

your Wedding



The Tenby
Observer

Pic. Beverley Thomas Photography

Your Pembrokeshire Wedding

WEDDING PLANNER



Welcome to your Wedding Planner, packed with ideas, expert tips and real-life experiences from local couples.

Wedding stories Sarah and Dan Freeman

SATURDAY, September 2 saw the wedding of Sarah Hackett to Dan Freeman.

Sarah arrived at Begelly church in an open top car with dad Derek Hackett.

They entered the church to the wonderful sounds of Clair Jones and her golden harp. Clair Jones was born in Wales and was appointed official harpist to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. She became a household name for her esteemed performance at the Royal Wedding for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. She has performed over 180 times for the Royal Family, she also performed for her Majesty the Queen and more recently for HRH King Charles III at the Senedd in Cardiff.

Sarah was in a beautiful dress, followed by her bridesmaids Suzanne Hackett and Charlie-Ann Walker. The Bride's mother Teresa Hackett and the many guests followed in other open top cars.

After the wedding, there was a procession of cars and motorcycles led by Derek Hackett on his beautiful white 1800cc Goldwing, backed up by the Goldwing club of Great Britain and the 3 Amigos to the reception held at the Imperial Hall, Milford Haven.

On arrival at the reception, Clair was there, playing her golden harp. The room was decorated beautifully in white silk flowers with hundreds of fairy lights. The food and service was first class and nothing was too much trouble for the staff.

With the speeches over, everybody had a wonderful evening with even more food and dancing.



The weather could not have been better, sun shining and blue skies. At the venue there was a large patio overlooking the haven which

many enjoyed. The bride and groom left for their honeymoon in Scotland.



Welsh harpist Clair Jones with her golden harp at Sarah and Dan's Begelly wedding.

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Your Pembrokeshire Wedding

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Ask the expert How to include your dog in your special day

WEDDING days are often filled with celebrations with the ones you love the most, so it's understandable that for many people it simply wouldn't feel right to celebrate their special day without their faithful furry companion.

PDSA Vet Nurse Nina Downing has pulled together her top tips and some things to consider before saying yes to involving your pet on your big day!

Consider if your dog will be comfortable in a wedding environment

Weddings can be busy, noisy and overwhelming – especially for your pooch! If your pup isn't used to big crowds, is uncomfortable with strangers, or doesn't adapt well to new surroundings, it may be kinder to leave them at home.

Of course there are many dogs who thrive from attention and company who might enjoy



temperature be comfortable for them? Is there shelter to get them out of the hot sun, rain or wind? Is there space to take them for a walk during the day? Are water bowls provided and will staff be happy to keep them topped up? Are dogs only allowed in certain rooms? If so, where will they be able to go? Are there likely to be other dogs around on the day?

When deciding on a venue, make sure there's a quiet and private space to take your pooch if they begin to get stressed, over excited or just exhausted. Providing them with a quiet space or room where other guests can't enter, will allow them some space to relax.

Think about their role

From a ring bearer and 'dog of honour', to a simple wedding guest, there are many ways that you can include your pet. If you have a mischievous doggy, perhaps they'd be more comfortable joining once the ceremony has ended, such as during the photos. This will allow them to be included without any pressure to be calm and quiet during the vows.

Prepare them beforehand

Letting your dog become familiar with the wedding venue before your big day is really important. If you are having a rehearsal before the wedding, be sure to take your pet with you for a practice run. Letting them sniff out their new environment not only gives your four-legged friend some familiarity, but it can also give you an indication of how things might go on the day.

If your pet has a specific role, it can also be a good idea to do some reward based training in advance.

Find a designated doggy sitter

Keeping your four-legged friend out of mischief is a lot to think about when you're getting swept up in the celebrations of the busy day! It can be helpful all round to have a designated pet-sitter – this could either be a professional dog-sitter, or a trusted guest.

Knowing someone is keeping an extra close eye on your pooch, giving them regular breaks, taking them to the toilet and feeding them, can take away the worry. If your pet becomes stressed or tired, your dog sitter can also get them settled back at home.

Be mindful about potentially harmful items

Delicious fruitcake, chocolate and alcohol are all likely to be part of the fun celebrations – but don't forget that they are highly toxic for your pet. Before the wedding, ensure that your guests know not to feed the dog – no matter how convincing your gorgeous pup may be!

Even with the best planning, it's likely that some food will be dropped during meal times. If you are planning to have your pet around while your guests are eating, it's a good idea to keep them at a safe distance from the tables and think about taking some of their own treats, puzzles and toys to help keep them distracted.

Remember that there are also many plants that are poisonous to dogs, so be mindful about the type of decorations, confetti and flowers that you use – it's always best to keep them out of reach from wagging tails and curious paws!

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the excitement at your wedding, but bear in mind that no doggy is guaranteed to behave perfectly on the big day. Be prepared that they may cause a distraction or disturbance, especially as crowds of people can bring out our dogs' playful and vocal side!

Make sure that the venue is dog friendly

When viewing wedding venues with the plan to involve your pet, it's always good to keep your pet's needs in mind. Think about the following questions: Is there a safe space for my dog if they want to take a break? Is there an appropriate space for my dog to toilet? Are there dog poo bins handy? Will the

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Wedding stories

Samantha and Stephen Palmer



Pics. Mumford Photography

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SAMANTHA and Stephen are in their 30s, but they met when Sam was 18 through a mutual friend – they ended up meeting in Steve's parents' house - and moved in together three years later so they have been together for a long time. They moved to Saundersfoot just under five years ago.

The couple got engaged in December 2019 at Monkstone beach on a walk (in the random days between Christmas and New Year) and then because of Covid and lockdowns they finally married in May 2023.

The wedding was very much beach/Pembrokeshire themed as Sam and Steve wanted to show off the local area to our guests, many of whom hadn't been to Pembrokeshire before.

The wedding took place at St. Issell's church in Saundersfoot in May 2023 and had our reception at Trefloyne Manor. We also stopped off at Glen beach in Saundersfoot for photos on the way to the reception.

A harpist played at the church; she played Canon in D for Sam to walk down the aisle, Snow Patrol's Chasing Cars during the signing of the register and Ar Lan y Mor to walk out to.

During the service there were three hymns: Guide Me O Though Great Redeemer, Jerusalem and Who Put The Colours in the Rainbow.

Sam continues:

"My engagement ring was a ring belonging to my great grandmother which my nan inherited and then gave to us for me to have as my engagement ring.

"Our wedding rings were purchased in Cardiff in December 2022 – we both chose rings that we liked/wanted to wear so they are not matching.

"The wedding party consisted of:

"My mum Helen who gave me away as we sadly lost my dad in 2020 so she stepped in to the role

"A mutual friend (also) Steve was best man (he is the friend who introduced us to each other all those years ago)

"My cousin William rang the St Issell's church bells for us

"Steve's nieces Elize and Maya and my brothers Richard and Jonathan were my 'bridesmaids'

"In terms of planning, we started looking at ideas at the start of February 2020 but with lockdowns and everyone having to cancel/re-arrange their weddings we put all planning on hold until the lockdowns ended and started properly planning at the end of 2021. As there were so many people already rescheduling into 2022 due to their 2020/2021 wedding being postponed we decided to wait until 2023 so that we could have the venue/dates etc. that we wanted.

"We went to a wedding fair in Haverfordwest – once before covid and once again after

covid. I believe they were at the time Pembrokeshire County Wedding Fayre but the name has now changed I think to West Wales Wedding Fayre. It was important to us to use as many local suppliers as we could and this was a great way of meeting people.

"I had a ballgown style lacy dress which I purchased from White Bride in Narberth. They altered it to fit and changed the style of the neckline for me to create my perfect dress. I cannot fault their service at all!

"My hair was styled by Liz at the Hideaway Beauty Room in Stepside; my make up was done by Amy Louise Aesthetics and Beauty; my bouquet was pinks and whites – a mix of peonies, roses and calla lilies and was arranged by the florist at Sandyhill Nurseries – she also created bouquets for my two bridesmaids and buttonholes for the men in the bridal party.

"Our bridesmaids wore dresses that had chosen themselves – they were 19 and 15 so we took them out for a day shopping and let them choose their own dresses. They had the same style of dress but in different shades of blue.

"We had a colour scheme of blue for the bridal party but left this open for everyone to wear what they wanted and were comfortable wearing and whatever shade of blue they wanted and this actually worked out really well.

"The groom's suit was purchased from Hugo Boss – he doesn't have many suits so rather than hire one we took the opportunity to buy him a really nice suit that he will be able to wear again – he was a little concerned over the cost but I still haven't told him how much my dress cost and at least he gets to wear his again!

"Our reception was at Trefloyne Manor. We had around 70 guests in total.

"We had and ice cream van to welcome the guests to the reception along with their welcome drinks and the Fishguard Folk Singers sang some sea shanties for us.

"Our wedding breakfast was a three course sit down meal and Trefloyne really outdid themselves – everyone commented on how lovely the food was. They were brilliant at creating a bespoke menu with us too as it was important to us to give all of our guests a choice of food.

"On the evening we had a local DJ Steve Briers provide the entertainment and Trefloyne provided an evening buffet.

"Our favours were sticks of rock from the sweet shop in Saundersfoot and beach themed colouring books for the children.

"Our photographer, Sarah Mumford was absolutely brilliant!

"Our cake was made by Dec o'cake (based in Pembroke Dock) – Vicky took all of our ideas on board and created a fabulous 3 tier beach themed cake. The filling was raspberry

and white chocolate and was delicious.

"Top Class Cars provided our transport and we went for something a little different. The groom and best man travelled to the church in a vintage hot rod. I travelled to the church in a vintage blue Buick which also then took us to the beach for photos and to Trefloyne. They also provided the vintage ice cream van at Trefloyne for us.

"Narberth Travel also provided two coaches to take guests from Trefloyne to the church and then back again afterwards as there is not much parking available at St Issell's.

"Steve had his Stag do in Bristol and he and his friends went on a bit of an activity day clay pigeon shooting and off road go karting.

"I didn't have a traditional hen do but I, my mum and my brothers used it as an excuse to go to London for a few days to see Moulin Rouge the musical.

"We went on a mini-moon to St David's to escape for a few days – we are yet to book our official honeymoon.

"My top tips for a bride to be would be to stress less. A good to do list and break down what needs to be done by when and schedule it in rather than trying to do everything at once. Somehow it all works itself out and it's far better to be enjoying the process than stressing yourself out – enjoy the planning!

"Take your time with things on the day, allow yourself to have enough time to get ready without rushing and then just enjoy it! It's a cliché but it really does all go by so quickly so go with the flow and enjoy each part of the day, it really will be the best day ever."



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Ask the expert Beverley Thomas Photography

BEVERLEY Thomas has been in the photographic industry for three decades, and during that time she gained a Master's degree in Photography. She has shared some of her expert tips for couples considering a photographer.

How to Choose your Wedding Photographer

After hundreds of hours spent planning and preparing all the details that go into your wedding, you will want to relive those memories long after the celebrations have ended and what better way to look back on your wedding day is with beautiful photographs? Photographs of you getting ready with your bridal party, Photographs of you saying I-do's in the presence of family and friends, moments captured when you are not looking as you enjoy the whirlwind of attention, making speeches, cutting your cake that you spent months designing and dancing like there is no tomorrow.

With all the excitement of the biggest day of your life, it is hard to stop and take a few minutes to soak up every little detail. This is why your wedding photographs



are important. Your photographs are going to be the lasting memories of your wedding day and choosing your photographer should be one of the most carefully researched things that you do after booking the church and the venue.

Making sure you have an amazing wedding photographer to capture every carefully planned

detail and all those intimate moments is an investment and one of the best investments that you will make.

Define your photography style

In today's modern world, its not just as simple as clicking the shutter button. There are many different styles of photography, with certain photographers specialising in each one, I know I cover all styles from Fine Art to Traditional and storytelling Documentary styles. If you are not entirely sure what style resonates with you, check out the abundance of imagery on Pinterest Wedding Boards, you might identify something in common with what you have already saved.

Define your Photography Requirements

Visualising your day from start to finish is something that I am accustomed to. Once you have decided on a style, thoughts turn to a list of photographs and areas that you would like to be covered. Your thoughts should also include putting aside a budget anywhere between £1000 to £1500 should cover many different photographer's packages.

Meet in Person

Your wedding photographer

is going to be an integral part of your wedding day, so you need to make sure you meet them face to face wherever possible! You will want to feel at ease, relaxed and comfortable with them. If you feel uncomfortable in front of your chosen photographer, this will definitely come across in your photographs. Ask questions upfront so you have clear expectations and understandings.

Have Fun

At the end of the day, the best way to find your perfect wedding photographer is by being honest. Personally, I prefer to know what you might be nervous about, and what you like and don't like. My job is to tell your story through the medium of photography and I want you to enjoy your wedding day and have fun. My end goal after making sure everything is going to plan, is to give you beautiful images to have and to hold forever more. Choosing the right photographer is someone who you can really connect with and remember do your research. In order to help you more with advice, Beverley has put together a comprehensive list of Ask the Expert Q&As over on her website that will help answer some of those questions that you may not think about. Visit <https://www.beverleythomasphotography.uk/wedding-information> to read more.



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Keen to drop a dress size? Optimise with Slimming World

ITS that time of year... Autumn is on its way, we start to reflect on our summer choices and decide to focus on what we might want to achieve over the next few months as far as weight loss and getting healthier goes. And if we are planning a wedding and are keen to drop a dress size for the big day it's always a good time to start.

And so around about now we'll start to read more about weight loss pills, potions and patches that cost an absolute fortune.

So, let's look at it logically; all diets work, of course they do, if you're consuming fewer calories than you were, you're going to see a weight loss. But not all diets are healthy.

And what happened when you stop that diet, stop taking the pills and the potions? What then? It's not rocket science, is it? Go back to your old eating habits and the weight will go back on. Simple.

Because firstly, some of those diets are just not sustainable long term.

And secondly if you haven't learned anything about the psychology of yourself as a Slimmer, if you haven't learned about food and how its possible to eat normal, everyday food and still lose weight just by getting the balance right, if you haven't learned about the part activity plays in a healthy lifestyle and if you haven't learned how much fun you can have and how much support you can get while doing all those things nothing will ever change.

So unless you're really happy to keep dieting forever or taking the pills forever or you seriously just want a quick fix that won't last, then we need to find a different way.

A realistic way. Not a diet but a healthy way of eating that we CAN keep doing forever. We need to change our eating habits so that we can still enjoy our food (because food isn't a bad thing!), and so that we can keep that weight off when we reach our target.

And that's what Slimming World's food optimising plan does. It's a healthy way of eating that we can enjoy and one that, when combined with our individual activity programme, can help you have that fabulous healthy lifestyle. Their unique Image Therapy sessions provide the inspiration, motivation, help, support and fun that is so important to help you do that too.

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Wedding stories Stacey and Tom Roberts



Pics. Beverley Thomas Photography

STACEY (35) and Tom Roberts (30) we met six years ago. They have just got married - September 9, 2023 Stacey told the Observer all the details:

Tom took me to Slebech Park for a birthday present and proposed to me there - pure shock! The theme to our wedding was black and white because what better colours are there? I like the elegant look.

We got married in St Katherine and St Peter's Church, Milford Haven followed by a reception at the Imperial Hall in Milford Haven.

Our hymn in the church was Amazing Grace, which is one of my favourites. To walk down the aisle we had Can't Help Falling in Love and to sign the register we had Thousand Years, played on the organ.

We didn't write our own vows because I don't know what Tom would have said!

Our rings are white gold, mine has a diamanté trim and Tom's is very similar with the diamonds; inside we have 'always' engraved and the date of our wedding.

The wedding party included parents of bride Phillip Harries, Diane Harries and Tracey Thomas; parents of groom Martin Roberts and Sarah Louise Lambé.

Best men were friends John Kehoe, Jamie Davies and Andrew Court; groomsmen Steven Harries (bride's brother) Rhys Roberts and Connor Roberts (groom's brothers), Dalt Thomas and Matthew Sawyer (friends), Finley Turner, Joseph Spencer and Thomas Spencer (cousins).

Maid of honour were friends Sarah Bevans and Kristy Jenkins.

Bridesmaids were Clair Harries (bride's sister-in-law), Julie Turner (cousin), Hayley Coombs (cousin), Corinne Barrett (friend), Andrea McCarthy (cousin) and Mischa McCarthy (cousin).

Our flower girls were Bonnie-Rae Roberts (daughter), Mollie Harries (niece) and Mad-di-Leigh Roberts (niece)

Our ring bearer was Bobby Ralph (son).

We started planning our wedding 16 months in advance; we went to a wedding fair and had quite a few ideas

My gown was beautiful it was

from Sally White at White Bride in Narberth. She was like a fairy godmother!

Make-up was done by Simone Bowen Make Up Artist and hair was done by Morgan, Lilly and Beth from Hannah's house of hair.

Our florist was Keeley from Sandyhill nurseries and wow, I asked for a certain bouquet and she did just that and more: it was perfect! We also had all of our flowers and church decorations from her.

We loved our favours! We had scratchcard in a pocket that said: "We tied the knot, we hope you win the jackpot!" We had shot bottles with Tequila rose for adults and orange juice for children which said: "we tied the knot please take a shot which we used for our first toast!" We then had an after dinner mint.

The bridesmaids wore gorgeous black dresses and the groom and his party wore black tuxedos. The suits were hired from Geraint at Dress for the Occasion in Haverfordwest; he was fantastic!

At our reception at the Imperial Hall in Milford, we had 105 guests in the day where we had a hog roast for our meal which

was absolutely delicious. In the evening we had another 50 guests and had a buffet style again: it was fantastic food. We also had SASS Surprise singing waitresses who were out of this world and had the whole reception on their feet! In the evening we had David Hitchcock, the magician, entertaining our guests from inside to out in the beer garden, catering for all ages. We also had a bouncy castle, a sweet pyramid, a doughnut wall. Cup cake carousel, chocolate fountain and Slush Puppy machine.

Our first dance was Michael Bublé - 'To Love Somebody'.

We had an amazing photographer, Bev Thomas. Wow! That women went above and beyond, her sister Gill too. Our videographers were Dan and Jake; they were incredible!

Our cake was made by The Pembrokeshire Cakery. We had four tiers of vanilla and vanilla, Chocolate and Biscoff, lemon and lemon, and white chocolate and raspberry; it was delicious.

We had two cars on our wedding day: a seven-seater Bentley for the bridesmaids and a Rolls Royce for me, my dad and my

son, supplied by John McHugh of JJ McHugh Wedding Cars.

My hen night was in Bristol and Tom's stag do was in Liverpool: our friends really went above and beyond to give us the best weekends; memories made for a lifetime.

Stacey and Tom are currently on honeymoon in Marmaris in Turkey. They left on Monday, September 11, just two days after their wedding. They have decided to call it their family moon as they have taken their two children.

What was Stacey's favourite moment?

My favourite moment was finally seeing Tom and just thinking: "we have done it", also at the end of the night we sat back and just thought: "wow!" We had the best time. It all came to plan and how proud we were of our family and friends for helping us.

What about her top tips for a bride?

My top tips are: Go with the flow, don't stress just take it all in because when people say it goes too fast, it actually really does, it's over so fast! Take five minutes to take it all in! Enjoy every single second!



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A Top Class Car for Sean and Montana.
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Wedding stories Sean and Montana Willington



Pics. Beverley Thomas Photography

SEAN (30) and Montana (25) have been together nearly two years. They got engaged very quickly around six months after they met. Montana tells the story:

Sean asked my parents for permission to propose to me, he picked the ring by himself. He had to wait for the ring to be fitted to my size so he had planned to take me to Cardiff and propose there, but the ring came back sooner than expected and he couldn't wait! He took both our families out for dinner by the beach. We took a stroll across the beach and next thing I knew he was on one knee. Unfortunately he didn't realise there was a sewerage drain right next to us! But our families were a part of it and saw it all. We went on to celebrate for the rest of the night at Rock the Dock in Pembroke Dock.

We didn't really have a theme to our wedding; I just knew I wanted flowers, flowers and more flowers.

We got married on June 10, 2023, 1pm in monkton priory church. We had the traditional 'Here comes the bride' for the entrance of the bride and we stuck to traditional vows. The vicar gave a reading of our choice which was 'Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

Sean's ring was a traditional gold wedding band; mine was a thin white gold band with a row of small diamonds that matched my

engagement ring.

We had a huge wedding party: Shania Hines (sister of bride) was one of the two maids of honour, Lynda Worrell (godmother/best friend of the bride) was the second. Scarlett Hines (bride's sister), Lucy Thomas (bride's aunt), Michelle Powney (groom's sister), Charlotte Rees (groom's niece) were the bridesmaids with Nevaeh Evans (bride's cousin and godchild) being the only flower-girl. Jack price and Elliott lewis (both friends of the groom) were best men; Colon Burton (also friend of the groom) was an usher. Alex Maddox and George Jones (cousins of the bride) were also ushers, along with Richard and Daniel Powney (brothers of the groom), Tommy Willington (son of the groom), Jesse Lewis and Dougie price (sons of the best men), also Josh Powney (groom's nephew) and Andrew John Thomas (cousin of the bride). We had started planning the wedding almost straight after getting engaged.

I bought my dress from celebrations in Milford but later on added a detachable 12ft train and detachable sleeves. It was a full ball gown in ice white with multiple layers of glittered tulle.

My hair and make-up was done by Nicole Devereux and Julie Duignan from the Miss Jones salon in Pembroke. My bouquet was made by petals of Pembrokeshire.



The bridesmaids wore floor length baby pink dresses with a small train. The groomsmen wore Italian suits from Dyfed Menswear in Crosshands.

The reception was held in the Pavillion in Haverfordwest; it was decorated in pinks and white. Each table had a huge flower arrangement and the top table had a long flower arrangement from one end to the other. Katie Preece did the food - we had a buffet enough for 200 guests, then later on in the evening we had pulled pork and beef rolls.

Our first dance was 'Can't help falling in love' by Elvis.

Our amazing photographer was Beverley Thomas!! And videographer was T-joy Williams who was absolutely brilliant!

Our cake was made by Wendy Lee. It was originally five tiers but we had a bit of an accident the night before so it ended up being four - but it was still absolutely amazing! It was decorated with hand made flowers to match the rest of the wedding in pinks and white.

We had a vintage car to take myself and my dad to the church and then it took myself and Sean to the reception. The car was hired from Top Class Cars. Darren was absolutely amazing! As my dress was so big I struggled a lot, but Darren was the best last-minute bridesmaid I could have dreamed of. He even gave Sean his sandwich after the church. (Thanks, Darren!)

We had two hen and stag nights each! One local, both in Pembroke and one away: mine was in Butlins Adults' Weekend in Minehead and Sean's was in Cardiff.

Three days after the wedding, we went on honeymoon to Rhodes in Greece for 10 nights.

Our favourite moment of the day would probably be the excitement of getting ready and then just sitting back in our reception together as husband and wife seeing how happy everyone was and to see everyone enjoying the day as much as we were.

My top tips would be: As hard as it may be planning your day, just don't stress - what's meant to be will be. No matter how much you plan and get things in order things will go wrong but on the day you won't give it a second thought. Just enjoy every single second because it goes so fast. Also to take 10 minutes out of the day to spend with your husband. There will be so much happening, just have that time to take it all in.

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