Zara’s wedding style

By Merle Brown

YOU may have forgotten but there’s another Royal Wedding taking place this year when Zara Phillips marries Mike Tindall in Edinburgh’s Canongate Kirk on July 30.

However, if you’re expecting more of the same pomp and ceremony that was the nuptials of William and Kate, or the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, to give them their latest titles, you’ll be sorely disappointed.

There’s unlikely to be anyone camping outside the Palace of Holyroodhouse before this wedding, and we’re not sure if Mike’s rugby-worn face should grace any souvenir tea-towels.

And although the guest list will be very regal indeed – Kate and Wills are attending, along with the Queen and most of the rest of them - Ms Phillips herself isn’t even an HRH.

Her mum, Princess Anne, saw to that. She made sure Royal titles weren’t bestowed on either of her children (Zara’s brother Peter has no Royal title or status either), which means despite Zara being 13th in line to the throne, she isn’t even a real Princess!

Never mind Kate Middleton being a commoner, after Zara Anne Elizabeth Phillips marries, she’ll be plain old Mrs Tindall. MBE are the only letters attached to her name.

Perhaps all of this has been why there hasn’t been that much ‘ooh-ing’ and ‘aah-ing’ over what this Royal bride will wear.

However, some might argue that Zara’s dress choice is a much more interesting topic than that of Kate’s, who was always going to go for something as elegant, traditional and well, Princess-like, as her Grace-Kelly inspired gown by Sarah Burton at Alexander McQueen.

And whilst Kate’s gown was truly beautiful, and she was a stunning, simple bride, don’t you think Zara owes us something with a bit more, well, oomph?

This is the girl who arrived at her Uncle (Prince) Charles’s 50th birthday in 1998 with a tongue stud, after all. The girl who had such a stormy relationship with her former fiancé and National Hunt jockey Richard Johnson, police were called. The girl who took a gap year, but didn’t follow it with University.

Zara is a beautiful, friendly young woman with a sense of fun that extends to her dress sense.

If Zara walks down the aisle in something simple and low-key, won’t we be a little disappointed?

Paul Costelloe (who she wore to her cousin Wills’ wedding) is hotly tipped to be designing the dress. It could be interesting – Costelloe has a reputation for being a bit different to the rest, much like Zara.

An accomplished equestrian, Olympic gold medal winner, an Equine Physiotherapist, BBC’s Sports Personality of the Year in 2006, and all round horsey kinda gal, Zara is probably most at home in her jodhpurs, a fleece, and a pair of riding boots or wellies. She’s even designed her own range of riding clothes for outdoor clothing company, Musto.

She showed the world her dirty fingernails with her engagement ring, and posed for the official photo with her new fiancé in flat cap and body warmer.

But, when she has to dress up, there’s definitely a bit of fashion know-how in that sporty head – albeit matched with plenty of faux pas.

She attended cousin Wills’ wedding in a black asymmetric Phillip Treacy hat that nearly challenged Princess Beatrice’s for the most elaborate of the day. Zara’s definitely edged it in the style stakes though, and it’s no wonder – she was named Celebrity Hat Wearer of the Year in 2008.

Most recently she’s shown her fashion credentials with a new shorter page-boy style bobbed haircut and on-trend fringe. She loves towering stiletto shoes, and her choice of the likes of Gwen Stefani’s L.A.M.B label, show she knows what’s hip. But sometimes, like many sporty women, she seems to get it so wrong. There have been a few Ascot disasters – the Gharani Strok in 2003, with a huge split to the thigh was not a high point - a few too short hemlines, too low necklines, and too-much-going-on-in-one-outfit looks.

Rumours abound that she’s employed a new stylist in recent years, and her dress sense does seem to have improved in the same timescale.

As late as April this year, it was claimed she still hadn’t chosen her wedding dress. What she has decided upon is a tea party at the palace for pensioners as well as having local schoolchildren involved in her big day.

And if she turns up in an off the peg gown, or something in keeping with her outgoing personality – a Vivienne Westwood design perhaps - whatever she wears will get plenty of press – as she plans to pose for photographers outside the Kirk.

For Zara it seems it’s definitely more about substance than style.