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Celebrate Our 50th Edition!




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CELEBRATING OUR
50th
• EDITION •

WELCOME TO OUR 50th •EDITION•

Cover Shot Story…

Sally-Ann and Ben had a festival-style wedding at Lough House Farm, Morpeth in August 2026. Following a church ceremony their guests arrived on a red double-decker bus to a musical extravaganza complete with bucket hats, cigar bar, cocktail station, tequila shots and personalised tote bags!

With multiple food trucks throughout the day serving burgers, pizzas, mini donuts and fish and chips, this was a festival wedding worthy of the name!

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Since the year 2000, our handbook has helped thousands of couples with inspired ideas, expert advice, real wedding features, bespoke services and professional suppliers.

Established by Liz Clark, I was involved from the very beginning, distributing the books at my Elite Wedding Events across the North East and sourcing brilliant wedding suppliers to help excited couples. Liz retired in 2020 and alongside my company Dawn Marie Wedding & Event Design, I am proud to now own this fabulous planning guide and I'm delighted that **this book marks our 50th edition!**

Our aim is to help you find the right venue and the very best wedding suppliers to create your perfect day…**true wedding inspiration!** Intimate, extravagant, elegant, rustic, loud, relaxed, traditional, bohemian, minimalist, romantic, glamorous, colourful or a generous mix of everything, your wedding celebrations should be exactly as you and your partner want.

It's 31 years since I planned my first private wedding and wedding fair and this Guide has been brought together using all of my knowledge and experience. See my Wedding Planning Tips on pages 20 and 21 for expert advice on how to get started and stay one step ahead in the madness and excitement of your wedding planning!

From deciding which type of marriage ceremony is right for you both, to finding your perfect venue, booking a photographer and florist, to knowing which flowers are safe to decorate your wedding cake, it is all here for you.

I hope you love this celebratory issue and find it invaluable; use it alongside our website **www.theweddingguideuk.com** for even more expert advice, inspiration and guidance.

Oh, and if you want to star in one of our Real Wedding features after your Big Day, get in touch!



Dawn Marie

Editor

The Wedding Guide UK

GUEST LIST

Who should you invite?

Is your guest list getting out of hand? Are parents trying to add their friends you don't even know, or workmates asking to bring a plus one? This is your wedding; the last thing you want is to look around and only recognise half of your guests!

Try this helpful tool to help keep that list trim.



Thanks to @weddingfayresyorkshire for the inspiration

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CIVIL MARRIAGE OR PARTNERSHIP IN A LICENSED VENUE

An Easy Guide

A civil ceremony is a beautiful, personal, non-religious way to legally marry. You may choose a grand country house, a cosy boutique hotel, or even outdoors - as long as it's within the grounds of a licensed venue. Two registrars will attend: one to conduct your ceremony, and the other to register your marriage. You'll need two adult witnesses (they must be aged 16 or over), and then you can simply soak up the magic of your surroundings and the happiness of the moment.

Here, the Northumberland Registration Service guide you through the steps of planning your civil ceremony, from securing your date to personalising your vows.



STEP 1: BOOKING YOUR REGISTRAR

As soon as you've found your dream venue the next essential step is to book a registrar to conduct your ceremony. This should be done at the same time as securing your venue to ensure a registrar is available not just on your chosen date, but also at your ideal time.

Lunchtime ceremonies work well for a traditional reception with a wedding breakfast, whilst a later ceremony can set the tone for a more relaxed and intimate celebration.

Your venue will give you the contact details of the local Registration Team so you can book the date and time of your civil ceremony. A booking fee or deposit is usually required at this stage, along with your contact details – don't forget to keep these up to date if you move or change your phone number or email address.

STEP 2: GIVING LEGAL NOTICE

From 12 months before your wedding date, you can legally 'Give Notice' of your marriage or civil partnership – this is a crucial legal step that must be completed for your ceremony to go ahead.

'Giving Notice' involves a face-to-face appointment at the Register Office in the district where each of you lives (which might be a different county to where your venue is).

At the appointment, you'll need to bring documents proving your identity, nationality and residence. The fee for giving notice is currently £46.50 per person in England.

We recommend giving notice around 6 months before the big day (but never leave it later than 29 days before)! If one or both of you live outside England and Wales, or you're not a British citizen, additional steps and documents may be needed – your registrar will be able to advise you.

STEP 3: PLANNING YOUR CEREMONY

Once you've given notice, the registrar team conducting your ceremony will receive confirmation, and you'll receive a Ceremony Pack to help you create your ideal ceremony script.

This is your moment to add personal touches. Civil ceremonies can't include religious content, but there's still plenty of room for creativity and to inject your personality. Here are a few ideas to personalise your ceremony:

Write your own vows. Express your love in your own words. Whether romantic, light-hearted or poetic, personal vows can be incredibly moving.



Choose meaningful readings. Ask a loved one to read a poem or passage that is meaningful to you both. You can choose from the many options online or ask a guest to write some special words just for the two of you.

Incorporate a unity ritual. From candle lighting to planting a tree together, symbolic gestures can create powerful memories.

Select your own music. For walking down the aisle, signing the register and for your exit as newlyweds, choose songs that reflect your style, personality and your relationship story.



Theme it your way. Whether you're going rustic, vintage, coastal or colourful, let your registrar know. Some will happily join in the spirit of the day!

Once you've chosen your readings, vows, and any extras, return your script to the registrar. One of the team will call to run through the ceremony with you and answer any questions. This is also when your final ceremony fee is due. Costs vary by district and date but typically range from £665 to £795.

STEP 4: ON THE DAY

Your registrars will arrive around 30 minutes before the ceremony to meet each of you separately, and privately, away from your guests. They'll check your details, calm any last-minute nerves, and make sure everything is ready. You will not need any legal documents with you on the day as everything has already been finalised.

Your photographer and videographer can discreetly capture the ceremony – except the signing of the Marriage Schedule, which remains private under data protection rules. Don't worry, your registrar will help stage a beautiful mock signing for those all-important photos!

DON'T FORGET TO:

Bring printed copies of your vows or readings – why not have them mounted as keepsakes?

Arrange your ceremony music in advance with your venue or musician.

Be on time – registrars may have other ceremonies to attend.

STEP 5: SIGNING THE MARRIAGE SCHEDULE

Since May 2021, the traditional handwritten register has been replaced with a more secure electronic system. You'll now sign a one-page Marriage Schedule, which allows up to four parents to be named on the record. This can include natural, adoptive and stepparents, living or deceased.

You sign the Schedule in the name you held before the marriage (i.e. your maiden name). Your two witnesses also sign (responsible adults, over 16 years of age). Your marriage certificate will be posted to you after your big day.

RELAX AND CELEBRATE

From that very first phone call to the final 'I do', your registrar team is there to ensure your ceremony runs smoothly. With the legalities taken care of, you're free to enjoy a happy, heartfelt ceremony that's tailored to you both – the start of your married life together!

With thanks to the
Northumberland Registration Team

www.mynorthumberlandwedding.co.uk



NOTES

WEDDING DATE:

VENUE & CONTACT DETAILS:

TIME OF CEREMONY:

REGISTRARS CONTACT DETAILS:

WITNESSES:

CEREMONY MUSIC:

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Cam Patrick Photography





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At Northumberland Registration Service, we pride ourselves on delivering a unique and personal service to every couple who chooses to marry in our stunning County. We will be with you every step of the way from taking your booking, explaining the legalities, planning and personalising your ceremony before legally marrying you at your perfect Northumberland venue. Have the memorable, bespoke ceremony you have always dreamt of.

Contact our friendly ceremony coordination team:

Telephone: **01665 602870** Email: **alnwickreg@northumberland.gov.uk**

@WeddingsInNland **@weddingsinnorthumberland**

www.mynorthumberlandwedding.co.uk

DIRECTORY OF MAIN REGISTER OFFICES

in the North East & Yorkshire

If you are having a civil marriage ceremony, (not a church or celebrant–led service), once you have chosen your venue, it's time to book a registrar. Your venue will be able to give you the telephone number of the Local Authority Registrar Team that covers the venue.

These registrars will guide you through the process of booking a registrar to conduct your ceremony and where you need to give legal notice of your intention to marry. You 'give notice' to the registrars in the district where you live - the district (council) you pay your council tax to.

These are the main Registrars Offices in our region. You can also use the government website **www.gov.uk/register-offices** to find the correct office, just enter a postcode.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Central contact:

Tel: 01609 780 780

Email: ceremonies@northyorks.gov.uk

Web: www.northyorks.gov.uk

Offices also in Harrogate, Northallerton, Scarborough, Skipton, Malton, Richmond, Selby, Whitby

YORK

York Register Office,
56 Bootham,
York, YO30 7DA

Tel: 01904 553 190

Email: ceremonies@york.gov.uk

Web: www.york.gov.uk

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE

Beverley Registration Office,
Walkergate House,
67 Walkergate,
Beverley, HU17 9BP

Tel: 01482 393 600

Email: registration.service@eastriding.gov.uk

Web: www.eastridingceremonies.co.uk

Offices also in Beverley, Bridlington, Cottingham, Goole, Pocklington

WEST YORKSHIRE

Leeds Register Office,
Merrion House,
Marrion Way,
Leeds, LS2 8BB

Tel: 0113 222 4408

Email: register.headoffice@leeds.gov.uk

Web: www.leeds.gov.uk

Offices also in Calderdale, Pontefract, Wakefield, Bradford, Huddersfeld

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Civic Office,
Waterdale,
Doncaster, DN1 3BU

Tel: 01302 735 222

Email: registrars@doncaster.gov.uk

Web: www.doncaster.gov.uk

Offices also in Mexborough, Rotherham, Sheffield

NORTHUMBERLAND

Alnwick Register Office,
27 Fenkle Street,
Alnwick,
Northumberland, NE66 1HW

Tel: 01665 602 870

Email: alnwickreg@northumberland.gov.uk

Web: www.mynorthumberlandwedding.co.uk

Offices also in Morpeth, Hexham

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Civic Centre,
Barras Bridge,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8PS

Tel: 0191 278 7878

Email: registrars@newcastle.gov.uk

Web: www.newcastle.gov.uk

NORTH TYNESIDE

Maritime Chambers,
1 Howard Street,
North Shields, NE30 1LZ

Tel: 0191 643 6164

Email: registrars@northtyneside.gov.uk

Web: www.northtyneside.gov.uk

SOUTH TYNESIDE

The Register Office,
10 Broughton Road,
South Shields, NE33 2RN

Tel: 0191 424 6350

Email: registrars@southtyneside.gov.uk

Web: www.southtyneside.gov.uk

GATESHEAD

Civic Centre,
Regent Street,
Gateshead, NE8 1HH

Tel: 0191 433 3000

Email: ceremonies@gateshead.gov.uk

Web: www.gateshead.gov.uk

SUNDERLAND

Civic Centre,
Sunderland, SR2 7DN

Tel: 0191 520 5553

Email: registrars@sunderland.gov.uk

Web: www.sunderland.gov.uk

DURHAM

The Register Office,
Aykely Heads House,
Aykley Heads,
County Durham, DH1 5TS

Tel: 03000 266 000

Email:
aykleyheadshouseregisteroffice@durham.gov.uk

Web: www.durham.gov.uk

Offices also in Bishop Auckland, Barnard Castle

REDCAR & CLEVELAND

Civic Centre,
Ridley Street,
Redcar, TS10 1TD

Tel: 01642 444 440

Email: registrars@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Web: www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

MIDDLESBROUGH

Town Hall,
Albert Road,
Middlesbrough, TS1 2PA

Tel: 01642 729 004

Email: register@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Web: www.middlesbrough.gov.uk

REAL WEDDING
Love always wins

Ashleigh and Jamie were married in June 2026 at Lough House Farm, Northumberland.



Keen to have their wedding without restrictions was of upmost importance, from the decorations to food to entertainment. The couple explain:

"Our wedding was everything we had hoped for and more. From the moment we booked the venue, we knew it was somewhere special, but what really made it stand out was the four day hire and the complete creative freedom we were given to make the day our own.

Rather than choosing a traditional wedding breakfast, we brought in our own street food suppliers, which was a huge hit with our guests. We organised our own bar, complete with a cocktail station that kept everyone refreshed throughout.



Alongside this, we had a nacho station, which quickly became one of the most talked-about features of the reception and added to the fun, relaxed atmosphere that perfectly reflected us as a couple.

The flexibility of the venue meant we could hand-pick all of our entertainment. Throughout the day our guests enjoyed an amazing string quartet, a lively saxophonist, an incredible singer and, later on, a fantastic DJ. We also got to decorate the whole venue exactly how we wanted making it bright and colourful – just like us!



Being able to personalise every element of our day made it feel truly unique.

One of the highlights for both us and our guests was the amazing outdoor space. It gave everyone plenty of room to mingle, take photos,



play games and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. It created such a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere, and so many of our guests commented how much they loved it.

The venue itself is simply superb. It combines stunning surroundings with endless flexibility, and was everything we ever wanted. Looking back on our day, we honestly couldn't have chosen a better place to celebrate the start of our married life. Lough House Farm exceeded every expectation and gave us memories that we will treasure forever."

Photographer: stephenbeecroftphotography.com



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Lough House Farm Weddings

MARRIAGE READINGS

Your marriage ceremony should be unique to you both: personal, meaningful and emotional. Writing your own vows and including music that instantly conjures up happy memories for you both, are perfect ways to help create a completely unique marriage ceremony.

To go that extra step, inviting a guest, or guests, to read during your ceremony can bring a whole new wave of emotion. Readings can evoke tears (of happiness!), waves of remembrance for absent friends, knowing nods and winks amongst guests as well as roars of laughter! Selecting the right emotion-inducing words for a family member to read or a light-hearted look at marriage for your best friend to recite, adds a really personal touch.

For a civil ceremony, readings can be romantic, funny, chosen from the vast array online, words extracted from your favourite films, songs, books or written just for you by a trusted guest. The only legal requirement is that they must not have any religious content eg. extracts from the bible or words used to celebrate religious beliefs cannot be used. Non-religious readings that include words such as 'angel' and 'heaven' may be used but if you are in any doubt, consult with your Registrar.

Here are some of our favourite readings taken from films and TV shows that you could easily adapt to suit your own love story:

THE NOTEBOOK

"Poets often describe love as an emotion that we can't control, one that overwhelms logic and common sense. That's what it was like for me. I didn't plan on falling in love with you, and I doubt if you planned on falling in love with me. But once we met, it was clear that neither of us could control what was happening to us. We fell in love, despite our differences, and once we did, something rare and beautiful was created. For me, love like that has happened only once, and that's why every minute we spent together has been seared in my memory."

Noah Calhoun

BEVERLEY HILLS 90210

"I look at you, and I see my best friend. Your energy and passion inspire me in ways I never thought possible. Your inner beauty is so strong that I no longer fear being myself. I no longer fear at all. I never thought that I could find someone to love who would love me back unconditionally. And then I realized that although we are often apart, you are always with me, that you are my soulmate. You give me purpose when I feel I have none. Without you, my soul would be empty, my heart broken, and my being incomplete. I thank God every day that you were brought into my life, and I thank you for loving me."

Donna Martin

WHEN HARRY MET SALLY

"I love that you get cold when it's 71 degrees out. I love that it takes you an hour and a half to order a sandwich. I love that you get a little crinkle above your nose when you're looking at me like I'm nuts. I love that after I spend the day with you, I can still smell your perfume on my clothes. And I love that you are the last person I want to talk to before I go to sleep at night. And it's not because I'm lonely, and it's not because it's New Year's Eve. I came here tonight because when you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible."

Harry Burns

MEET JOE BLACK

"Love is passion, obsession, someone you can't live without. I say, fall head over heels. Find someone you can love like crazy and who will love you the same way back. How do you find him? Well, you forget your head, and you listen to your heart. Cause the truth is, there's no sense living your life without this. To make the journey and not fall deeply in love, well, you haven't lived a life at all. But you have to try, cause if you haven't tried, you haven't lived."

William Parrish

SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE

"It was a million tiny little things that, when you added them all up, they meant we were supposed to be together…and I knew it. I knew it the very first time I touched her. It was like coming home…only to no home I'd ever known. I was just taking her hand to help her out of a car, and I knew. It was like…magic."

Sam Baldwin

FRIENDS

"For so long, I wondered if I would ever find my prince, my soulmate. Then three years ago, at another wedding, I turned to a friend for comfort. And instead, I found everything that I'd ever been looking for my whole life. And now, here we are, with our future before us, and I only want to spend it with you my prince, my soulmate, my friend."

Monica Geller

TWILIGHT

"It's an extraordinary thing to meet someone who you can bare your soul to, and who will accept you for what you are. I've been waiting, what seems like a very long time, to get beyond what I am. And now…I feel like I can finally begin…No measure of time with you will be long enough. But let's start with forever."

Edward Cullen

SEX AND THE CITY

"His hello was the end of her endings,
Her laugh was their first step down the aisle.
His hand would be hers to hold forever,
His forever was as simple as her smile.
He said she was what was missing,
She said instantly she knew.
She was a question to be answered,
And his answer was 'I do'."

Carrie Bradshaw

STAR TREK VOYAGER

"Commander, I don't think you can analyse love.
It's the greatest mystery of all.
No one knows why it happens or doesn't.
Love is a chance combination of elements.
Any one thing might be enough to keep it from igniting - a mood, a glance…a remark.
And if we could define love…predict it…it would probably lose its power."

Neelix

THE WEDDING SINGER

"I want to make you smile whenever you're sad
Carry you around when your arthritis is bad
All I want to do is grow old with you
I'll get your medicine when your tummy aches
Build you a fire if the furnace breaks
Oh it could be so nice, growing old with you
I'll miss you
Kiss you
Give you my coat when you are cold
Need you
Feed you
Even let you hold the remote control
So let me do the dishes in our kitchen sink
Put you to bed if you've had too much to drink
I could be the man who grows old with you
I want to grow old with you."

Robbie Hart

P.S. I LOVE YOU

"Finding someone you love and who loves you back is a wonderful, wonderful feeling. But finding a true soulmate is an even better feeling. A soulmate is someone who understands you like no other, loves you like no other, will be there for you forever, no matter what. They say that nothing lasts forever, but I am a firm believer in the fact that for some, love lives on even after we're gone."

Patricia Reilly

THE VOW

"I vow to help you love life, to always hold you with tenderness and to have the patience that love demands. To speak when words are needed and to share the silence when they are not. To agree to disagree on red velvet cake, and to live within the warmth of your heart and always call it home."

Paige Collins

"I vow to fiercely love you in all your forms, now and forever. I promise to never forget that this is a once in a lifetime love. And to always know in the deepest part of my soul that no matter what challenges might carry us apart, we will always find our way back to each other."

Leo Collins

MARRIAGE READINGS

For more traditional, romantic readings, try these:

THE ONE

by Cheryl Barclay

When the one whose hand you're holding,
Is the one who holds your heart.

When the one whose eyes you gaze into,
Gives your hopes and dreams their start.

When the one you think of first and last,
Is the one who holds you tight.

And the things you plan together,
Makes the whole world seem just right

When the one whom you believe in,
Puts their faith and trust in you,
You've found the one and only love,
You'll share the whole life through.

MAYBE

author unknown

Maybe we are supposed to meet the wrong people before we meet the right one so when they finally arrive we are truly grateful for the gift we have been given.

Maybe it's true that we don't know what we have lost until we lose it but it is also true that we don't know what we're missing until it arrives.

Maybe the happiest of people don't have the best of everything, but make the best of everything that comes their way.

Maybe the best kind of love is the kind where you sit on the sofa together, not saying a word, and walk away feeling like it was the best conversation you ever had.

Maybe once in a lifetime, you find someone who not only touches your heart but also your soul, someone who loves you for who you are and not what you could be.

Maybe the art of true love is not about finding the perfect person, but about seeing an imperfect person perfectly.

WHAT IS LOVE

author unknown

Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favourite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all - one known only by those who love. And in return, love loves you and never stops.

I PROMISE

by Dorothy R. Colgan

I promise to give you the best of myself and to ask of you no more than you can give.

I promise to respect you as your own person and to realise that your interests, desires and needs are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you, to let you see through the window of my world into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you, to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, with all I have to give and all I feel inside in the only way I know how.

Completely and forever.

MARRIAGE READINGS

For something a little more light-hearted, try these:

HE NEVER LEAVES THE SEAT UP

by Pam Ayres

He never leaves the seat up
Or wet towels upon the floor
The toothpaste has the lid on
And he always shuts the door!

She's very clean and tidy
Though she may sometimes delude
Leave your things out at your peril
In a second they'll have moved!

He's a very active person
As are all his next of kin
Where as she likes lazy days
He'll still drag her to the gym!

He romances her and dines her
Home cooked dinners and the like
He even knows her favourite food
And spoils her day and night!

She's thoughtful when he looks at her
A smile upon his face
Will he look that good in 50 years
When his dentures aren't in place?!

He says he loves her figure
And her mental prowess too
But when gravity takes her over
Will she charm with her IQ?

She says she loves his kindness
And his patience is a must
And of course she thinks he's handsome
Which in her eyes is a plus!

They're both not wholly perfect
But who are we to judge
He can be pig headed
Where as she won't even budge!

All that said and done
They love the time they spent together
And I hope as I'm sure you do
That this fine day will last forever.

He'll be more than just her husband
He'll also be her friend
And she'll be more than just his wife
She's be his soul mate 'till the end.

I'LL BE THERE FOR YOU

by Louise Cuddon

I'll be there my darling, through thick and through thin. When your mind's in a mess and your head's in a spin. When your plane's been delayed, and you've missed the last train. When life is just threatening to drive you insane.

When your thrilling whodunit has lost its last page When somebody tells you, you're looking your age. When your coffee's too cool, and your wine is too warm. When the forecast said "Fine", but you're out in a storm.

When your quick break hotel, turns into a slum And your holiday photos show only your thumb When you park for five minutes in a resident's bay And return to discover you've been towed away.

When the jeans that you bought in hope or in haste. Just stick on your hips and don't reach round your waist. When the food you most like brings you out in red rashes. When as soon as you boot up the bloody thing crashes.

So my darling, my sweetheart, my dear... When you break a rule, when you act the fool. When you've got the flu, when you're in a stew. When you're last in the queue, don't feel blue 'cause I'm telling you, I'll be there.

RULES FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE

author unknown

If you sleep in it – make it.

If you drop it – pick it up.

If you open it – close it.

If you empty it – fill it up.

If you eat out of it – put it in the sink.

If it rings – answer it.

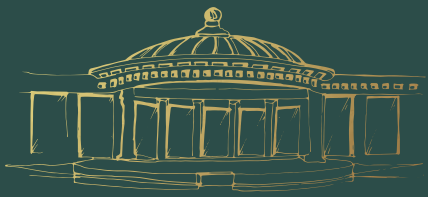
If it cries – love it.

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AT SCARBOROUGH SPA

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Contact our wedding coordinator on **weddings@scarboroughspa.co.uk**





SCARBOROUGH SPA
The Promenade Lounge

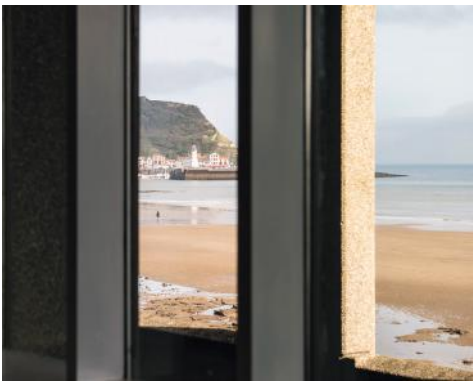
Naomi from Scarborough Spa introduces their newly refurbished Promenade Lounge.



"The chapel-esque room has been completely transformed into a calm, bright and inviting space, with its tall arched windows perfectly framing the views of South Bay beach and the North Sea.

The brown 1970s cladding has been tastefully replaced with neutral colours, decorative coving and refurbished wooden flooring, creating a bright, attractive lounge. The neutral base allows couples the creative freedom to decorate the space exactly as they wish.

The newly re-imagined room is thoughtfully designed to create a space that is in keeping with the Spa and its Victorian features, whilst incorporating a fresh, modern touch.



We couldn't be happier with the result and cannot wait to start planning your celebration with you."



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WELCOME TO WEDDING PLANNING HEAVEN

MARRIAGE RITUALS

In addition to including meaningful readings in your marriage ceremony, you can also incorporate traditional marriage rituals. Often symbolising deep cultural and spiritual customs, popular rituals like the Unity Candle Ceremony and Hand-fasting, embody unity, commitment and new beginnings.

UNITY CANDLE CEREMONY

This represents the merging of two individuals into one life. A couple each light a separate candle and then together, light a larger 'unity' candle. Representing the union between the couple and their families, words can be added or names of children included to make the ceremony really personal.

HANDFASTING

This is where the couple's hands are tied together, and where the phrase 'tying the knot' is believed to originate.

An ancient Celtic tradition, a couple stand face-to-face while their hands are tied together with ribbon, cord, cloth or even some leftover material from the wedding gown or outfit.

As their hands are bound, the couple may exchange vows or enjoy a special piece of music to signify they are now bound together.



SAND CEREMONY

This can involve the couple as well as children. Each person pours sand from their own container into one larger bottle or box, symbolising the combining of lives, hopes, dreams and ambitions into one as the sand grains can't be separated.

The sand can be different colours or, and this can make it even more personal, gathered from your favourite beaches.



A QUAICH CUP

Pronounced 'Kwek', a Quaich cup is a two-handled cup which historically demonstrates trust on the part of both giver and receiver as, if drinking from the same cup, you couldn't be poisoned! Also known as a 'love cup', it is symbolic of love, peace, sharing and trust between a couple.

You can choose to drink anything from the Quaich, perhaps the cocktail you drank on your first date, your favourite champagne, something non-alcoholic or the more traditional tipple of whisky. You can also include the Quaich in other parts of your day such as during your speeches or before your first dance. You can take a handle each and drink your first Toast together or get the dancing off to a rowdy start!

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WEDDING CELEBRANTS

Melody Diamond

Melody, an award-winning independent celebrant, has been working in the wedding industry for over a decade. She specialises in writing and conducting wedding ceremonies, providing a friendly and attentive service with bags of Yorkshire charm!

"I love getting to know my couples! Spending quality time with them, understanding their love stories and what marriage means to them helps me create a bespoke and personal wedding script that is meaningful, memorable and totally reflective of their personalities.

On their wedding day, couples know there will be a friendly, familiar face who they know and trust, guiding them through their unique ceremony. There are no rules or restrictions on time, place or content, meaning you have the opportunity to be creative – which is great. Want to incorporate your values and beliefs, sing a song, play a game, take a shot of your favourite tipple - let's do it! You can even have your dog's paw print as your witness!

Forget stuffy, formal, templated ceremonies and make sure your ceremony is the best ceremony anyone has ever been to; full of love, laughter and memorable moments!"



Gemma Jay

Do you dream of being married on your favourite beach, a picturesque hilltop or even in the garden of your family home? For many couples, choosing a celebrant-led ceremony over a legal marriage ceremony is personal preference, however, sometimes it is necessary to get exactly what you and your partner want. If you would love to be married in a place that is full of meaning to you both, a celebrant-led ceremony could be your answer. Gemma Jay, the North East Celebrant, explains.



"As these places are not legally authorised to conduct marriages, a celebrant offers a professional, fully customisable alternative to traditional wedding venues. Reflecting the couple's unique style and vision, a celebrant-led ceremony gives the freedom to exchange vows wherever and at whatever time of day - or night! - suits them.

There are a few things to keep in mind though. It's important to note that celebrant-led ceremonies in England and Wales are not legally binding so you will need to complete the legal formalities separately. Depending on your chosen location, you may also need the landowner's permission and permits. Additionally, non-traditional locations often come with logistical challenges, such as parking, toilet facilities, sound systems, and electricity. Having a wedding planner or coordinator to help manage these details is invaluable."

A WEDDING PLANNER SINCE 1995

Expert advice

Working in the Wedding Industry since 1995, Dawn Marie, of Dawn Marie Wedding & Event Design, is the longest established, independent wedding planner in our region with over 31 years of experience. Dawn has successfully helped over 600 couples find their perfect venue and suppliers, as well as planning and coordinating all elements of their day from making sure the aisle walk is perfect to announcing the happy couple in to dine!

Having worked with the best suppliers, venues and registrars in the North East for so long, Dawn Marie knows the industry inside out and her reputation for the highest standards in professionalism, attention to detail and patience along with her sense of humour make her the perfect planner. Here is some of Dawn's expert advice to help couples navigate through the wedding planning process...



"The first decision you have is about what kind of marriage ceremony suits you both. You can choose a church service, a civil marriage ceremony or a celebrant-led service. A church service is a legally binding, religious service and follows certain rules such as giving official notice, having an authorised officiant, and holding the service between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

A civil marriage is also legally binding but is secular (no religious elements: music, words or references). There are still regulations which need to be followed but they are more relaxed than in a church, see the 'Easy Guide for Civil Marriages' on pages 8 and 9 for full details. There is also more scope to personalise your day by writing your own vows, including personal readings, and non-religious music and rituals.

A celebrant-led service is not legally binding so you will need a separate, legal ceremony to make the marriage official (which can be held in your local registry office before hand). As this is not a recognised legal ceremony, there are no rules to follow: religious or non-religious, midday or midnight, inside or outside, the choice is yours. Couples usually engage a professional celebrant to write and conduct the ceremony, but you could opt for a confident family member or friend to perform the task.



Whichever service is right for you both will help with the next, very important decision: your wedding venue. If you choose to marry in your local or family Church, look for a venue within a reasonable travelling distance. No one wants to spend hours travelling on their wedding day. If a Civil Ceremony is for you, the venue will need to be licensed, however, if a Celebrant-led ceremony is right for you both, you can look at any venue, marquee site or even hosting your day at home.

Next, think about what other factors are important: on-site accommodation, exclusive-use (only your wedding guests onsite), exclusive wedding use (one-wedding policy but where other guests may be using the venue such as a hotel, or golf club house) and travel time for the majority of your guests. These factors will all help you narrow down the suitable venues to view.

Once your venue is booked, start to look around for the best suppliers. The best florists, cake makers, photographers, entertainers etc. get booked up years in advance but all will take bookings on basic information e.g. table centres for approximately 8 round tables and 6 bridesmaids' bouquets or a cake to serve

around 80 day-guests. They don't need finer details – flower type, colours, cake flavours – until nearer the event. Couples don't realise you can reserve suppliers time without knowing the full details of your day and I have seen many couples disappointed because of this.



I offer a 2-hour 'power consultation' with couples to discuss all aspects of your wedding: venue, suppliers, the running order / flow of events, and to help build a realistic timing schedule so nothing is rushed and there are no 'gaps'. It is a really popular service and can help couples massively in planning their perfect day.

Visit lots of good quality wedding fairs. Suppliers and venues often have special offers available if you book at, or just after, a wedding fair. At my Elite Wedding Events, I like to showcase smaller, local companies that are often more quirky and can offer a really personal touch. Before booking, ALWAYS confirm special deals, discounts and full descriptions of what you have agreed, with prices, in writing. This is invaluable, especially if your wedding is 2 or 3 years away.

Take help when offered. As long as you trust them, people contributing to your day in lieu of a present can create very personal touches and save you a fortune. Many couples already have an established home together before they get married, and guests can find it difficult to choose a wedding gift; not everyone is comfortable giving cash. Asking guests to help with your day not only helps you but can also save a lot of 'what do I get them' gift stress for your guests. So, the aunty who wants to make your cake, the friend who loves making stationery, the neighbour who has a beautiful car...accept the help.

If you can, view your venue at the time you are getting married – height of summer, mid-autumn, depths of winter. This will help with all sorts of things such as how the gardens look, which areas need more decoration, where outside drinks receptions could be, good places for photographs...even if your venue could be snowbound!

Finally, CHECK AND DOUBLE CHECK. This is where a good planner will be invaluable. My 'Final Check' service includes contacting all suppliers to ensure they have the right timings, names, delivery addresses, quantities, sizes, special request information, etc, etc. ALWAYS get an emergency mobile phone number for suppliers in case of any difficulties.

Once done, sit back, relax and trust that you have done everything possible to make your day fantastic!"

WHAT COUPLES SAY

Dawn Marie is literally everything and more. From the moment we met her, she was just so phenomenal and thought of so many things we had never even considered.

On the actual wedding day she was everywhere and nowhere at the same time, and made sure our day was even better than I could have ever imagined. I wish she could move in with me and sort my life out, although knowing Dawn Marie, she'd have it whipped into shape in 30 mins! By the end of our weekend she was more popular with my bridesmaids and friends than me, and my husband thinks she is by far the best money we spent throughout the entire process.



Kate and Nick, August 2025

Thanks to dannybirrellphotography.co.uk

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REAL WEDDING

A love of horses

Kirsty and Matthew were married in June 2026. Their reception was held at York Racecourse.



Kirsty tells us about their day…

"I love horses and, as a couple, we love horse racing. We have been to York Races many times and I chose the venue after visiting with my maid of honour. Due to work commitments, Matt didn't actually see the Parade Ring Restaurant until the day before the wedding! Thankfully he trusted me and when we arrived, he loved it all.



It has always been my dream to have a horse and carriage for my wedding and what better way to arrive at the racecourse! When the event staff said they had gained special permission for us to enter via the VIP iron gates and trot down the concourse to the Champagne Bar for our drinks reception, it couldn't have been more perfect. One of my favourite photos from the entire day is not of me and my new husband, but me and the beautiful grey horses outside the Champagne Bar!



The grounds are immaculate and the hanging baskets and flowers were all in bloom. With everywhere looking so stunning, we had so many choices for our photographs. The Parade Ring Restaurant is upstairs and has floor-to-ceiling windows so the views across the racecourse, the pristine wooden stables and the Parade Ring are just breathtaking.



As the racecourse is already beautifully landscaped and colourful, we decided to keep the floral displays fairly simple. @floraldesignbyk made our bouquets and buttonholes and the amazing floral horse which stood at the entrance to our reception room.



The horse inspiration was incorporated into our day in many ways. Horseshoes featured in our seating plan design and table numbers, and we had special racing-themed scratch cards at each place setting. The winners got a free drink at the bar, so they went down very well!

We also had tiny, mirrored horseshoes made with 'Mr & Mrs Jones' and our wedding date on. The children were tasked with sneaking them into people's pockets and bags without being spotted which was hilarious to watch and kept the children occupied for hours. I highly recommend it if you have children at your wedding. To continue the fun into the evening, we had a horse-racing board game especially made for the adults to play.

The scratch cards, mirrored horseshoes and board game were great entertainment additions as was the live artist illustrator @lavinart. She drew a lovely picture of each of our guests to take home which was far better than a table favour they may never use.



We also had 'Advice and Wishes' hearts on each table. I had seen these at another wedding and loved the idea that guests of all ages, some of whom have been married a long time, could share their wisdom with us. There were some lovely, happy ones, some with very wise words and quite a few naughty ones too!



Emily was our wedding coordinator on the day, and she and the rest of the team looked after us so well. Emily just appeared like a fairy god mother every time I needed her: to help me sit in my dress, to make sure our drinks were forever full and that we were always in the right place at the right time.

We had a few hiccups on the day. Sadly, my maid of honour was ill with food poisoning and only made it to the church, so we don't have a single photo together. The church forgot to ring the bells and, when leaving the church, our wedding car didn't start - the joys of a vintage car! All of our guests had already left which was a bit worrying, but thankfully it did eventually get going! The car was a Daimler that had once belonged to the Queen. I was also so busy enjoying the day that I forgot to throw my bouquet! Despite all of this, apart from my maid of honour being poorly, we wouldn't change a thing. The day was absolutely everything we had hoped for.

Charlotte Atkinson Photography captured our day perfectly. The photos became so much more special as my father passed away suddenly only three weeks after the wedding. The pictures of him are invaluable."



Venue: www.yorkrace.co.uk

Photographer:
charlotteatkinsonphotography.co.uk

CHARLOTTE ATKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY

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MICRO WEDDINGS

BY CHARLOTTE ATKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY

Charlotte Atkinson is a wedding photographer based in York. Here is her take on the increasing trend of smaller, more intimate celebrations.

"If you're planning your wedding and wondering whether a smaller celebration is right for you, you're not alone. Micro weddings have become increasingly popular, offering couples a relaxed and meaningful way to celebrate with the people who matter most.

A micro wedding typically includes between 8 and 20 guests. With a smaller guest list, you can spend quality time with your loved ones, enjoy genuine conversations and be fully present throughout the day, rather than worrying about entertaining a large crowd.



One of the biggest benefits is how simple everything feels. There are fewer logistics to manage, less rushing around and more time to enjoy the experience. In many cases, you can simply arrive, meet your guests and walk together to your ceremony. If your reception is nearby, you can stroll there afterwards too, creating a relaxed flow to the day without any fuss or pressure.



A smaller wedding helps your budget go further too. Instead of paying for a large guest list, you can focus on the people and elements of the celebration that matter most to you, whether that's beautiful photography, amazing food, a unique venue, stunning flowers or an unforgettable honeymoon.

Micro weddings also give you the freedom to create a day that reflects your personalities. With less planning stress and fewer expectations, you can celebrate in a way that feels authentic to you as a couple.



From a photography perspective, intimate weddings allow more time for relaxed, natural portraits. Without a packed schedule, we can explore York's beautiful streets and make the most of its historic landmarks and hidden gems, creating timeless photographs without feeling rushed.

If you're considering a micro wedding, don't underestimate just how special a smaller celebration can be. Your wedding day isn't measured by the size of your guest list, but by the memories you create and the people you share them with. I'm passionate about telling your story by capturing those authentic moments, creating beautiful images that become lasting memories to keep forever."

CHARLOTTE ATKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY

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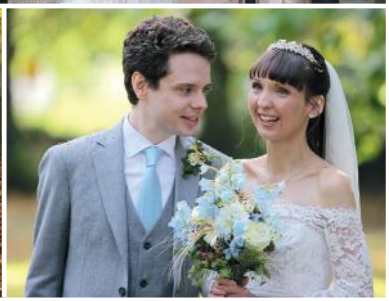
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CHANGING YOUR NAME
after marriage

Whether you are taking your partner's name, opting for a double-barrelled surname, using your maiden name as a new middle name, or merging surnames together to create a brand new one, there are many personal and legal documents to update after your ceremony.

If you do decide to change your name, here is a checklist of organisations to inform:

- *The passport office*
- *The DVLA (driving licence and vehicle registration)*
- *HM Revenue and Customs*
- *Department for Work and Pensions*
- *Local Authority (Council tax and electoral register)*
- *Land Registry*
- *Student Loans*
- *Your employer*
- *Your bank / building society / investment accounts*
- *Your mortgage / pension providers*
- *Credit card companies*
- *Your phone & broadband provider*
- *Your doctor / dentist*
- *Your vet*
- *Your gym*
- *Your motoring organisations (breakdown cover)*
- *Utility companies (gas, water, electricity providers)*
- *Your insurance company (motor, home, travel, health, life, pet)*
- *Loan companies*
- *Magazine subscriptions*
- *Store cards & online accounts*
- *Any clubs or societies you belong to*

If you are going on honeymoon after your wedding, the document that causes the most concern is your passport. The most important thing to remember is that the name on your tickets must match the name on your passport.

You can change the name on your passport up to 3 months before your marriage. The new passport will be post-dated so it is valid to use from the date of your ceremony – although some countries won't issue a visa for a post-dated passport so do your research before booking anything.

NOTE: a marriage certificate legally entitles you to adopt your spouse's name or to double-barrel your last name. If you want to change / add to your middle name, or mesh your two surnames into a completely new one, you may need a deed poll. If unsure, take legal advice.

Of course, there is no legal obligation to change your name. If you both decide to keep your own surnames, none of your personal records or legal documents need to be changed. It is entirely your choice.

Disclaimer – this list is not finite

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We cannot recommend Dawn Marie enough! She was incredibly organised, communicative, thoughtful and created such a calm, stress-free experience. Thanks to Dawn, we had the absolute best day of our lives.
Jamie and Jonathan

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From the moment we met Dawn Marie she was just so phenomenal and thought of so many things we had never even considered. She is by far the best money we spent throughout the entire process.
Kate and Nick



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We hired Dawn Marie to coordinate wedding at Tapyard. As the venue owners, we can tell you firsthand just how incredible she is at what she does. Always smiling, completely on it, and a total dream to work with.
Gabby and Sam

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WEDDING FILMS
Mean so much over time

Couples are often told that their wedding day will pass by quickly, but it's hard to truly understand just how true this is until the day arrives. Months, sometimes years, of planning can whizz by in a blur. One moment, you're putting on your beautiful wedding outfit; the next, you're standing on the dance floor wondering where the day went.

That's one of the reasons wedding videography has become so important to many couples. It's not just about capturing the big moments like the vows, confetti toss, or your first dance. It's about preserving the small moments that often go unnoticed: the groom's nervous laugh before his bride walks down the aisle; a parent quietly fixing a buttonhole or veil during the morning preparations; guests chatting and laughing during the drinks reception; grandparents sitting together, watching everything unfold; the smiles on your friends' faces as you share your first kiss as a married couple. These are the moments you might miss while caught up in the whirlwind of your wedding day.



When couples watch their wedding film, they often say the same thing: they missed these interactions on the day and are so pleased they have been captured forever. Weddings move so quickly, and as the couple at the centre of it all, you can't be everywhere at once. A wedding film allows you to experience these otherwise missed moments and to feel the emotions in a way that photos alone cannot always convey.



Sound also plays a huge part in memories. Hearing your vows again, the laughter during speeches, or the voices of loved ones chatting brings everything back in a uniquely vivid way. Over time, these moments often become even more meaningful.

A wedding video isn't about perfection or creating something that feels staged. The most special films are those that feel honest and natural - a true reflection of the people, emotions and atmosphere that made your day unique.

Long after the outfits have been packed away and the day itself becomes a little blurry, these genuine moments remain captured to be enjoyed over and over again. Often, they are the memories that couples treasure the most.

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REAL WEDDING

Carrieanne and Teri were married in May 2026 at York Registry Office.



Originally planning a large 2027 wedding, life had other ideas. The couple explain:

"Sometimes the most beautiful weddings aren't the ones you've spent years planning, they're the ones that happen exactly when they're meant to. As we prepared to begin our IVF journey, we believed it was important to be married before starting treatment, knowing it would allow us both to be named on the birth certificate. We jokingly called it our "shotgun wedding" as we are of course two women planning a pregnancy. With just under 8 weeks to plan everything, our countdown began.

The ceremony was going to be just the two of us plus witnesses, but this quickly became 50 of our nearest and dearest. York Registry Office was the perfect choice. We didn't want to miss out on some tradition, so the plan was for both of us to walk down the aisle separately, accompanied by our chosen loved one. This was the first time this had happened at York Registry Office: two brides with two entrance songs. TOP TIP: ensure you ask the question if you want something different!

The intimate setting allowed us to focus on what truly mattered - becoming wives. Looking back, we wouldn't change a thing. It was the perfect beginning to our marriage and start of our journey together.

Our evening reception at Melodies was everything we had hoped for: relaxed, full of laughter and surrounded by the people who have supported us. With such a short planning window, there wasn't time to second-guess ourselves. There were no endless colour changes, no debating a second dress and no changing our minds every few weeks. In a way, having less time made the whole process easier. We made decisions together, trusted our instincts and simply enjoyed creating a day that reflected us.

One of our favourite parts of planning was making our own wedding decorations: centrepieces, backdrop, buttonholes and our matching bouquets. This became a creative project we enjoyed together and added personal, meaningful touches. We chose to invest less in fresh flowers, knowing they would only last for the day. Instead, we were saving for our IVF treatment and honeymoon. Every decision felt right for us and reflected the life we are building together.

If we could offer one piece of advice to other couples, it would be to make every decision together. Your wedding should reflect who you are as a couple, not what anyone else expects. Make a plan, trust each other and remember that the marriage is far more important than the wedding itself.



Andy Dufton Photography beautifully captured every smile, happy tear and quiet moment between us. Thanks to his photographs, we have beautiful glimpses of one of the most important chapters of our love story -our marriage - and memories we'll treasure forever."

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The newly renovated gardens provide an elegant outdoor oasis, serving as a natural suntrap that captures the best of the daylight, enticing guests outside from midday until dusk. With festoon lighting and patio heaters, there is no need to retreat indoors when the sun goes down - whether soaking up the afternoon sun or enjoying a cosy evening drink, the reimagined gardens offer a seamless blend of natural beauty and modern comfort.



The Barn's ceremony space, featuring overhead chandeliers and atmospheric lighting, boasts a private dressing area for the wedding party, allowing a calm and unrushed start to your day.

For a different aesthetic, the Garden Room is flooded with natural light through apex windows and opens onto a private terrace.



As the ceremony draws to a close, guests can spill out onto the terrace, where canapés are circulated and refreshments served from the outdoor bar, leading perfectly into golden hour. The terrace runs the full width of the house, providing guests with plenty of space to gather, surrounded by the gardens.



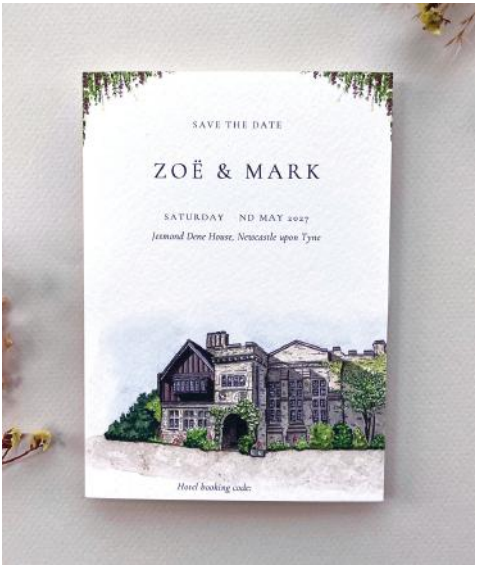
A gazebo is neatly tucked within the greenery with an outdoor seating area - a lovely spot for photographs, or a quieter place to sit with a drink.

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From designs featuring your venue, to details and motifs that reflect your personality and story, Wilde & Scribe will ensure your wedding stationery is treasured for a lifetime.

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TOP TABLE ETIQUETTE

Traditionally, a straight top table would be (from left to right looking at the table): Chief Bridesmaid, Groom's Father, Bride's Mother, Groom, Bride, Bride's Father, Groom's Mother, Best Man. However, this arrangement does not work for all couples. Blended families, same-sex couples, older couples, and divorce can all mean a variation to the traditional Top Table.



If parents are divorced or have new partners, consider seating them at tables near the top, but with friends or family they feel comfortable with. An alternative top table could include the couple, their siblings, the best man and partner and the bridesmaids and partners.

Round top tables are more popular than ever and give a less formal feel. They're also more conducive to easier conversation than a straight table.

A Sweetheart Table seats only the newly-weds and allows for some quiet moments between the two of you in what will be a whirlwind of a day.

Mixing the two families or groups of friends may be traditional, but if they have never met before, it can lead to awkward silences. Your wedding breakfast should be filled with chatter and laughter, so seat people where they will be most comfortable and where conversation will naturally flow.

HOTEL DU VIN NEWCASTLE

Nestled on the banks of the River Tyne, Hotel du Vin Newcastle offers a truly distinctive setting for your wedding day. Once the headquarters of the Tyne Tees Steam Shipping Company, this beautifully restored Edwardian landmark is steeped in history and character.



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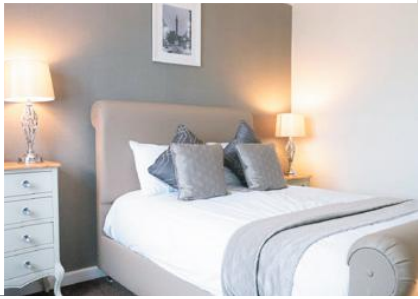
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REAL WEDDING
Bright, traditional, happy

Madia and Saif were married in April 2026 at the Britannia Airport Hotel, Newcastle.



The Britannia can host up to 300 wedding guests and allows self-catering weddings. This makes it perfect for large, multicultural events.

Madia tells us about their day…

"We chose the Britannia Airport Hotel because it offered everything we wanted in one place from getting ready in the morning to celebrating late into the evening. From the moment we viewed the venue, we loved the elegant ballroom space, the convenience for travelling guests, and how accommodating the staff were throughout the planning process. We wanted a venue that felt spacious and welcoming that could comfortably host all our family and friends, whilst still feeling intimate and personal. The venue gave us the perfect balance of affordability, style and practicality, which made it an easy decision for us.

FAVOURITE MOMENT

Seeing each other for the first time during the ceremony. After months of planning, nerves, excitement and anticipation, everything suddenly felt real. Looking around and seeing all our loved ones together celebrating with us made the moment even more emotional and unforgettable. Another special moment was walking into the reception room and seeing all the décor, flowers and personal touches come together exactly how we imagined.



ENTERTAINMENT

We wanted the day to feel lively and memorable, so entertainment played a huge part. We had traditional drum players performing during the celebrations, which created such an exciting atmosphere and got everyone dancing, especially Saif's family! One of the most fun parts of the day was taking part in a Pakistani wedding tradition where the groom's side is stopped from entering the venue until he gives money to the bride's family. It's all done jokingly, with the bride's family asking for more and the groom negotiating until they agree on an amount. My family had created a list of promises for Saif to sign which included him promising to support Newcastle United instead of Manchester United! It's just as well he signed it! It brought so much laughter and energy to the day and was a lovely way to include our culture and traditions in the celebrations.



SPECIAL TOUCHES

We added personal touches throughout the wedding to make the day feel unique to us as a couple. From customised décor and coordinated colour themes to thoughtful catering for guests, we wanted every part of the wedding to feel warm and personal. Family is very important to us, so we made sure our traditions and loved ones were included throughout the celebrations making the day even more meaningful and memorable."

Photographer: moonlightmilephotography.com

WEDDING BOUQUETS

Your floral masterpiece

Your wedding bouquet is a statement of your style: a floral masterpiece that complements both your wedding dress and theme. Whether you want timeless and elegant or bright and bold, choosing your wedding bouquet is so exciting!

Bridal bouquets come in lots of shapes and styles: hand-tied, cascading, round, posy, asymmetrical, fresh flowers, dried, faux - to name a few. To get yours just right, here are a few things to consider...

Think about the time of year you are getting married, seasonality is everything when it comes to your wedding bouquet. Choosing blooms that are in season, and ideally are locally sourced, will ensure freshness and vibrancy and can help keep the cost under control. You could also explore the beauty of dried or faux flowers or combine some good quality faux blooms in with your fresh bouquet.

Match your theme. Is your wedding traditional, modern or rustic? A cluster of loosely tied wild flowers looks great in a rustic barn setting but would not suit a very formal affair where a more structured look would work well.



Would you like to incorporate heirloom pieces, such as a grandmother's brooch, a favourite family flower or a photo memory-charm? A skilled florist can be invaluable in bringing their expertise and creativity to help craft a bouquet that will surpass your expectations and keep it really personal.

Think about the overall colour scheme of the wedding and the exact colour of your dress. White and ivory dresses can look very different with varying colour tones.



Perhaps the most important consideration is the shape and style of your wedding dress.

A-Line and Ball Gown: These classic silhouettes can handle larger, more dramatic bouquets. Consider cascading arrangements or lush, round designs to create a stunning look.

Mermaid: These figure-hugging styles demand a more streamlined bouquet. A smaller hand-tied or posy arrangement will beautifully accentuate your curves without overwhelming your silhouette.

Column: Sleek and minimalist dresses pair perfectly with elegant, understated bouquets. Consider long, linear arrangements or small, compact designs to maintain the overall clean aesthetic.

Boho and Rustic: Loose, natural bouquets with wildflowers or greenery-focused designs will complement a free-spirited bohemian vibe perfectly.

Lastly, if the top of your dress has lots of detail, a bouquet which is held lower won't hide the embellishments. Your florist will be able to guide you.

Perfect

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NOTES

PHOTOGRAPHER:

VIDEOGRAPHER:

CONTENT CREATOR:

FLORIST:

CAKE:

VENUE STYLING AND PROPS:

SPECIAL GUESTS

If your wedding wouldn't be complete without your best friend, **WAGGING TAILS WEDDINGS** could be just what you are looking for. Providing professional dog chaperoning, transport and loving care, they ensure your four-legged VIP is relaxed, safe and part of your day – all adding to your unforgettable moments. Cameron, founder of Wagging Tails, explains why you should choose a dog chaperone for your wedding…

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You want to create unforgettable memories and this includes having your beloved companion involved in your ceremony and photographs.

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THROW A DOG A BONE has 10 years and over 80 'dog chaperones' of experience, AND have recently been awarded 'Dog Chaperone Service of the Year' by Prestige Awards! Michaela will care for your doggy from the night before your wedding until the day after, ensuring that both you and your pet have the best day possible.

If you are lucky enough for your venue to allow your pooch to join you for walkies down the aisle, as your ring bearer or to attend for some photographs, Throw a Dog a Bone can even dress them correctly with a floral collar or a wedding sign for cuteness overload!





VENUE NEWS

The Grand Hotel Sunderland is perfectly located by the sea front and Roker Park meaning beautiful backdrops for your wedding photos are just a few minutes walk away.







The recently refurbished Castle Suite is stylish and spacious with high ceilings, classic décor, private reception foyer, dedicated bar and generous dance floor meaning each part of your day can be held in one exclusive-use setting.

With great food and drink and the welcoming luxury of the newlywed bedroom suite, the Grand Hotel offers the perfect coastal package for your wedding day.



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WEDDING TRADITIONS

Most people know it is traditional to go down on one knee when proposing, but have you ever wondered why? Most people know that confetti is thrown at a wedding, and that the happy couple don't see each other during the morning of their wedding. But do you know where these traditions came from or what they represent?

What about the origin of some of the more quirky traditions such as:

Why does the bride stand on the left?

Why are favours given to wedding guests?

Of course, it is entirely up to you if you follow wedding traditions. A lot of couples now opt for a more informal and relaxed day to celebrate their nuptials, but it is still nice to wear a veil and the confetti throw always makes for such good photographs! Here we look at some of the more common Wedding Traditions you may, or may not, choose to incorporate into your day.

DID YOU KNOW?...

There is a long-established tradition that the happy couple do not see each other on the day of their wedding until they meet at the ceremony. This dates back to the days of arranged marriages when marriage was often more of a financial agreement than a love match. Then, it was usual for a couple to meet for the first time at the altar, in order to reduce the risk of one side pulling out of the deal due to how their prospective partner looked and leaving one family shamed! Today it is simply viewed as unlucky to see each other before the ceremony and as a way of building up excitement on your wedding day.





'First Look' photography is becoming increasingly popular. This is a staged moment before your walk down the aisle, where a photographer or videographer captures the first time you see each other in all your wedding finery. This usually involves just the couple but including the bridesmaids and groomsmen can make the footage even more emotional. In addition, having the parents also photographed whilst watching the 'First Look' takes it to a whole other emotional level!!

DID YOU KNOW?...

During a marriage ceremony, the bride always stands on the left. I have heard two explanations of this, the first of which seems far more reasonable!

Many years ago, a groom would have to capture his bride by kidnapping her. If the groom then had to fight off other men interested in his bride or fight for her honour, he could hold his lady with his left hand keeping his right hand free to use his sword. The second explanation (which has to be thought up by a man!) is that your bride goes on the side you walk your dog on!!! Now, who prefers the first option?



DID YOU KNOW?...

Confetti derives from pagan wedding rituals in which newly-weds were showered with rice or grain as a symbol of fertility. Rose petals were also scattered before the bride to ward off evil spirits. Today, dried flower petals, rice paper confetti and bubbles are all used and can look great on photographs.



DID YOU KNOW?...

The tradition of giving guests a gift, or favour, to remember your wedding day by has been around for hundreds of years. One of the first references to handing out wedding favours is back in 16th century England when couples would often give love knots made of lace and ribbon to symbolise their connection in love.

A wedding was seen as a lucky occasion and it was believed that by giving guests something to take home, the happy couple were sharing their good fortune. Amongst European nobility, a trinket box containing sugar cubes or sweet confectionery, also known as bonbonnieres, were often gifted. Sugar was an expensive treat so it symbolised luxury, wealth and the grandeur of the occasion.

In Greece, sugared almonds were gifted. This came from the tale of Demophon, the King of Greece, whose wife died and was reincarnated as an almond tree. The bittersweet almond symbolised the bittersweet nature of the ups and downs of marriage. The sweet sugar coating was added in the hope there would be more ups than downs in a marriage. Traditionally, each favour consisted of five sugared almonds which represented health, wealth, happiness, long life and fertility.

Today, people are far more creative with their favours. Here is a list of alternatives which guests will be sure to take home...



A packet of wild flower seeds, succulent plant, a specially chosen book, home-made alcoholic miniatures, individual chocolates or macarons, personalised key rings / pens / candles / bottle stoppers / golf balls / shot glasses, a 'day after' bag (paracetamol, breath mints, bottle of water, energy bar), a miniature picture frame with a photo of you and your guest, mini Lego people, chocolate name tags (to double as place cards), tea-in-a-tube, wedding festival wristbands,





personalised temporary tattoos, a box of tic-tacs or a token for an after-dinner visit from the local ice-cream van!



For children try miniature teddy bears, activity packs (crayons, paper, puzzles etc to keep them occupied during the speeches), jigsaws, jellybeans, beach balls (outside use only!) bubbles (good for the photographs) an 'eye-spy' challenge card or a treasure hunt / jigsaw-piece treasure hunt to be completed throughout the day!

DID YOU KNOW?...

There are several explanations of why a Bride wears a veil. It is believed the veil predates the wedding dress by centuries perhaps originating in the days when a groom threw a blanket over the head of his chosen woman as he captured her and carried her off!!



DID YOU KNOW?...

Getting down on one knee to propose is often seen on the big screen as the big romantic gesture: gallant and chivalrous and often in front of an 'encouraging' crowd!

Whilst the exact origin of this tradition is unknown, it is widely believed to be a sign of respect. The act of bending the knee is called genuflection. In the Middle Ages, men would bend down in front of the women they adored. Kneeling in front of someone of a higher rank, such as a King or Queen is common practice.

Today, getting down on one knee to propose is seen as a romantic gesture. Bowing or kneeling not only shows respect but can be taken as a sign of loyalty or even obedience. It also shows vulnerability whilst asking such an important question.

DID YOU KNOW?...

Have you noticed it is 'Bride and Groom,' not 'Groom and Bride?' Etiquette dictates the bride's name comes first before and during the wedding day. This starts with the wedding invitations as traditionally a wedding would be hosted, and paid for, by the bride's family and they were the ones who invited the guests. After the wedding day, Mr and Mrs is the more usual way to address a couple.

DID YOU KNOW?...

In the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Italy, France, Sweden, Mexico, and many other countries, wedding rings are typically worn on the fourth finger of the left hand. This is said to have originated from the Romans, who believed a vein ran straight from the fourth finger on the left hand to the heart. Ahh! A less romantic option is that, as the majority of people are right-handed (roughly 90%), the left hand is simply a more practical choice for a piece of jewellery.



Not everyone uses the left hand though. In Austria, Greece, Russia, Norway, Poland, Cuba, and parts of Spain and Portugal, couples wear wedding rings on the right hand. Reasons vary from country to country, but the right hand is often associated with strength, righteousness, and taking oaths. By placing their wedding band on this hand, couples may have been emphasising their unwavering commitment and loyalty to one another.

There are also several superstitions associated with the wedding ring, including: it is unlucky for a bride to wear any ring on her wedding finger before she is married or to even try on her wedding ring before the marriage; if the bride or groom drops the wedding ring in the church, they shall be the first to die (!!); and it is unlucky to remove a wedding ring during the first seven years of marriage.

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WEDDING DRESS SHOPPING

An expert's top tips

Elizabeth, founder and owner of Maidens & Ravens, York, has been in the wedding dress business for over 7 years. These are her Top Tips to guide you through finding your perfect wedding dress.

ALLOW YOURSELF PLENTY OF TIME.

All of our dress appointments are at least two hours so that you can try on whatever you want without feeling rushed. Take advantage of this! Don't overbook appointments on the same day or book another appointment in an hour's time. It takes time getting dresses on and off and looking at yourself. Give yourself the time to enjoy the experience without stressing about time or your parking ticket.



DRESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT.

Yes, you will be taking your clothes off. You will normally keep your bra and pants on (some people like to keep tights on too) and I would suggest nude or light coloured underwear. I would also recommend a bra that's easy to take off as you may want to remove it for certain dresses.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR BODY!

I have helped brides of every shape and size - from petite size 6 to curvaceous size 32 and everything in between! You have plenty of privacy during the appointment, with the boutique to yourself and a changing room to get ready in - I will simply step in when help is needed.

BE OPEN-MINDED.

Dresses can look completely different on different people and they almost always look better on a body than on a hanger. What you think you like may not be the best shape or style when you put it on. Keep an open mind and experiment with different shapes, fabrics and details. If you are drawn to it, try it on!

DON'T BRING TOO MANY PEOPLE.

Some of my favourite appointments have been just me and my bride. Everyone has a different opinion, and too many voices can make it harder to make your own voice heard. I recommended just one or two trusted people who will encourage you to find the dress that makes you feel amazing.

TRUST YOUR HEART.

How do you want to look on your special day? Don't regret walking away from a dress that you felt incredible in because someone said something negative. Do not listen to all the annoying doubts in your head or other's opinions - follow your heart!

LASTLY, ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE!

I have encountered so many anxious brides who end up having a lovely time and that is always my aim. If you are really nervous, book in by yourself to try some dresses on just with me, then bring your entourage back to see your favourites. There is no right or wrong way to dress shop - do what feels right for you.



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WEDDING DRESSES
Finding your perfect style

Figuring out which style of wedding dress will suit you the best and complement your body shape can be overwhelming. Be open to trying on different silhouettes and ask the advice of the stylist – they are there to help you and their experience can be invaluable.

Here is a guide to help you find your wedding dress style...

BALL GOWN

Ball gowns are the most formal styles of wedding dress. Their attention-grabbing skirts are often multi-layered and extremely full. Layers of ruffles, tulle, and satin organza provide endless details - real show-stoppers! A long veil can be added for extra dramatic flair.

Suits: Tall, slender, hourglass, pear-shaped and inverted triangle ladies



Maidens & Ravens

MERMAID / TRUMPET

Mermaid gowns are incredibly fitted through the bodice down to the booty with a dramatic flare down to the floor. A different material is often used for the lower part of the dress such as tulle. Trumpet wedding dresses have a similar fitted look but rather than having a different fabric for the bottom of the gown, a structured petticoat makes the dress flare out more.

Suits: Hourglass, tall, slender and pear-shaped ladies



Belles & Bows Bridal

FIT 'N 'FLARE

Similar to the mermaid style but a little easier to wear, these gowns hug nicely through the bodice and bottom without feeling too tight or too loose. Using the same material for the whole dress, they gently flare out emphasising your curves.

Suits: Hourglass, tall, slender, athletic and pear-shaped ladies

COLUMN GOWN

Close fitting with a straighter skirt that loosely skims your figure. Very similar in shape to a fit 'n' flare dress but without the flare at the bottom. These are exceptionally elegant gowns. Beautiful details like lace and beading can be added, or you could opt for a minimalist, natural option that will look stunning.

Suits: Hourglass, tall and slender and petite ladies



PRINCESS / A-LINE

This is the most popular shape of wedding gown. These flattering silhouettes have a narrow top and a flowing bottom creating an "A" shape, perfect if you have concerns about larger hips.

Typically easy and comfortable to wear as they are less fitted across your tummy and bottom.

Suits: Petite, apple, pear shaped, hourglass, tall and slender and fuller figure ladies



MINI

Shorter styles are becoming increasingly popular. If you wanted a more traditional gown through the day, choose a dress that can be worn with an overskirt. This can then be easily removed for an evening update.

Suits: Pretty much everyone!

Thanks to Maidens & Ravens, York and Belles & Bows Bridal, Retford.

For more wedding gown inspiration and bridesmaids dress brilliance, including veils, shoes and bags, go to

www.theweddingguideuk.com

and click on 'Suppliers'

WEDDING RINGS
as unique as you both

Your wedding rings are the one part of your wedding you'll wear every day for the rest of your lives. At Ginger & James, each ring is thoughtfully designed and handcrafted to reflect your unique relationship, creating pieces that are as meaningful as the vows you'll exchange.



Whether you're looking for perfectly matching wedding bands, shaped rings to fit around an engagement ring, or completely bespoke designs created just for you, jewellery designer Jemma will guide you through every step of the design process. You can even incorporate sentimental gold or inherited gemstones to create wedding jewellery with a truly personal story.



Based in The Biscuit Factory Studios, Ouseburn, Newcastle, Ginger & James offers relaxed, one-to-one consultations by appointment, helping couples create wedding rings they'll treasure for a lifetime.

Visit **www.gingerandjames.co.uk** to book your consultation.

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UNIQUE HAIR COMBS

Unique Hair Combs is an online, eco-friendly bridal accessory and vintage jewellery business. Based in York, they specialise in sustainable bridal hair combs, lovingly handcrafted by upcycling antique brooches. Claire is the founder of the company.

'Antique jewellery is beautiful, unique, and well made. Transforming these stunning pieces into bridal hair accessories adds a real touch of glamour whilst helping to minimise the environmental impact of your wedding day - something couples are becoming increasingly aware of.

If a client has a cherished piece of jewellery or a family heirloom, such as a brooch, charm, or pendant, I can also incorporate it into their design, making their wedding day accessories even more personal and unique.'

@uniquehaircombs







A SPECIAL GIFT

As an extra special 'thank you' keepsake for your bridesmaids or those who have helped with your wedding planning, how about a bespoke piece of jewellery that incorporates your beautiful wedding flowers!



Only a small number of petals are needed to create this unique jewellery. The petals are set in high-quality resin, mounted in sterling silver and presented in a branded pouch and gift box.

Simply select a few of your favourite blooms and post them to Bidds Creations, one to two days after your wedding.

In around 4 weeks you will receive a stunning pendant, earrings or bracelet to gift to your favourite people.





Alongside jewellery, Bidds Creations also specialise in resin letters and blocks, photo frames, tea-light holders, trinket boxes, keyrings, mango-wood side tables and more.

www.biddscreations.com

JEWELLER FOR LIFE

Tucked away in the historic Victorian Arcade in Barnsley, Kingston Jewellers has spent 45 years perfecting the art of perfect-fit engagement and wedding rings. As a family-established business, they understand that a ring isn't just a purchase - it's a commitment.

What truly sets Kingston Jewellers apart is their genuine desire to be your 'jeweller for life'. Their collection is proudly crafted in the UK by a well-established family firm, ensuring that every piece - from sparkling engagement rings to bespoke wedding bands - boasts exceptional, long-lasting quality. They provide exceptionally competitive prices, ensuring luxury remains accessible to everyone. Whether your budget is £50 or £1,000's, you'll discover a stunning range of platinum, gold (white, yellow, or rose), palladium, or Argentium (a purer silver) rings, with or without diamonds, to suit your unique style.

The relationship doesn't end with your wedding day. Kingston's professional on-site workshop ensures your jewellery remains as beautiful as the day you first wore it, specialising in:

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MAKE EACH OTHER'S WEDDING RINGS

Spend a special day creating your wedding bands together in a private workshop with jewellery designer and experienced tutor Emine Thompson. No previous jewellery-making experience is needed - just bring your ideas and enjoy learning traditional silversmithing techniques at your own pace.

- Complimentary design consultation
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- Celebratory lunch included
- Professional finishing and hallmarking

"Emine was patient with us and guided us through the process. We now have some lovely memories of making our rings together."

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DIY WEDDING NAILS

Meamora is an award-winning company that specialises in at-home, salon-quality products, renowned for their innovative gel-finish press-on nails.

The nails are easy to apply in just a few minutes, do not damage your natural nails, and can be easily removed using only warm water and olive oil. Made from a high-performance resin material, these press-ons mould to your own nails using a conditioning adhesive rather than glue, ensuring that your nails remain completely unharmed by the process.

They are strong, flexible, waterproof, chip-resistant, affordable, and do not require lengthy appointments at a nail salon. This makes them perfect for your hen do, wedding, and honeymoon, without having to factor in time-consuming trips to the salon.

Each box includes a preparation alcohol wipe, a cuticle pusher, a mini nail file, and 30 press-ons giving up to three manicures. The price ranges from just £7 (lighter adhesive to last 2 – 4 days) to £14 per box (longer lasting at 10 – 20 days). With online tutorials demonstrating exactly how to apply and remove, as well as personal support available from your supplying stylist, it couldn't be easier to achieve picture-perfect nails at home for every stage of your wedding celebrations!

Full range available from Dawn Jones, @dawnmeamorayork






MAKE YOUR OWN WEDDING RINGS

Wedding rings should be meaningful and last a lifetime. A daily reminder of the promises you made to each other. But what if your rings also carried the memory of being made by your own hands?

At SILVERKUPE Jewellery Studio in Newcastle upon Tyne, couples can spend a special day creating their wedding bands under the guidance of jewellery designer, maker and experienced tutor Emine Thompson. Based in Ouseburn, Newcastle's creative quarter, SILVERKUPE is an independent jewellery studio offering a relaxed and personal alternative to choosing conventional, off-the-shelf wedding rings. No previous jewellery-making experience is required. Emine guides each couple through every stage of the process, with clear demonstrations, patient tuition and plenty of individual support.



The experience begins with a complimentary consultation a few weeks beforehand. Together, you will explore your ideas, discuss ring sizes and consider different metals, widths, profiles, finishes and design details. Whether your taste is simple and timeless, softly textured or more contemporary, your rings will be designed to reflect you as individuals whilst feeling connected as a pair.



On the workshop day, the studio is reserved exclusively for you and your partner, allowing you to enjoy the experience entirely at your own pace. You will learn traditional silversmithing techniques as you shape, solder, form and finish your rings. The experience also includes a celebratory lunch at The Biscuit Factory Kitchen, providing time to relax and enjoy the occasion together.

One delighted couple described the experience: "Emine's calm, patient guidance turned what sounded like a daunting undertaking - making our own wedding bands - into an incredibly meaningful, heartfelt experience."



Once completed, the rings remain with Emine temporarily so they can be professionally finished, hallmarked and, if requested, engraved with names, initials or a significant date. They are then ready to become part of your wedding day - and your life together. Couples are encouraged to book their workshop at least four months before the wedding, although shorter timescales may sometimes be accommodated.

This is more than creating wedding rings. This is creating an experience you will remember every time you look at your hands. Contact Emine to arrange your complimentary consultation: **contact@silverkupe.com.**



BIODEGRADABLE CONFETTI

The wedding rule that is good news

Planning a wedding involves many decisions, and somewhere between the flowers and the favours, you'll almost certainly come across this from your venue: "Biodegradable confetti only." But what does this mean? Nichola from The Dried Petal Company explains everything…

WHAT DOES 'BIODEGRADABLE CONFETTI' ACTUALLY MEAN?

At its simplest, biodegradable confetti is made from natural materials that safely break down in the environment. Real dried flower petals - think freeze-dried rose petals, dried larkspur, hydrangea, and lavender - are the best examples. They decompose within weeks after your wedding, leaving no lasting trace in the grounds of your venue.



You may have seen paper confetti described as eco-friendly, and while some paper versions do break down faster than plastic or foil, they can still take months to decompose, and many venues do not allow them because the colour can run, and it can look unsightly for weeks. If your venue specifies natural petal confetti, it is always best to go straight to real, dried flower petals to be certain to keep your venue happy.

WHY DO SO MANY VENUES INSIST ON IT?

Venues host multiple weddings throughout the season. Imagine your wedding photographs with foil, plastic, or even soggy paper confetti in the background! It accumulates in flowerbeds, blocks drains, stains stonework, and can remain on lawns for months. Outdoor venues and historic properties are understandably protective of their grounds.

Real flower petal confetti avoids these issues. It is safe for wildlife, gentle on gardens, and welcomed by churches, country houses, and outdoor spaces alike. Many venues now include biodegradable confetti as a specific requirement in their wedding contracts, and an increasing number only permit genuine dried petal confetti.



Here's some good news: natural dried petal confetti isn't just the responsible choice – it is also the most beautiful confetti you can choose. Those dreamy, romantic photos where confetti seems to float and swirl around a laughing, just-married couple are almost always taken with real, dried flower confetti.

Dried petals drift softly and naturally, catching the light beautifully. The colour options are extraordinary - from delicate ivory and champagne, through every shade of pink, to rich burgundy, violet, and vibrant summer yellows. Whether your wedding palette is muted and romantic or bold and colourful, there's a natural petal mix to match it perfectly.

You can even choose UK-grown varieties, such as British larkspur, for an added layer of eco credentials.

Natural confetti, real petals, and a venue that loves you for it - it doesn't get much better than that.





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CHECKING CONFETTI RULES AT YOUR VENUE

Most venues include confetti information in their wedding pack or in their FAQs online, but if not, a quick email to your venue coordinator will get you a clear answer.

When you ask, it's worth checking:

1. Is confetti allowed at all?
2. Does it need to be biodegradable?
3. Where can we have our confetti moment - is there a designated area?
4. Are there any restrictions on confetti indoors versus outdoors?
5. Is there a specific type (petals or paper) that the venue prefers?

Natural, dried flower petal confetti gets the thumbs up almost everywhere.

Thanks to **@driedpetalcompany** for the inspiration

GOOD TO KNOW

When it comes to decorating your wedding cake, there are so many options: sugar paste flowers, fresh fruit, hand-crafted cake toppers, Lego people, sparkly initials, personalised signs or fresh flowers to match your bouquet. But did you know there are a number of common flowers that are highly toxic to humans and should not be used as cake decoration?

FOOD SAFE FLORALS INCLUDE:

Alliums
Bizzie Lizzie
Corn flowers
Echinacea
Freesia
Fuchsia
Geraniums
Gerbera
Hibiscus
Lavender
Lilac
Lisianthus
Olive leaves
Palm leaves
Pansies
Peony
Pine cones
Roses
Stocks
Sunflowers
Thistle (but not Yellow Star)
Viburnum

ONES TO AVOID:

Alstroemeria
Amarylis
Azelea / Rhododendron
Beargrass
Bluebell
Calla Lily
Cherry Blossom
Clematis
Daffodils (Narcissus)
Eucalyptus
Gypsophila
Heather
Holly and berries – including Mistletoe!
Hydrangea
Iris
Ivy
Lily-of-the-Valley
Poinsettia
Poppy
Ruscus
Sweetpea
Tulip

Disclaimer – this list is not finite, ALWAYS check with your cake company!

DIY WEDDING CAKE

There are many reasons why you might want to bake and decorate your own wedding cake. Perhaps you have a cherished family recipe that holds sentimental value, maybe you want the really personal touch or perhaps a 3-tier professional cake is a little out of your budget. Whatever your reason, a homemade wedding cake could be a great addition to your day.



Browse online galleries and magazines for inspiration or maybe you already have your own unique design in mind – just remember to factor in your skill level! Consider taking some cake decorating classes that will teach you how to ice, make sugar flowers or even how to craft little animal characters!

Next, decide how many tiers your cake needs to feed your guests and choose a recipe that fits your taste - and baking experience. You can personalise with fresh or sugar-craft flowers, characters or meaningful details that are important to you both.

Most importantly, have fun! This is your chance to create a one-of-a-kind masterpiece. It doesn't have to be perfect - just perfect for you both! Happy Baking!

CAKE DELIGHTS

Sticky Sponge Cake Artists specialise in unique sculpted masterpieces and intricate hand painted designs with a motto of 'anything is possible'.

Winner of the DMA Edible Sculptor of the year 2022, these designs are just a small example of the truly wondrous cakes Graeme can create. **stickysponge.co.uk**







Make, Bake, Eat specialise in elegant, bespoke wedding cakes inspired by delicate details.

The luxury designs feel timeless, sophisticated and are thoughtfully tailored to each couple with impeccable flavour pairing and perfect decorative detail. Covering all the classic flavours, **Make, Bake, Eat** also offer a delicious sticky ginger cake, an aromatic coffee cake and a decadent Dubai chocolate cake. **makebakeeat.co.uk**








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MENSWEAR

Helping you get it right

THE GROOM

Once your venue, colour scheme and theme have been chosen, it's time to start thinking about suits. It's not always easy to look effortlessly stylish and dressing for a wedding demands a blend of tradition, personal style and the etiquette of the occasion. Here are some pointers to ensure you dress your very best.

Colours and fabrics are important, but the overall style and those critical finishing touches can really complete the look. Think about accessories: shoes, cufflinks, watch, braces, tie pin, bow tie, flat cap – you might even want to make sure you have a suitable pocket for a hip flask or have your initials or date of wedding sewn into your outfit!



When you start looking for suits, begin with a company that carries a good amount of stock on the premises so you can try different styles, colours and sizes. If you have page-boys at your wedding, remember to check that the suits come in smaller sizes too. Make sure you feel comfortable in the whole ensemble and give yourself plenty of time to choose. Too many grooms begin their search only a few months before their wedding date, but this can really limit your choice, especially if you are hiring.

THE GUESTS

A wedding invitation will usually include a dress code – but this is only helpful if you know what it means. White-tie and Morning Suits are very formal and are becoming less popular, so let's take a look at some commonly used 'codes'.

Black-Tie: This very formal code is becoming increasingly popular and always looks great in photographs. You should wear a black dinner suit, or 'tuxedo'. A white dress shirt, a black bow-tie, black patent leather shoes and don't forget cufflinks and a formal pocket square to complete the look. You could also add a matching cummerbund.



Black-Tie Optional or Formal wear: This means a tuxedo is preferred, but a dark suit with a white shirt and tie is an acceptable alternative. Not everyone has a tuxedo, so it's a kind way of giving an option.

Lounge Suit: This just means a suit. Usually grey or blue with a smart shirt and tie.

Cocktail: Generally, this means a tailored suit and tie. However, you can be a little more creative with the colour of your shirt and patterns for your tie and pocket square.

Suits could be light grey, charcoal or dark to mid-blue. Pair with a smart, solid coloured dress shirt and a tie.

Smart Casual: Smart but not overly formal. A patterned suit or smart trouser and blazer / suit jacket combination is acceptable, but a tie is still expected – at least until the evening dancing gets underway.

Casual: Casual weddings allow for more flexibility. You could opt for smart trousers with a smart shirt or smart polo shirt. No tie is required. Sometimes this is reserved for evening guests.

ENTERTAININGLY BRILLIANT

YORKSHIRE VIOLINIST



Emily, the Yorkshire Violinist, creates unforgettable live music for weddings across Yorkshire and the UK. From elegant solo violin to beautifully matched string duos, trios and quartets, every performance is tailored to reflect your unique love story.

Creating your perfect soundtrack: Yorkshire Violinist takes the time to understand your vision, carefully shaping the music around your day with warmth, emotion and exceptional musicianship. From first enquiry to your wedding day, you'll enjoy a personal, seamless experience. As part of a commitment to sustainability, one tree is planted for every wedding booked, helping your celebration leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

Visit **yorkshireviolinist.com** to learn more and to check your date.

PAUL LYTTON PICK-POCKET MAGIC



Paul Lytton is one of the UK's most sought-after magicians. This is pick-pocket magic for luxury weddings.

Performed on a very personal level, Paul's magic is fast, witty, visual and 100% exciting. It's guaranteed to impress because the magic not only happens right under your guests noses, but literally within their own hands! A perfect ice-breaker for your drinks reception, imagine the look on peoples faces when he returns the watches he's pick pocketed, or burns a hole in the best man's jacket!

This isn't cheesy magic, it's pick-pocket-fast-paced entertainment that will leave your guests shocked, baffled and desperate to see more!

Paul has established himself as the leading magician in Newcastle and regularly performs throughout the UK. **www.northeastmagician.co.uk**

STEVIE BAGPIPES



Having Bagpipes at your Wedding is nice...but having Stevie Bagpipes is fantastic!

A multi award winning wedding piper, Stevie will create moments your guests will talk about long after your day is over. From powerful entrances to emotional exits, the bagpipes offer a memorable backdrop to your day.

For an extra wow factor as you are announced in to dine as newlyweds, add a piped entrance and a Gaelic Toast. A Gaelic Toast wishes good fortune upon the marriage; a way of making good wishes stick for a long, happy, healthy and prosperous union.



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Can you play my favourite song?

Imagine walking down the aisle to your favourite song. Now imagine it played live, perfectly timed to fade in and out as you make your grand entrance. Live music adds a whole new dimension to your marriage ceremony, setting the mood for your entire celebration - so getting it right is crucial.

Unlike recorded music, a live musician can personalise arrangements, adapt to the flow of your event, and create a truly unique atmosphere that a playlist simply can't match. Occasionally ceremonies don't go exactly to plan, such as a slightly longer walk down the aisle or a delay when signing the marriage schedule. A skilled live musician can adapt to these unexpected moments and adjust the music seamlessly, ensuring the flow of your whole ceremony remains flawless. This adaptability extends to the wedding reception too, where a live musician can read the room and adjust the tempo or genre to keep the atmosphere lively.

A talented musician will work with you to create a personalised soundtrack for your entire wedding. Discuss your favourite genres, artists, individual songs and the overall mood you want to create, and let your musician weave their magic.

Whilst some musicians prefer you to select your ceremony and reception songs from their set portfolio, others will happily learn new songs for you. However, a word of caution, you do need to ask the question. Whilst some will do this as part of their fee, others will charge an additional amount for their time to learn your special song or songs.

Do remember that musicians can also personalise arrangements of your ceremony songs including wonderful mash-ups (thanks Tik Tok!) but again, do ask if there are any additional charges.

A good musician will strive to provide a fabulous soundtrack for your perfect day. Invest some time in the process and ask a few simple questions to find the right musician for you. With the right live music, your wedding will be an unforgettable, emotion-filled celebration giving memories to last a lifetime. So, start planning your perfect soundtrack today! @rayspiano

10 THINGS TO KNOW
before booking wedding music

As told by Nadia Violin…



1. Book early. Popular musicians can get booked years in advance, especially for peak dates. I currently take bookings up to three years ahead, so if live music is a priority, it's worth enquiring as soon as you've chosen your wedding date.

2. The performance location. Not every outdoor ceremony has access to electricity. Find a musician who uses a professional, battery-powered sound system as I do. This offers the most flexibility, for either indoors or outdoors and allows movement between locations throughout your day.

3. Always have a weather plan. Outdoor weddings are beautiful, but British weather is unpredictable! Live musicians need protection from rain, wind and sunshine. Electronic equipment, speakers and, most importantly, the violin itself can be damaged by extreme conditions. Having a sheltered area or indoor alternative ensures your music can continue safely whatever the weather.

4. Don't worry about exact timings. Wedding schedules can change, so I offer packages that cover each part of the day, with final timings confirmed much closer to the date. This allows more flexibility and removes unnecessary stress.

5. A performance involves much more than one song. Couples sometimes ask whether it's possible to book "just the aisle song", without realising every performance includes travel, early arrival, equipment set-up and sound checks before guests arrive. Providing music while guests are seated feels natural and complete ceremony packages create a far more seamless experience than leaving immediately after the entrance which would interrupt the flow and emotion of the ceremony.

6. Make your music personal. From timeless classics, modern chart hits or film soundtracks, your wedding music should be meaningful and reflect your story. I invite every couple to choose each song I perform. I have over 1,000 pieces in my repertoire and am always happy to learn special requests and help with song choices.

7. Any song can become an aisle song. Many couples assume only traditional music works for walking down the aisle but almost any meaningful song can be transformed into a beautiful, slower arrangement that perfectly suits the pace and emotion of your entrance.

8. New song requests need time. If you'd like something completely unique, request it well in advance. It takes time to learn, arrange and rehearse new music properly to ensure your chosen song sounds exactly as it should.

9. Think beyond the ceremony. Live music doesn't have to end once you've said "I do". It can set an upbeat tone during the drinks reception as guests mingle, create a beautiful atmosphere during the wedding breakfast and a live performance for your first dance will make it unforgettable. Best of all, every part of the performance during the day can feature your favourite songs, giving you a truly personal soundtrack from beginning to end.

10. Experience brings peace of mind. An experienced wedding musician does far more than perform beautiful music. They anticipate changes, adapt to unexpected situations and help create a calm, enjoyable atmosphere from the moment your guests arrive until your celebration continues.

Your wedding music should be every bit as personal as the rest of your day. I'd be delighted to help create the perfect soundtrack for your celebration, tailored entirely to you! To find out more or check my availability, please get in touch at nadiaviolin.co.uk.

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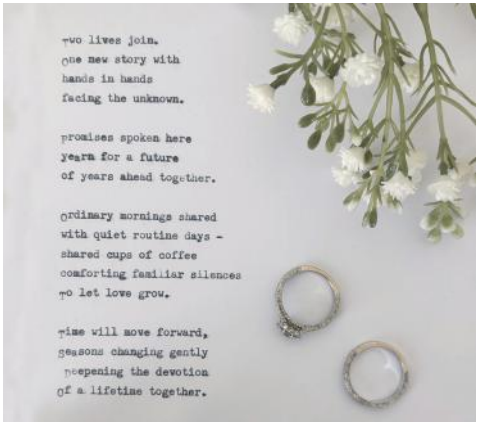
Love and Verse Weddings creates completely personalised poems, vows and wedding readings, written around your story, your people and the moments that have made your relationship what it is. Every piece is written from scratch, meaning no two poems are ever the same.

Grace is now bringing live wedding poetry to celebrations across the North East! Imagine a poet at your wedding, chatting to your guests throughout the day and turning their memories, stories and feelings into completely personalised poems. Each guest receives their own poem to take home - a unique keepsake from a day they will never forget.

"Grace captured our story in a way we never could have put into words ourselves. It was so personal, emotional and completely us."

From the first word to the final line, Love and Verse Weddings creates poetry that turns memories into something you can hold onto long after the confetti has settled. Your Stories, Written in Verse.

@LoveAndVerseWeddings on all socials





HEN PARTY TREATS!

Spa day, make-up master class, weekend hot-tub lodge, afternoon tea, day at the races, cookery lesson, perfume or jewellery making, pottery class, bottomless brunch, axe throwing, rock climbing, a city break, comedy club, recording your own music video or learning a group dance to wow the evening guests. All are excellent options for a Hen Party and something to suit everyone. But do you fancy 'shaking it up' a little? At Butler Direct you can interject some extra fun into the celebrations from tame to...well, the not-so-tame!



"At Butler Direct, we offer private cocktail lessons for every occasion, specialising in Hen Parties.

Your handsome host will provide games, laughter, and a little bit of refined spice! If you are feeling creative, our Life Drawing sessions will unleash your imagination - with a tipple served on the side!



We have a good range of attractive packages so you can get exactly the right mix of entertainment for your crowd. We mean it when we say that we are different - just tell us what, where, and when - and we'll be there. With our top-class entertainment, you will be sure to enjoy the party."

STAG DO CHECKLIST

Planning and executing a good stag do usually falls to the Best Man (or Best Men) and Ushers. Whilst a wild weekend can be fun, try to tailor pranks, games, and optional costumes to the groom's personality rather than forcing him into uncomfortable situations. Keep it balanced: one or two main activities rather than over-planning every minute. And remember, a stag do should be a good few weeks ahead of the wedding – not the night before!

Here is a quick checklist to help get you started:

- Consult the Stag
- Establish who will be in charge of proceedings
- Plan the guest list
- Choose the date(s)
- Set the budget
- Select a destination. If abroad, will there be a second 'do' nearer home?
- Create a group chat
- Establish payment method
- Book accommodation and travel
- Book activities and transport
- Agree the stag do etiquette / do's and don'ts / pranks / themes
- Send final itinerary to the group
- Enjoy!

For tips and advice on how to get it right, go to www.theweddingguideuk.com /blogs and search 'Stag Do'.



Adrian Salamon
Wedding Magician
'Jaw-dropping magic'

"Adrian was fantastic! His tricks were brilliant and guests were talking about him for days.

I highly recommend booking him if you want to baffle people."



T: 07849 123560
E: contact@**yorkmagician**.co.uk
W: www.**adriansalamon**.co.uk

HOW I FIT MAGICALLY INTO YOUR BIG DAY...

Every couple wants their day to be filled with fun and laughter, creating happy memories from the ceremony to the first dance, and every moment in between. That's where 'magical' entertainment can be perfect! A close-up magician can keep the energy high and guests engaged through every part of your day. Here's how jaw-dropping magic can fit effortlessly into your celebration.



YOUR DRINKS RECEPTION. After the ceremony, guests gather with drinks and canapés while your photographer captures the happy scene. Many will be meeting for the first time, and the last thing you want is awkward silences. A magician can mingle seamlessly among groups, performing astonishing close-up magic and sparking conversation. Suddenly, strangers are laughing together, debating impossible mysteries, and sharing an unforgettable experience.

YOUR WEDDING BREAKFAST. Guests settling into their seats, waiting for the different courses, the build-up to the speeches: a magician can fill these moments with table-side performances, ensuring every guest feels included. Working around the staff and service, a skilled magician delivers bursts of wonder to keep the atmosphere lively, yet personal, at all times.

YOUR EVENING PARTY. As the wedding breakfast concludes, guests drift to the bar or explore the venue. New evening guests may also arrive. Before the band or DJ begins, a magician can set the tone, welcoming newcomers and keeping the atmosphere lively. This provides a perfect transition into the evening as your party truly begins.

When you invite a magician to your wedding, you are investing in atmosphere, joy and memories that sparkle long after the last dance.

YORKSHIRE MAGIC MIRROR

The selfie revolution

The Magic Mirror has had a baby!

Welcome the Mini - the newest creation from Yorkshire Magic Mirror, taking everything couples love about a luxury Magic Mirror experience and shrinking it into a sleek, stylish tabletop showstopper.



Selfies, group photos, cheeky gifs, boomerangs, slow-motion clips, and video messages - all guided by the Mini's interactive touch-screen animations that make it ridiculously easy for all ages to use.

How does it work?

One get your gang together

Two choose your props

Three all smile

Four press that button!







YORKSHIRE MAGIC MIRROR

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Yorkshire Magic Mirror is designed for fun!

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The stylish mirror captures full length photos of you and your guests posing with our array of silly props and outlandish signs. Customised with fancy borders and personalised messages the photos will bring back happy memories for years to come.







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ENTERTAININGLY BRILLIANT

SARAH ANNE BUSH MUSIC



Award-winning violinist and pianist Sarah Bush brings elegance, emotion and versatility to every performance, creating the perfect soundtrack for your special day. Performing on both electric and acoustic violin, as well as piano, Sarah tailors each set to reflect your unique style and vision.

Whether you dream of the romantic melodies of Bridgerton, timeless classics like Can't Help Falling in Love, or contemporary favourites with a modern twist, Sarah delivers every piece with grace, sophistication and heartfelt expression.

If choosing just one song feels impossible, Sarah can create a bespoke medley that tells your love story through music.

She can also reimagine upbeat, high-energy tracks as beautifully slowed-down arrangements, perfect for an unforgettable ceremony moment.

Follow and connect with Sarah **@bushsarah.music**

CANDY FLOSS EVENTS



Freshly spun, colour-coordinated candy floss brings a nostalgic charm to your wedding reception that goes beyond the usual dessert table.

Freshly made on-site, each cloud of candy floss is presented to your guests, bringing a touch of childhood magic to your big day. If you want to add a little extra, Candy Floss Events also offer a popcorn stall - perfect for keeping your guests snacking and happy throughout your celebration.

The most beautiful days deserve the sweetest things.
@candyflossevents

PREMIER ENTS AND EVENTS



Premier Ents and Events pride themselves in their ability to work with you to create your dream wedding, offering venue visits and private consultations to ensure that every detail is perfect.

From table centrepieces and blossom arches to LED letters, dance floors, photo booths, cold sparks, and DJ with dancing on the clouds effects, they have a range of packages to fully style and entertain at your wedding.

Popular entertainment packages combine a photo booth with DJ and various add-ons like their audio telephone box, LOVE letters and their recently acquired old sparks machine. Their casino tables are also extremely popular with Roulette and Black Jack being the most requested.

ENTERTAININGLY BRILLIANT

FIRST DANCE PRESSURE



It is surprising how many couples feel anxious about their 'First Dance'. You know, the dreaded three-and-a-half-minute 'sway' that seems to go on forever whilst your guests crowd around and film every second! This is where Kay from West Hen Events can help.

"Your first dance should be an amazing moment to treasure- not torture! Our First Dance Package is designed to have you feeling comfortable, confident and genuinely excited for your first dance after just a few relaxed lessons. Together, we'll turn first dance stress into first dance yes!"

Alongside their popular First Dance Package, West Hen Events also offer fun, themed dance parties for hen and stag groups, Singing & Disco packages, and live entertainment including a fabulous ABBA tribute act, Mammy Mia, and a high-energy country show, Whiskey Hinnies.

For your hen, stag and wedding day itself, **@westhenevents** make every step unforgettable.

NOT ALL DISCOS ARE THE SAME

The Disco Co is a professional outfit offering superb customer service to ensure your evening is remembered for years to come.

- Great communication beforehand so your requirements and expectation are fulfilled and your favourite tunes and bands are included
- Requests taken during the evening
- House compliant decibel level, DBS, PLI and PAT certified
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MIND-BLOWING MAGIC

Winner of the UK Wedding Magician of the Year 2026 at The UK Wedding Industry Awards and a proud member of The Magic Circle, Paul Innes has been performing close-up mix-and-mingle magic, mind reading and astonishing mentalism - think Derren Brown - since 2018.

Paul can entertain your wedding guests during the drinks reception, meal, room turnaround period, or evening reception. He can also entertain the younger guests with his children's magic.

These reviews say it all… "What can I say! This guy is beyond incredible. Tricks that leave you bewildered and fry your head for days. Too impressive for words! Outstanding and simply mind boggling!" Jennifer, wedding guest.

"Paul left everyone absolutely speechless. He was engaging, funny and charming but it was his magic that stole the show. A class act and I couldn't recommend him more." Mark, groom.

"From the very first contact to the moment he left, he was a 5-star experience. Every single guest was astounded. An absolute gentleman and he made my party extra special!" Nicola, birthday girl.

@paulinnesmagic, bringing unforgettable mind-blowing magic, laughter, incredible reactions and lasting memories that will be talked about long after your wedding.



NOT ALL DISCOS ARE THE SAME



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See page 23 and Real Wedding on page 24

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Allan House, City Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 2BE

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E: events.newcastle@hotelduvin.com
W: www.hotelduvin.com/locations/newcastle/weddings/

See page 39

Britannia Hotel Newcastle
Small, intimate weddings through to large and lavish events.
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T: 0191 4019 988
E: conf716@britanniahotels.com
W: www.britanniahotels.com

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W: www.theelitevenueselection.co.uk/grand-hotel-sunderland/

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E: dawn@dawnmariewed.co.uk
W: www.dawnmariewed.co.uk

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Charlotte Atkinson Photography
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T: 07812 985 088
E: info@charlotteatkinsonphotography.co.uk
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Fun, relaxed photographer. Capturing today's moments, for tomorrow's memories.
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E: andyduftonphotography@gmail.com
W: www.andyduftonphotography.com

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W: www.janesflowers.co.uk

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W: www.premierentsandevents.co.uk

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W: www.meamora.co.uk/?ref=dawnjones

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Michelle Brooks Make-up, Hair & Beauty
W: www.mbmakeuphairbeauty.co.uk

Euphoria Hairdressing
W: www.euphoriahairdressing.com

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W: www.kingstonjewellersbarnsley.co.uk

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W: www.eva-mae.co.uk

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W: www.silverkupe.com

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E: clairegilmore@hotmail.com
W: https://uniquehaircombs.etsy.com

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E: jessica.smith@biddscreations.com
W: www.biddscreations.com

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♥ MUSICIANS

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Ray's Piano
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Based in Northumberland, playing across the North of England and Scotland.

T: 07795 011 983
E: ray.snowdon@hotmail.co.uk
W: www.rayspiano.co.uk

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W: www.thediscoco.com

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I: awf.records.ne

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Yorkshire Magic Mirror
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Adrian Salamon Magic
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E: contact@yorkmagician.co.uk
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WEDDING FAIRS

The UK Wedding Event

T: 0113 821 4544
W: www.theukweddingevent.co.uk

See page 92

Wedding Fayres Yorkshire

T: 01484 537 130
W: www.weddingfayresyorkshire.com

See page 94

Dawn Marie Wedding & Event Design

T: 07717 220 556
W: www.dawnmariewed.co.uk

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Wedding Fairs North East

T: 07493 213 452
W: www.weddingfairsnortheast.com

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Belles and Bows Events

T: 07988 384 636
W: www.bellesbowsevents.co.uk

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Spanish City Elite Wedding Fair
Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear, NE26 1BG

Sunday 27th September 2026, 10am – 2pm
Delta York Wedding Showcase
Delta Hotels by Marriott York, Tadcaster Road, YO24 1QQ

Thursday 15th October 2026, 5pm – 7pm
Grand Hotel Sunderland Wedding Open Evening
Queens Parade, Sunderland, SR6 8DB

Thursday 12th November 2026, 5pm – 7pm
Grand Hotel Sunderland Wedding Open Evening
Queens Parade, Sunderland, SR6 8DB

Thursday 19th November 2026, 5pm – 7pm
Hotel du Vin Wedding Showcase
Allan House, City Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 2BE

Sunday 22nd November 2026, 10am – 3pm
Scarborough Spa Wedding Fayre
South Bay, Scarborough, YO11 2HD

Sunday 3rd January 2027, times TBC
Horton Grange Country House Open Day
Berwick Hill Road, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE13 6BU

All events are correct at the time of going to press.
For a full list of Wedding Fairs, Shows and Open Days go to
www.theweddingguideuk.com and click on 'Wedding Fairs & Events'

NOTES

WEDDING FAIRS TO ATTEND:

Belles & Bows
EVENTS

PRESENT

2026-2027
wedding fayres

6th September 2026	Holiday Inn Leeds Wakefield - 11am - 2pm
27th September 2026	The BIG Magna Wedding Fayre - 11am - 3pm *(Catwalk at 1.30pm)*
4th October 2026	Holiday Inn Rotherham Sheffield - 11am - 2pm
11th October 2026	Holiday Inn Doncaster - 11am - 2pm
17th January 2027	The BIG Magna Wedding Fayre - 11am - 3pm *(Catwalk at 1.30pm)*
31st January 2027	Holiday Inn Doncaster - 11am - 2pm
7th February 2027	Holiday Inn Leeds Wakefield - 11am - 2pm
21st February 2027	Tapton Hall Sheffield - 11am - 2pm
21st March 2027	Holiday Inn Rotherham Sheffield - 11am - 2pm
21st July 2027	Tapton Hall Sheffield *Evening soiree Wedding Fayre 6pm - 8.30pm*
3rd October 2027	Holiday Inn Rotherham Sheffield - 11am - 2pm
10th October 2027	The BIG Magna Wedding Fayre - 11am - 3pm *(Catwalk at 1.30pm)*
31st October 2027	Holiday Inn Doncaster - 11am - 2pm

FOR TICKETS VISIT

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2026/2027 WEDDING SHOWS

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The Engine Shed Wetherby | Sun 6th September
Oulton Hall | Rothwell | Sun 13th September
The Big Leeds Wedding Show | Sun 20th September
The Sun Pavilion | Harrogate | Sun 27th September
Dalston Hall | Carlisle | Sun 4th October
The Big Wedding Show @ OEC Sheffield | Sun 4th October
Swinton Park Hotel | Masham | Sun 11th October
The Big York Racecourse Wedding Show | Sun 18th October
The Bridge Hotel & Spa | Wetherby | Sun 25th October
The Old Swan Harrogate | Sun 1st November
Mercure Bradford Bankfield Hotel | Sun 8th November
Tankersley Manor | Barnsley | Sun 15th November
The Milner York | Sun 22nd November
The Engine Shed Wetherby | Sun 3rd January
Gomersal Park Hotel | Sun 10th January
Crathorne Hall Hotel | Yarm | Sun 17th January
Oulton Hall | Rothwell | Sun 24th January
Rushpool Hall | Sun 31st January
Skipton Hotel | Sun 7th February
Big Leeds Wedding Bash @ Headingley Stadium | Sun 14th Feb
Hazlewood Castle | Sun 21st February
Tankersley Manor | Barnsley | Sun 28th February

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SCAN THE QR CODE FOR OUR MOST UP TO DATE LIST OF SHOWS

Wedding Fayres



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