

Weddings



Special day is timeless

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GLANCE at a wedding party emerging from their marriage ceremony and there is always a strong sense of timelessness.

The smiling couple, the tearful mother, friends throwing confetti, excited children running around, the babble of laughter and conversation: apart from the fashion, it could be a scene from a hundred years ago.

Weddings the world over have many similarities despite the divergence of cultures. Many of the traditions and trappings have similar meanings. For example, the veil is almost universal, from Mongolia to Manchester, brides still wear this garment along with their best gown worn only for one day.

And then there is the confetti and the wedding party of bridesmaids and ushers. What do they all mean?

The first thing you notice about a wedding party is the clothes and, in particular, the bride's gown. Even the most hard-up bride will find a special outfit. During the war, parachute silk was used, or even curtain material.

The dress is a very important piece of social costume marking the bride as special on the day. It highlights her status as a woman passing from one part of her life to another. This rite of passage holds as much importance today as it ever has for most women.

White gowns became popular during the late-19th century due to new manufacturing processes, while, today, ivory and champagne colours hold sway. In the past, blue was popular, but most brides had to wear their best dress and add decorations, such as new sleeves.

The style of the 20th-century gown evolved from evening wear thought appropriate for a society ball.

The first celebrity wedding that inspired a thousand designs was



Scarlet woman:
This daring gown is by Hollywood Dreams

Advertisement feature

that of Queen Victoria. Drawings of her gown were printed in newly emerging women's magazines along with patterns of the dress, so brides-to-be could make their own.

By the turn of the century, off-the-peg gowns had begun to appear, heralding an age where more women could buy their own gown rather than make do with their best dress.

Royalty continued to set trends as late as Princess Diana's wedding in the 1980s. In more recent times, gowns have become influenced by the Hollywood catwalk and celebrity evening dresses pictured at film premieres.

Here, the emphasis is on glamour, with plunging necklines and bare shoulders and arms.

Confetti is a throwback to an ancient fertility rite. Corn or seed were used as confetti to symbolise the main point of marriage: procreation.

Paper confetti and rose petals came in as a gentler alternative more than a century ago.

Colour code:
traditional white has given way to ivory tones in modern times



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BRISTOL is full of shops and businesses catering for the bride-to-be. Listed below are some handy wedding contacts:

Eclipse Catering Equipment Hire is a family firm in Clevedon that hires out everything you need to cater for your wedding. Call 08452 797977, or visit eclipse-hire.co.uk.

Highly Inviting offers some beautiful bespoke stationery. It is a local company specialising in wedding and on-the-day stationery. Call 07837 103206, or visit highlyinviting.co.uk.

Bride At Home in Downend has a carefully selected

Wedding contacts

collection of gowns, bridesmaids outfits and accessories. Proprietor Jan is passionate about helping brides feel wonderful. Call 0117 956 8068, or visit brideathome.co.uk.

The Bridal Room has opened a shop at 40 High Street, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol. The mother and daughter business team has a wide selection of designer gowns, accessories, prom gowns, bridesmaids dresses and evening wear. Call 0117 908 9010, or visit thebridesroom.co.uk.
College Green

Bridal is located on the sweep of the road between Park Street and the Centre in Bristol. The store has three floors crammed with designer wedding gowns, prom gowns, bridesmaids outfits and accessories. Call 0117 316 9132, or see collegegreenbridal.co.uk.

Ikon Hair and Beauty offers a wide range of treatments ranging from manicures and pedicures, relaxing dermalogica facials to bridal make-up. Visit 121 New Cheltenham Road, Bristol, call 0117 967 0467, or see ikonhairandbeauty.org.uk.

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