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Say "I do" in Leicestershire

Welcome, nearly-weds

Congratulations on your engagement and forthcoming wedding.

Within this brochure you will find an ensemble of practical advice and interesting facts tailored specifically for couples with the intention of marrying in Leicestershire.

Whether you'd like to get familiar with the county's licensed venues, jewellers and bridal/menswear establishments, seek inspiration for gift ideas or simply swot up on some wedding trivia, we provide these pages in the hope of assisting you in designing a day you'll enjoy remembering for the rest of your life.

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Nobody has ever measured,
even poets, how much a heart can hold.
- Zelda Fitzgerald

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Why Leicestershire

Nestled in the heart of the English midlands, Leicestershire has long been a farming, automobile and textile industry powerhouse.

It's where Walker's crisps was founded, where fox hunting originated, and where Sir David Attenborough grew up.

Back in its Anglo-Saxon days, around the year 1087, Leicestershire was better known as Laegrecastrescir. After the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, the county also became the final resting place of King Richard III.

Enclosed you'll find a blend of Leicestershire's most captivating urban and rural wedding backdrops to suit your special day, whatever the theme.

*Adopt the pace of nature: her
secret is patience.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson*



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Ceremonies at approved venues

If you decide to marry in one of Lancashire's approved premises you should first contact the venue directly to make a provisional booking for the best available date and time. Further details you may wish to enquire about include: payment rates, deposits and cancellations; logistics such as noise restrictions, room for dancing and guest parking; as well as which staff member will be your point person on the day.

This booking can be made at any time before your wedding day, however, you should contact your Register Office up to 12 months in advance to ensure the Registrar is able to attend. This will enable you to proceed with making other arrangements for your ceremony.

Both parties entering into a marriage must be at least 16 years of age, according to the Ages of Marriage Act. Before it was passed in 1929, no marriage between persons under the age of 21 was valid without parental or guardian consent.

The most recent statistics about marriage from the UK Office for National Statistics were measured in 2014. During that year, more women than men married a person of the same sex, while marriage rates for opposite sex couples increased for those 35 years and older. For men, the average age at marriage was 37 years, and for women it was 34.6.



You may hold your marriage or civil partnership ceremony at any approved premise in England and Wales. Before the middle of the 18th century, however, marriages were able to take place anywhere as long as they were overseen by an ordained clergyman of the Church of England. According to the UK Parliament, this lack of restriction resulted in a high percentage of secret weddings which were often underage, bigamous or lacking in parental consent. Legal notice must be given within 12 months and no later than four weeks before your wedding. This is due to the fact that the details of the wedding will then go on public display for 15 clear days to ensure there is no objection to the marriage or civil partnership. Once this time has passed, the Superintendent Registrar will issue their authority for the marriage to take place.

The Marriage Act was introduced in 1753 and declares that marriages and ceremonies can be considered legally binding only if they are conducted by a minister in a parish church or chapel of the Church of England.

To be married anywhere but the Church of England, you need a Registrar to legally conduct the ceremony.

Marriages of same-sex couples have been legally recognised since 2004, when the Civil Partnership Act was passed.

Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open.
- J. K. Rowling

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Religious ceremonies

If you wish to marry in the Church of England or Church in Wales you should contact the vicar who will arrange the ceremony and advise you of the legal formalities.

If you wish to marry in the building of any other religion, i.e. Methodist, Sikh, Roman Catholic or Muslim, for instance, you should contact the person appointed to register weddings in that building. If nobody has been appointed to do this, you must book the attendance of a registrar from the appropriate registration district to register the event.

You are able to marry in a religious building only if it is situated in the registration district where one or both of you reside. You may, however, be married in a religious building in a district where neither of you reside if it is the usual place of worship of one or both of you.

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*A heaven on Earth I have
won by wooing thee.
- William Shakespeare*



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Bridal wear: a brief history

You may have found your soulmate, but you haven't completed your search for "the one." Somewhere, tucked away in an intimate bridal boutique or biding its time in a glossy retail store, is your dress. Gorgeous, comfortable, and supportive, it'll be your ally during the most photographed day of your life, so choose wisely.

It is recommended that you select bridal wear at least nine months before your wedding. By allowing plenty of time, you can ensure that any shipments or alterations will run smoothly.



The bridal garter

Tossing the wedding garter is a tradition stemming from 14th century Europe, when wedding guests sought "proof" that the bride and groom had consummated their marriage on their wedding night. It was thought that whoever caught the garter thrown by the groom would receive good luck. Some guests even followed the couple into their bridal chamber!

*To find someone who will love you
for no reason, and to shower that person with
reasons, that is the ultimate happiness.*

- Robert Brault

The bridal gown

White wedding gowns, although commonly associated with the concept of purity in the Western world, originally emerged to reflect affluence. As all garments in the 18th and 19th centuries were washed by hand, white clothing was considered impractical and virtually impossible to clean. Not everyone could afford the luxury of buying a dress that would last just one day, and so a bride in white not only looked beautiful but also radiated wealth.

Queen Victoria I is considered to be the first to popularise the white wedding dress, according to the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition, Wedding Dresses 1775-2014. Before her marriage to Prince Albert in 1840, it was commonplace for the bride to wear her best existing dress, regardless of its colour.

The bridal veil

The bridal veil is believed to predate the wedding gown by nearly 2,000 years and has many different histories and traditions.

During the Roman era, veils were considered necessary to ward off any evil spirits that may be jealous of the bride's happiness. In many arranged marriages, they were used to disguise the bride's face until she was unveiled to the groom for the first time - after the exchanging of vows. In some Western cultures, the veil is assumed to represent virgin innocence, and it is only when the couple have been married that the groom may lift it to kiss the bride.

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Bridesmaids: a brief history

Being a bridesmaid can seem like an intimidating responsibility – until you consider the job description of a bridesmaid in ancient Rome. Back then, they were entrusted with the task of protecting the bride from the very real possibility of harm, be it from thugs in pursuit of her dowry or rejected suitors wanting revenge. It was tradition for the bride to travel to the groom's village for the wedding, and so it was during this journey that she required protection.

To confuse anyone with illintent, each bridesmaid dressed similarly to the bride. Romans also believed that their presence would shield the bride from any curses or evil spirits intending to ruin her happiness, and it later became Roman law to include at least 10 witnesses at a wedding for the purpose of outsmarting them.

The maid or matron of honour originated with wedding planning. It became the responsibility of a senior maid to help dress the bride and make sure her wreath was complete, while decorations for the wedding feast were done by all the bridesmaids.

*To get the full value of a joy you must
have somebody to divide it with.*
– Mark Twain

Today, bridesmaids are predominantly expected to be pillars of support and friendship during an emotionally turbulent day. Their main duties include planning any pre-wedding events, such as a hen party or bridal shower; helping shop for dresses; giving advice on decorations, food and music; making a speech at the wedding; and providing information to guests such as where to send gifts.

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Like all pieces of jewellery, prices vary depending on the cut, clarity, carat and colour. We offer diamond engagements rings in a variety of cuts and colours including classic solitaires, three stones and many other designs. Choosing the right ring or jewellery for your wedding day and getting the look just right, whether vintage or modern, is very important for today's bride. Whether you love the Art Deco look, the vintage glamour and grace of the 1940s or something more modern, we have something perfect just for you with our bespoke service.



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The best man: a brief history

He's the one who knows enough embarrassing anecdotes about you to compile a speech; the one you play Call of Duty with; and the one who won't ever let you drink alone. He's your best mate regardless of how well he can wield a sword. In the 16th century, however, combat skills were fundamental qualities in a best man.

The tradition originated with the Germanic Goths, who incorporated groomsmen (or bride's knights) for the purpose of protecting the bride along with her dowry and virginity. Often at this time brides were chosen from neighbouring towns and taken by force, so it was necessary for the groom to have men able to assist with the kidnapping. Some altars were even equipped with weaponry in case anyone tried to stop the ceremony.



Nowadays there's a little less pressure for the best man – depending on how bad he is at public speaking. His main objectives are to help the groom make necessary plans and arrangements, to de-stress him before the wedding and to thoroughly embarrass him during it. It's also ideal for him not to lose the ring, the speech or the groom by leaving him tied to lamp post somewhere overnight.

A man in love is incomplete until he has married. Then he's finished.
- Zsa Zsa Gabor

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Wedding rings: a brief history

The first known record of the exchanging of wedding rings was documented in ancient Egypt. Roughly 4,800 years ago, rings were crafted from plants such as sedges, reeds and rushes. Their circular shape embodied the notion of eternity, a never-ending cycle with no beginning or end. In Medieval Europe, wedding rings often included an engraving of two clasped hands to signify a couple's union. These were referred to as fede rings, stemming from the Italian word for fidelity and trust.

The ancient Greeks and Romans began the tradition of engagement or betrothal rings. Although typically plain in appearance, some featured inscriptions as early as the 4th century A.D. They were made of iron, a material strong and durable enough to represent the legally binding contract of marriage, as well as the bride's transition of ownership from father to husband. For this reason, it was uncommon for men to wear wedding rings.



The church officially recognised rings in the 11th century, however, it wasn't until the mid-16th century that they were incorporated into wedding ceremonies.

Diamond engagement rings emerged in the mid-1800s, but at that time only the social elite were able to afford them. During World War I and the Great Depression, diamond rings lost their prevalence only to regain it again in the 1940s, after which time they became an arguably crucial part of modern day engagement.

Who, being loved, is poor?
- Oscar Wilde

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Wedding photography: a brief history

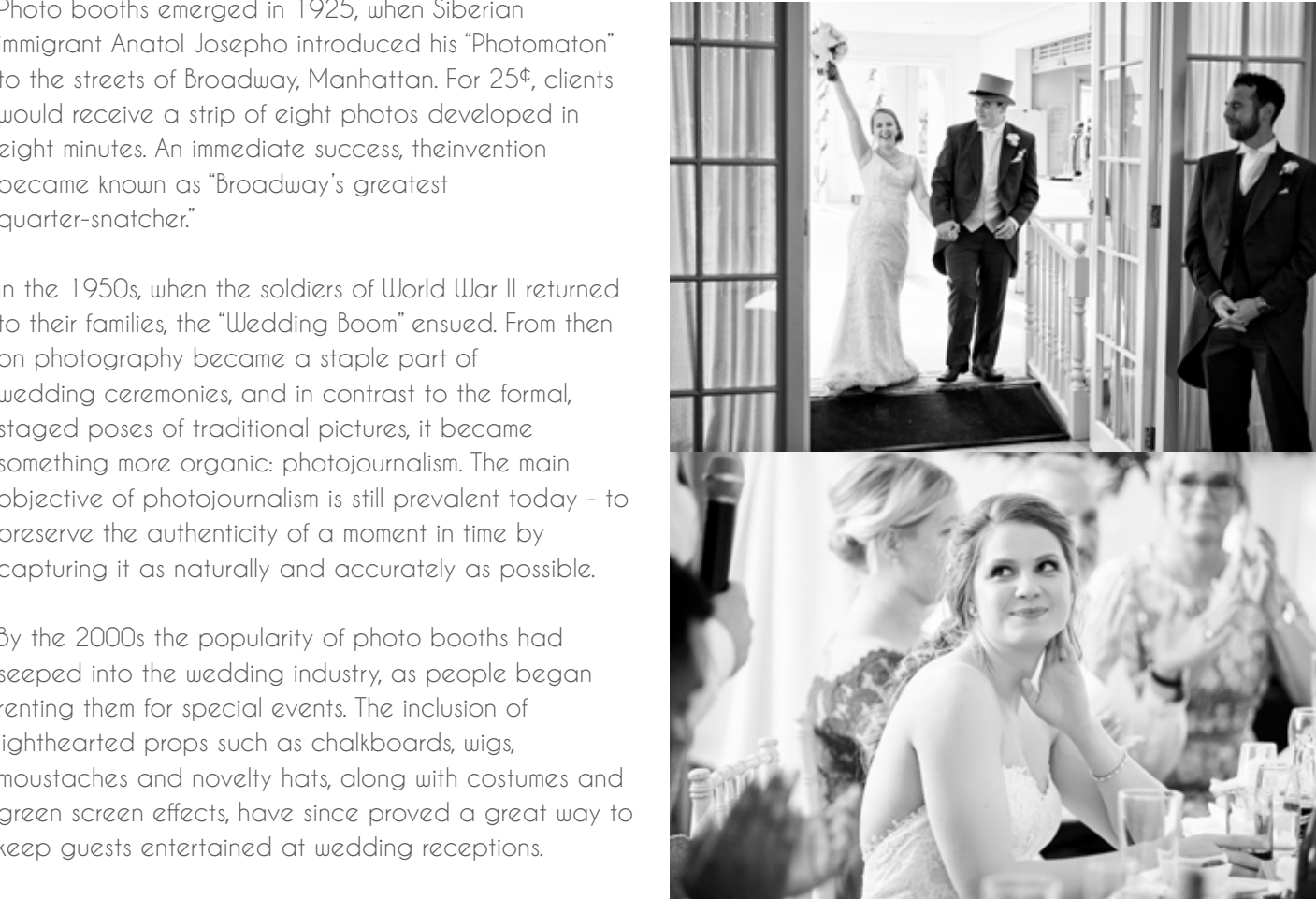
Before photography emerged in 1839, tangible wedding memories were complicated and costly to create. For hours at a time, high society couples and their families would sit together as their portraits were painted in memory of the union. In most cases, this was done prior to the wedding day.

When photography took off during the 1840s, it wasn't the mobile art form it is now. Bulky lighting equipment, wet plates and chemicals took a long time to set up and were difficult to transport; so wedding pictures were usually taken in a studio on a different day. The result would be a small, single image on a copper sheet, as there was no possibility of producing paper photographs or multiple copies.

Photo booths emerged in 1925, when Siberian immigrant Anatol Josepho introduced his "Photomaton" to the streets of Broadway, Manhattan. For 25¢, clients would receive a strip of eight photos developed in eight minutes. An immediate success, the invention became known as "Broadway's greatest quarter-snatcher."

In the 1950s, when the soldiers of World War II returned to their families, the "Wedding Boom" ensued. From then on photography became a staple part of wedding ceremonies, and in contrast to the formal, staged poses of traditional pictures, it became something more organic: photojournalism. The main objective of photojournalism is still prevalent today - to preserve the authenticity of a moment in time by capturing it as naturally and accurately as possible.

By the 2000s the popularity of photo booths had seeped into the wedding industry, as people began renting them for special events. The inclusion of lighthearted props such as chalkboards, wigs, moustaches and novelty hats, along with costumes and green screen effects, have since proved a great way to keep guests entertained at wedding receptions.



Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place.
- Zora Neale Hurston

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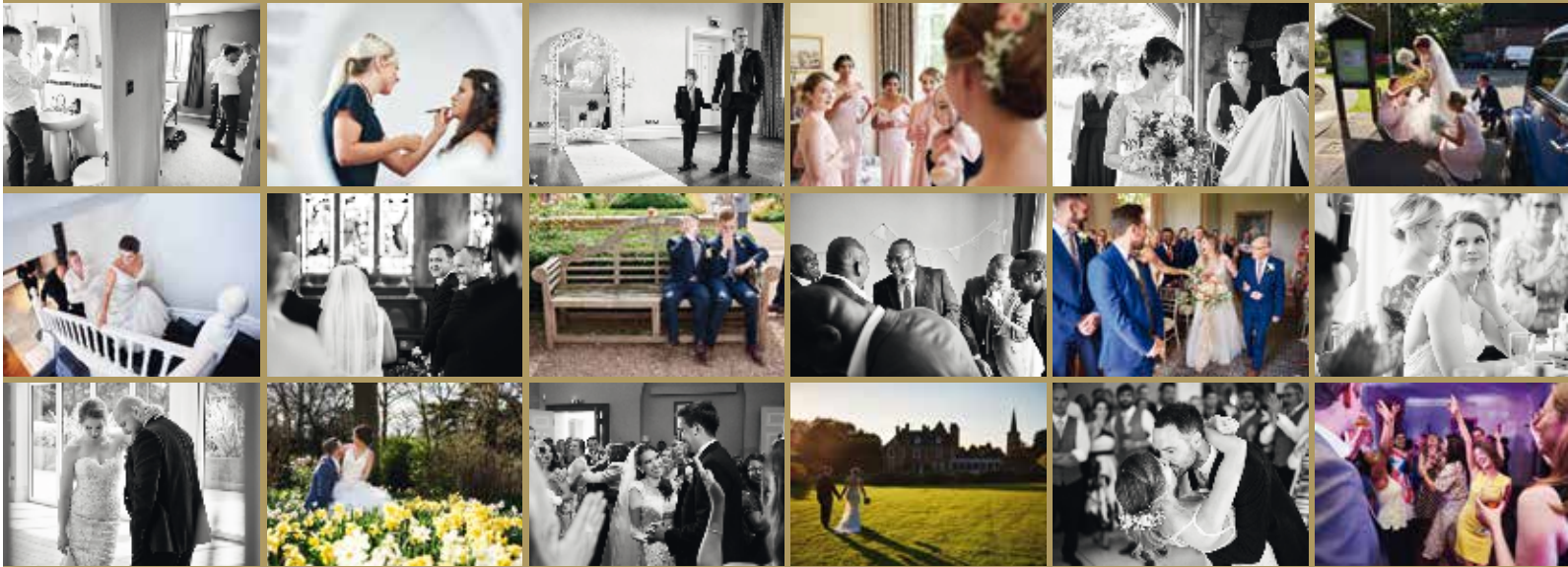


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I think the most important thing to photograph is the emotions and the people.”

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- Kahill Gibran*

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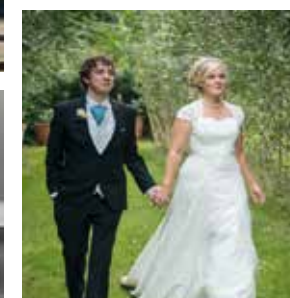
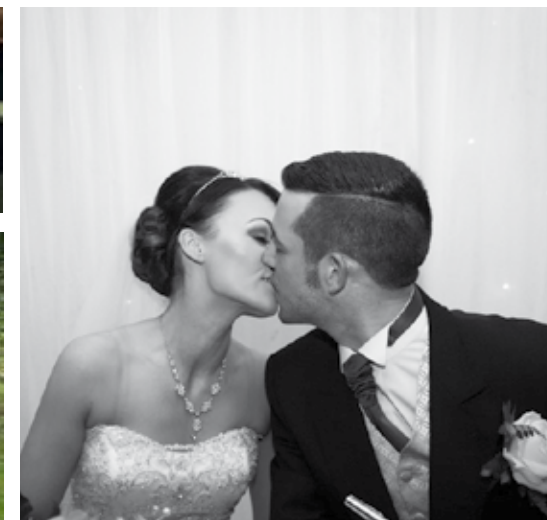


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Wedding traditions

*When soul meets soul
on lovers' lips.
- Percy Bysshe Shelley*

What began around 5,000 years ago has blossomed into a ceremony infused with many ancient customs. Having stood the test of time the most popular traditions remain in diluted, disguised or upgraded forms reflecting our modern culture.

Throwing confetti

Originally, it was Pagan tradition for guests to scatter grain, nuts or rice over the bride and groom to encourage fertility. However, rice in particular has since been recognised as harmful to birds (and humans, should they slip!) The Victorians were the first to use shredded paper as an alternative.



Carrying the bride over the threshold

Marriages in the Middle Ages frequently involved kidnapped women, and so the groom would often be the first to leave as he literally stole his bride away.

Many centuries ago, young women were considered the prime targets of evil spirits, particularly those lurking in the threshold of a new marital home. Likewise, superstition in ancient Rome dictated that bad luck would fall upon the couple if the bride tripped over the threshold, so the groom would carry her through to avoid any misfortune. For Medieval Europeans, this method of entering the marital home also prevented the bride from appearing too enthusiastic about losing her virginity.



Photography by andrewcraner.com

Avoiding the bride before the day

When arranged marriages were commonplace they were treated more as business transactions than declarations of love, so it was often customary for the wedding day to be the first time the couple saw one another. This way, the groom had little or no time to change his mind. Today many women choose not to be seen in their wedding attire until the moment they walk down the aisle, as they wish to make the moment more exciting and memorable.

Photography by bursill.com



Bride on left, groom on right

In less civilised times, it was crucial for the groom to keep his sword-wielding arm free in anticipation of any jealous suitors or worried parents chasing a kidnapped bride. There's (hopefully) no need for such positioning in today's ceremonies, but the tradition remains.

Photography by digimem-studio.co.uk

Tiered cakes

Bread or cakes have been staple celebration foods since the Medieval period. Typically at weddings, all baked goods were stacked high until they formed a mound for the bride and groom to reach over and kiss each other. Doing so without knocking it down would supposedly guarantee them a life of prosperity. By the 1600s, a visiting French chef encouraged the use of sawn-off wooden broom handles to better stack the food, but this idea didn't immediately catch on. The tiered wedding cake is thought to have made its first official appearance in 1882 at the wedding of Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany.

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- Nikki Giovanni*



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Civil partnerships and Civil marriage

In 2004 the Civil Partnership Act was passed, a law which grants recognition of a relationship (civil partnership) between same-sex couples in England and Wales. Couples attain the legal status of "civil partners" and receive the same rights as married couples in a range of legal matters. Further details can be found at legislation.gov.uk.

Legal notice is valid for 12 months, and must be given in the area where you live. The registrar in the area of your ceremony will issue the civil partnership schedule, which is the legal document you will be asked to sign on the day your partnership is formed. Unlike marriage ceremonies, civil partnerships do not require the reading of any legal words or vows but you may include them if you wish.

Civil marriage

On 17th July 2013, same-sex couples received complete freedom to marry when the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act was passed. This legislation gives an official legal status to same-sex marriages, providing all couples with equal rights. Same-sex marriages can take place in an approved venue, a register office, a church or any other religious building. Additionally, since 10th December 2014, any civil partnership can be legally converted to a marriage. This transition can be purely administrative or celebrated with an official ceremony. For further information please contact your local register office.

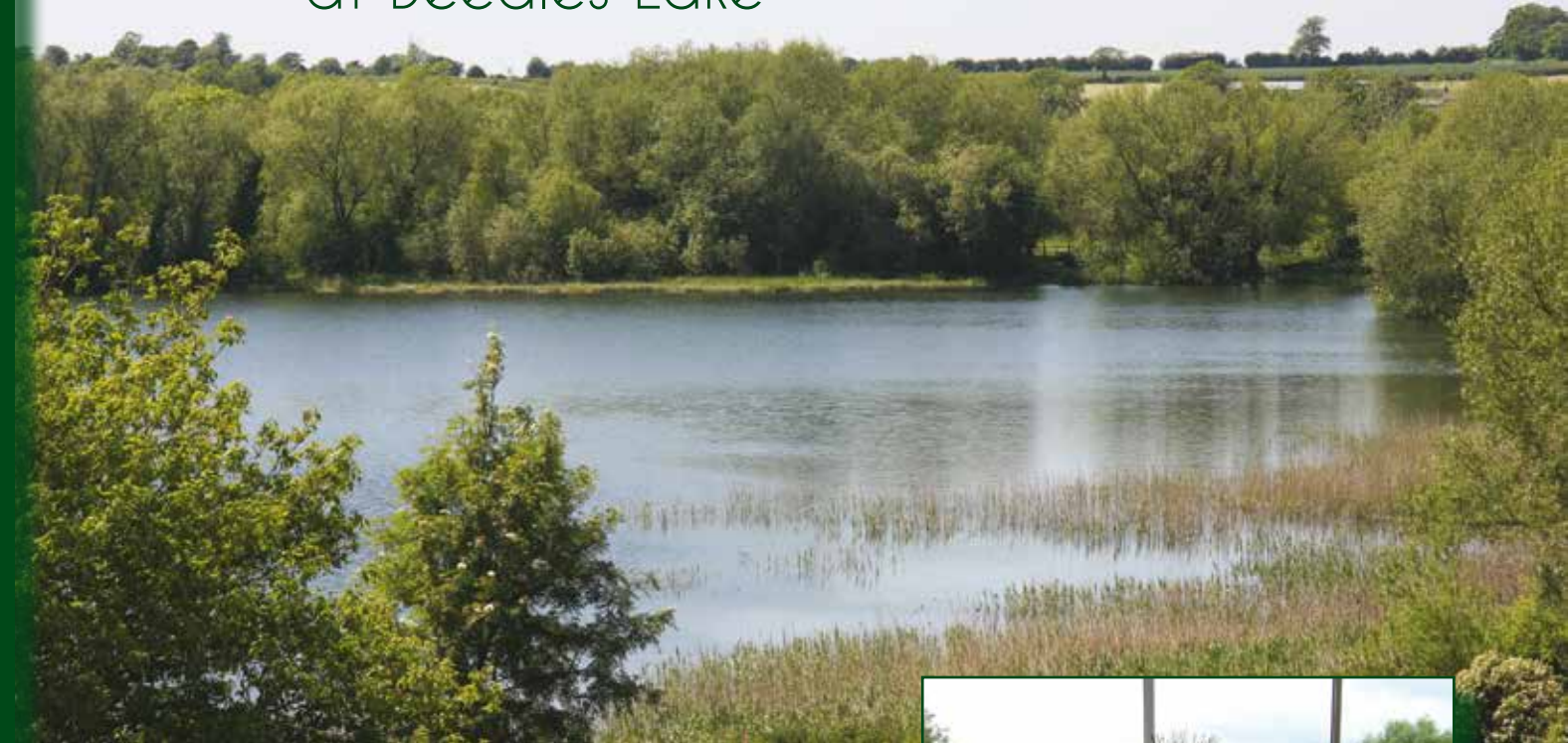


*There are all kinds of
love in the world, but never the same
love twice.
- F. Scott Fitzgerald*

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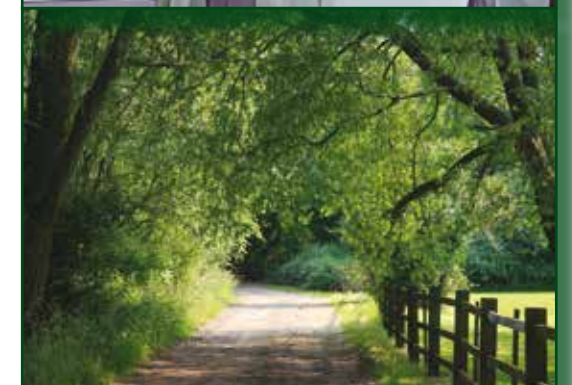


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Entertainment: a brief history

Celebratory feasts have been part of the Western marriage tradition for as long as historians can decipher. The aim of the feast, or wedding reception as we now know it, is for the newly married couple to "receive" and be "received" by society for the first time, essentially starting them off on the right foot, surrounded by well-wishing family and friends, great music and fine food. Traditionally, toasts are made before dinner and include a welcome by the bride's father, as well as speeches by the best man and maid of honour.

Before WWII, receptions were held at the bride's home, and they were therefore reflective of her family's financial standing. Wealthy families would typically hold fancy balls, while middle or lower class families hosted luncheon and tea. When it later became popular to hire dance halls, wedding receptions took on a larger form as couples were no longer limited in how many guests they could invite.

Today, your options have never been more extensive. You could hold your reception in a banquet hall, hotel ballroom, church, wedding venue, restaurant or community hall. Whatever your selection, ensure it's big enough to accommodate everyone!



Photography by andrewcraner.com



Photography by kimberleyhillphotography.com

While it would be wise to hire a band or DJ to conjure up anything people can dance to, you may also want to consider other forms of entertainment depending on the theme of your day. Consider your audience and try to go for something everyone can enjoy. If you have kids attending, include something for them, but don't forget about your grown-ups! Photo booths, quizzes and games will keep guests busy and break any ice, while incorporating a live artist, juggler, jazz band, magician, fire eater or contortionist will foster originality.



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Love must be as much a
light as it is a flame.
- Henry David Thoreau

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Wedding cars: a brief history

We call them vintage cars, but back in the day they were known as “horseless carriages.” Once the first cars emerged in the late 1800s, it wasn’t long before wedding cars came on the scene. Most experts agree that the first car used in a wedding was an 1897 Daimler Wagonette, built in Britain and capable of travelling at a whopping 11.6 mph. We can safely assume that Miss Rosa Gough set off in good time to tie the knot with Mr James Andrews, as historians have photographic evidence of the Weston-super-Mare couple and their guests posing with the car in 1903.

Today there are more ways than ever to arrive at your ceremony and, therefore, plenty of opportunities to match transport style with wedding theme. While an extravagant affair may lend itself to a limo or sports car, a rustic buffet might call for a VW camper van or vintage car.

What makes sense for some couples won’t make sense for others. Many couples rent two or three wedding vehicles, but you may find it preferable to hire one extra special car and a few taxis. You may even decide to rent a bus or coach to collect out-of-town guests. Whatever your choice, don’t forget to factor in the size of the bride’s dress!

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*Love doesn't make the
world go 'round: love is what makes the
ride worthwhile.
- Franklin P. Jones*

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*You gave me a forever
within the numbered days,
and I'm grateful.
- John Green*

Wedding floristry: a brief history

Throughout the centuries, flowers, plants and herbs have acquired their own symbolic language. Roses and tulips, for instance, have developed associations with love and romance, so therefore appear most frequently in weddings. Similarly, white lilies have connotations of purity and innocence, and this makes them a popular choice for both joyous and sombre occasions. When deciding on floral arrangements for your wedding day, consider which flower or plant may be most personal to you and your significant other.

Floral weddings are thought to have originated in ancient Greece, where garlands were worn in a wreath-like arrangement on the head or around the neck. Seen as gifts from nature, plants and flowers were symbolic of love and happiness.

Early Europeans also assumed that certain herbs such as garlic, dill and sage would prevent evil spirits from interfering with a couple. Additionally, in the 15th

century when bathing was an annual occurrence, brides carried strong scented bouquets of flowers and herbs for the added benefit of counteracting potent body odour!

Today, flower arrangements are primarily used for the bridal bouquet, the corsage, the boutonniere and the table centrepiece. The bouquet is carried down the aisle by the bride and will typically match her dress, as will the corsage worn around her wrist. The boutonniere is a matching flower worn by the groom, usually pinned to his left lapel. The centrepiece, a lavish display of flowers on each guest’s table, tends to be the main decorative element of the wedding reception.

The following English rhyme...

originated in the Victorian period when it was believed that if a bride included each of the following items in her wedding attire, her marriage would be blessed with good luck.

Something old represents continuity with the past and serves as reassurance that old bonds with friends and family will remain.

It could be... a family heirloom, a locket with family photos, fabric from a relative's wedding gown or even an old childhood doll or piece of clothing.

Something new is a token of optimism for the newly-weds' future together. *It could be... the wedding gown, lingerie, jewellery or shoes.*

Something borrowed is traditionally handed down from a happily married woman in the hope that her good fortune will rub off on the bride. *It could be... jewellery, a brooch, purse, lace handkerchief, veil or headpiece.*



I carry your heart with me.

- E. E. Cummings

Something blue has connotations of faithfulness and loyalty, and thus symbolises the pair's trust and devotion to one another.

It could be... blue flowers, a garter, lingerie, nail polish or shoes. Some brides have blue thread sewn into their wedding dress.

And a silver sixpence in her shoe was originally included to wish the bride wealth.

This is disregarded in weddings today, but it was once customary for the father of the bride to place the coin in her shoe.

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For the two of us, home isn't a place. It is a person. And we are finally home.
- Stephanie Perkins

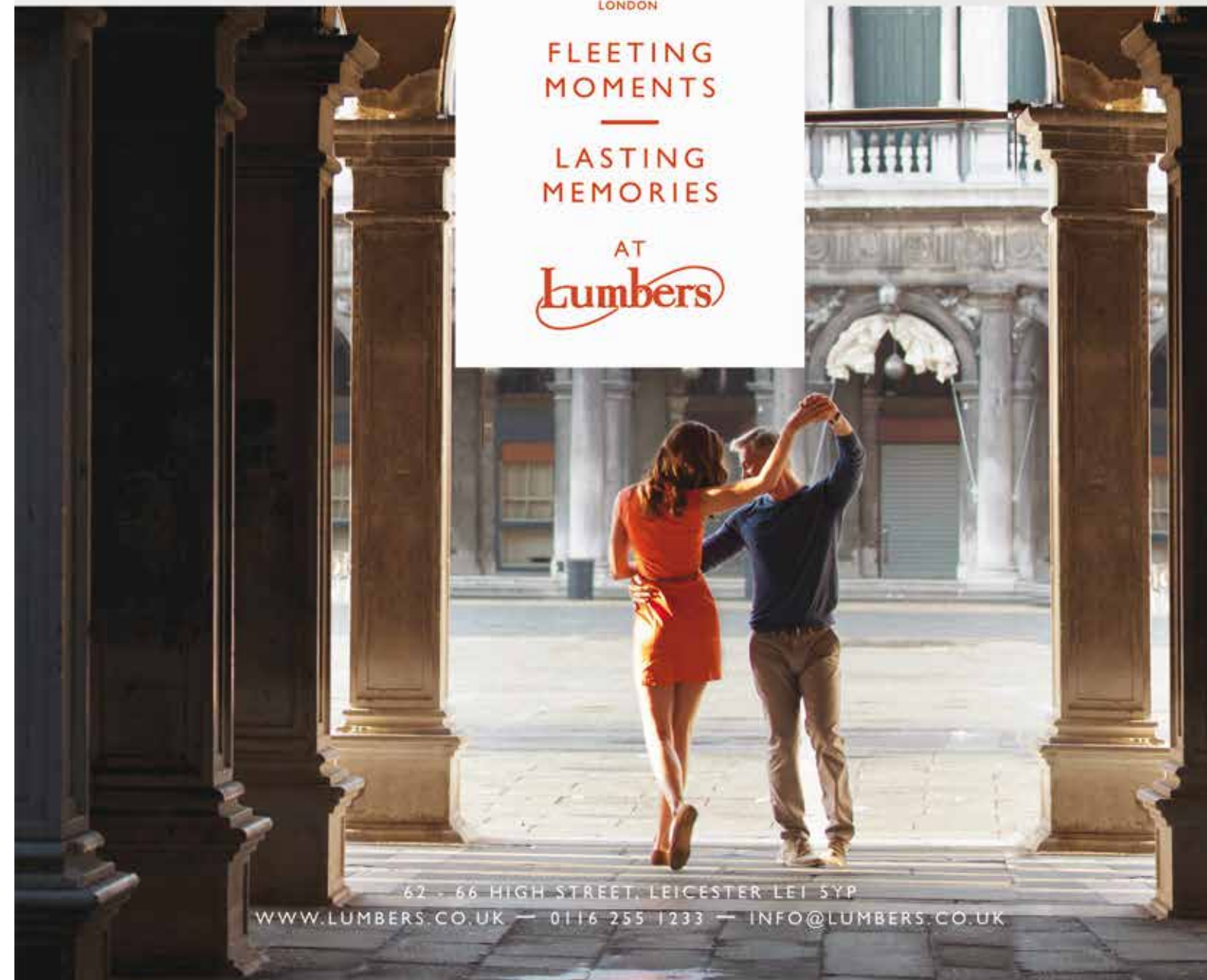


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