckingham Palace. Which is always acknowledged with thanks.

Last night as usual I drank a cup of gentian tea and stared at my blank wall to settle into my Vatic state. Unusually, I had an instant vision of King Charles processing to the throne in Westminster Abbey on Coronation Day. All was calm, gracious and regal. Until...

A hideous creature - obese, white-haired, and badly-dressed - came out of nowhere and brought down the King with a vicious rugby tackle. Then It kicked his Majesty and stole his Crown!!!

The Creature (I cannot believe it was human) then sat on the throne and crowned Itself, shouting "Today, Britain! Tomorrow, the World!!!"

Everyone reared back in terror as the Creature's hideous leer swept the Abbey. Then suddenly the leer became a grimace. The Creature moaned: "IT BURNS! IT BURNS!" It tried to wrench off the Crown but the be-jewelled headpiece was obviously shrinking, tightening around that bestial head. Now bright rivulets of blood were streaming down its jelly-wobbling jowls. And now the Thing itself was shrinking, disappearing into the shabby clothes which were now a heap of rags.

The Archbishop of Canterbury stepped forward and jabbed the rags with his crozier. A large rat leapt up from them and bit the Archiepiscopal nose, causing even more profuse bleeding. Two Horse Guards seized the Archbishop's arms while a third raised his sword up high.

There was a scream... I think it was mine.

When I opened my eyes again the quick-thinking Guard was tossing the two halves of rat to the Abbey cat. As if a spell were broken all was peace and light again. The wincing King was dusted down and helped to His throne. The Archbishop, a towel wrapped around his lower face, still managed to administer the Oath. The Crown too, restored to normal size, sprayed with anti-bacterial gel, and wiped down with the fur from a Guardsman's helmet, played its part in the ceremony.

And so a King was Crowned.

I thought long and hard before reporting this hideous vision to the Palace. But decided it was my duty so to do. I have received no reply but...

Oh, I can hear someone at my door. I will send this in haste.

RA (Miss) Solihull

Hoaxes are also a common theme.

Early on the evening of Thursday 4th my neighbour Mrs EY told me that in the morning Waitrose would give away £1000 worth of Duchy Original products to those who shouted their allegiance to King Charles the loudest. She said that as we were both in the choir we were bound to win if we did it together. It was a dream come true. I couldn't sleep.

I got up at 4am, showered, and put on my lucky dress. Driving to Waitrose in the car we made up our own vocal arrangement that would best suit our voices. We were so happy...

Until we saw the crowds in the car park. They were pushing and shoving and their screaming drowned out the Manager with his megaphone. It was all a horrible hoax! While we stared in horror someone slashed a tyre and we had to change it ourselves. Without help.

I have not spoken to E since. But I daresay I may. Once her insurance pays up.

JW (Mrs) Blandford Forum

Similar hoaxes were perpetrated elsewhere.

Late Thursday my son rang me about the Free Beer: Anyone Pledging Allegiance to the King could claim free beer from any pub in a list posted at Oxford Town Hall. I rang my mates right away.

Good old PUBWAG! It only took 7 minutes for the Beer Hunter to confirm that all the pubs listed had shut in the last 2 years. We were furious and blamed the King's advisors.

However my son and his mate waited at the Town Hall anyway, thinking it was all a mistake. (Kids! I ask you.) But then he and mate Terry heard chortling and snorting from a parked Ferrari.

They knew that noise from their waiter jobs. The whole thing had to be a Bullingdon Club jape. So they decided to pull one of their own.

Come Saturday morning there's a market stall outside the King's Arms pub. It's laden with mounds of sacks under a giant Portrait of a beaming King Charles saying: "Free White Lady to all My Loyal subjects who Remove their Trousers and 'Sing Charlie is My Darling' three times."

Soon the air was thick with clouds of white powder and then a wailing, "Like castrated tom-cats," according to one witness. The loyal tribute quickly degenerated into vicious thuggery as the well-dressed Royalists fought each other for the precious powder.

Which turned out to be quick-setting cement, as later confirmed by local A&E departments. Ha!

Mr Z, Oxford

Like every lively lad born in the late '40s my dearest wish was to die gloriously in a cavalry charge led by Prince Charles. (As he then was.) Or if not die, at least carry His Highness's wounded body from the battlefield to safety and become a national hero that way.

Yet times change. Years wasted, foreign trips, fast cars, so many girl friends... His, I mean, not mine. So I gradually lost respect for the man and the institution.

But I was the first to stand when he walked into our local – OUR LOCAL! – last Tuesday night and said he wanted, "Ten strong men and true to join my Knights." He planned to ignore the shilly shally shabby politicians, take the fight to Brussels and free Britain once and for all. "You already have a Round Table here in the Dog and Duck. So where is your spirit, your courage, your heart and your strong right arm? Meet me in the car park here tomorrow at 10am and I will knight you. You may not have armour so wear your best clothes and we'll sort out the metal work and your Knightly title later. And don't forget, each knight bring a hundred pounds each in cash for expenses. Till tomorrow, my brave lads! Fail me and you fail the greatest country on earth!"

None of us slept that night. We were back at the DaD bang on time the next morning. Shaved, dressed, medicated (where appropriate) with our passports and £100. King Charles' Squire gave us our new names, collected the money, and lined us up to be knighted.

But you should have seen the King's face when the Squire confessed he had left the ceremonial sword back at the Palace. "You could improvise, your Majesty," said the idiot. "Dub my knights with a garden rake? Are you mad? No. Let us fetch the sword. You men wait here."

We are still waiting. We believe.

(And good to see His Majesty was green enough to drive a 1989 Metro.)

C R, Sheppey

And some plain ingenuity.

My Uncle Pierre is a Border control officer. He told us that the Home Secretary wanted to celebrate Coronation Day by sending back ALL the small boats of asylum seekers. "So everyone was on duty in a line of vessels stretching from Margate to Brighton. Sure enough at 11am a smaller line of dinghies approached from France. 'Do whatever it takes, Men,' shouted the Home Secretary bravely from her cabin cruiser. 'Oh, and you women too. I haven't forgotten you.'

"But the Refugees played a really dirty trick on us. When they were within grappling distance all of them - Children, Women and Men - began to sing, "God Save the King!" And they kept it up.

Singing all the way while our people stood to attention till they were safely on land. The Home Secretary screamed furiously but what could we do? We couldn't disrespect the King, could we?"

ALK, Pennycuik

