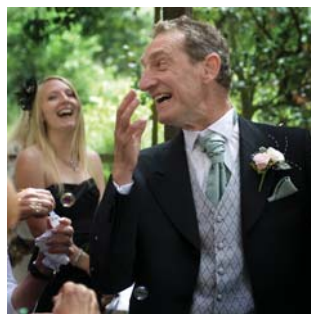


Secrets of a great wedding

by Stuart Hollis, wedding photographer

I've attended many weddings in Leicestershire, the UK and around the world. I've photographed weddings on the beach in California, in the crypt at St. Paul's Cathedral, a forest in Belgium and the swankiest hotel in Singapore.

But some of the best weddings have nothing to do with the location, how expensive the car is or the size of the diamonds on the engagement ring. What makes a great wedding is love! This means how much love has gone into the wedding: the planning, the needs of the guests and the love of the couple.



© Stuart Hollis

Weddings have changed a lot since I took my first wedding photograph in the late 1980s. In those days, they were mostly the same: a church, some hymns, some fixed group shots, a few of the couple under a tree and the faked cake-cutting shots at the end. Most photographers used a heavy large format camera, which meant that photographs had to be staged, causing lots of fixed smiles and 'cheeses'! I created a stir when I started doing 'reportage' weddings and created a new kind of modern, natural folio. I captured the little details, the spontaneous moments, which my clients loved.

What's so wonderful now is that no two weddings are the same. Couples are getting married later and having the wedding they've always dreamed about. I've photographed a medieval wedding banquet where all the guests wore costumes from the BBC wardrobe department (I was dressed as a court jester!) I've photographed grooms arriving at church on tandem bicycles, brides in campervans, weddings in fields and forests, and couples running straight into the sea after the ceremony!

So my tips for planning a wedding? Close your eyes, think of your most beautiful dream and make it come true! Be realistic, but hold on to your vision of your perfect day. And don't forget to pick a good photographer to capture it all!

A selection of Stuart's wedding photographs can be viewed at www.hollisphotography.com

New use for an old barn

Anne and Tim Palmer's decision to turn a disused barn on their farm into a small events venue is already paying dividends.

Although the final stage of the conversion has only recently been completed to give an extra gallery floor, **The Barn at Manor Farm** in **Rearsby** has already hosted a wedding reception, an arts and crafts fair, children's workshops and a sellout music gig. The lovely old red brick building sits in the farmyard of the 18th century farmhouse in the heart of Rearsby and next to the village's landmark seven-arch bridge.

"It's a lovely setting and the ideal place for small gatherings of up to 100 people" said Anne who is planning more music events over the coming months. The Poozies, (an all female band of which Kate Rusby was once a member), are booked for **7 October**.

Manor Farm is a fully working arable farm, and also has B&B accommodation for up to four guests.

Call 01664 424239 to speak to Anne about hiring the Barn for an event or to book accommodation at the farmhouse (you can see photos of the bedrooms at www.rearsby.net/manor).



Wedding Photography

BY STUART HOLLIS



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