

It's just superstition

Picking the right wedding date is essential for your future happiness – or so legend says. **Ann Gillespie** looks at the lore behind wedding-day myths

ACCORDING to folklore, there are many myths and superstitions surrounding weddings. Superstitions are broadly based on events that have been associated with good or bad luck. There is no scientific basis for these but, nevertheless, most brides will follow them, even if only subconsciously. Take the month of June, the most popular month for weddings. Understandable, you would say, since it has the best weather. Old superstitions, however, provide an alternative explanation for the month's popularity. June was associated with the Roman belief that weddings were watched over by the patroness of marriage, Juno, and it was considered very lucky for newlyweds. The commonly known rhyme goes: "Married when the year is new, he'll be loving, kind and true. "When February birds do mate, you wed nor dread your fate. "If you wed when March winds blow, joy and sorrow both you'll know. "Marry in April when you can, joy for maiden and for man. "Marry in the month of May and you'll surely rue the day. "Marry when June roses grow, over land and sea you'll go. "Those who in July do wed, must labour for their daily bread. "Whoever wed in August be, many a change is sure to see. "Marry in September's shrine, your living will be rich and fine. "If in October you do marry, love will come but riches tarry. "If you wed in bleak November, only joys will come, remember. "When December snows fall fast, marry and true love will last." In old Scottish traditions, due to the sun's association with fertility, summer as a whole was considered a good time to marry. One particular custom was for the bride to "walk with the sun" to bring her good fortune. She would walk from east to west on the south side of the church and then continue walking around the church three times. However, the exception to

this rule is the month of May. Victorians took the May warning very seriously and believed the superstitions of bad luck which derived from events during Roman and pagan times. While the Romans held the Feast of the Dead, mourning and making offers of sacrifice to honour the deceased, the pagans held the Beltane festival on the first full moon after the modern May 1, conducting a celebration of sacrifice and mass orgies to mark the return of summer. Even the Catholic Church has created its own superstitions of bad luck by prohibiting marriage during Lent and Advent. It is because of the Catholic Church that couples today still associate Lent, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Advent and Christmas Day with bad times to marry. And if all that is not enough to worry about, even the days of the week have their own warnings. One of the more popular rhymes goes as follows: "Monday for health, Tuesday for wealth, Wednesday best of all, Thursday for losses, Friday for crosses, Saturday for no luck at all." If we are to believe the legends, the origin of the superstition concerning Friday as an unlucky day for marriage can be traced back to the crucifixion of Christ on that day. Equally interesting is that, according to ancient tradition, Friday is also regarded as unfavourable since it was on a Friday that Adam and Eve succumbed to tasting the forbidden fruit which led to their banishment from the Garden of Eden. But with so many myths about, you may find that some contradict each other in some way. For instance, in the Norse tradition, Fridays were thought fine for marriage because of protection from the goddess, Freyja. So even, if by some miracle, you manage to observe each superstition, that may not guarantee good luck on your wedding day. There will always be things over which you have no control – the whims of the weather, traffic or the aftermath of the stag/hen night. So why not set old superstitions aside, start your own tradition and create your own good luck?



Living the dream

ABERDEEN woman Emma Douglas remembers gasping in awe at brides having their photographs taken outside Queen's Cross Church when she was a little girl. And her fascination with weddings has followed Emma, 21, into adulthood as she has set up her own wedding planning service, Timeless White. After leaving school, Emma spent the first two years studying for a business degree at Strathclyde University before returning to her home city of Aberdeen to complete the final two years at The Robert Gordon University. During her studies, Emma spent an invaluable 18 months shadowing an established wedding planner to gain inside knowledge and a wealth of experience. On graduating, she felt that this was the perfect time to put all of her knowledge and skills to good use. And, while she is confident that she can make a success of her business, she admits that

starting out in this industry has not been without risk and sacrifice. Emma feels so passionately about the job that she has even invested money that her fiancé, Sean, and she had saved for their own wedding in 2012. Newly engaged Emma said: "It has been quite a big risk to take, putting savings for my own dream day into the business, but my fiancé and family have all been extremely supportive. I received a lot of help from the local Business Gateway and the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust, too." Witnessing the stresses of planning a wedding at first-hand, Emma has no difficulty empathising with clients and understands how important decision-making is for a couple planning their wedding. That is why Timeless White offers a free "hand-picked suppliers" service to all engaged couples – with no obligation to purchase any of the other services and packages offered by the company. This recommendation service provides clients with a short

report with details of how much couples can expect to pay, who to contact, availability and contact details. The success of Emma's business venture relies on three charmingly simple principles: "Exceptional or not at all; knowledge is everything, and pricing with honesty". These basic principles, on which the company is based, ensure that clients receive a service that really does put the customer first. Timeless White is proud to offer a wedding service that brings a contemporary flare to elegant and lasting traditions and promises a wedding-planning experience to be cherished, says Emma. She is as committed to her clients as she is to knowing the industry. When she is not working hard to make her clients' dreams come true, she is researching the industry and building lasting relationships with some of the most acclaimed wedding suppliers and venues. Emma said: "I am always looking out for industry newcomers and am only too

happy to get to know the established suppliers and venues, too. Timeless White takes great pride in recommending fabulous suppliers to its clients." Timeless White's free hand-picked supplier service means that couples on any budget can make the first step towards planning their big day with the help of a professional wedding planner. "I simply enjoy helping brides find what they are looking for, and I'd like for every engaged couple to have somewhere to turn to if they are experiencing problems as the big day approaches," Emma said. "I can't encourage brides enough to get in touch if they are really having trouble finding something that they have pictured as a part of their day." In addition to the hand-picked suppliers package, Timeless White is also offering 25% discount on all wedding services for a limited time only. **For further details, see www.timelesswhite.co.uk**



From dream to reality – how a special piece of jewellery is made

BUYING a beautiful piece of bespoke jewellery is not just the preserve of the rich and famous – it's an increasingly fashionable way of creating a special gift. Whether it's an engagement or wedding ring or a token of thanks for the bridesmaids or best man, one thing is guaranteed – no one else will have one the same. But how do you go about designing your own piece of jewellery? The process, from inspiration to design on paper and the finished article, is something the team at McCalls Jewellers in Aberdeen work on every day. A specialist in the perfect one-off for individual clients, the company ensures that every piece is unique and a true reflection of its wearer. From a £100 silver commission to an outrageously expensive pink diamond suite or specially crafted anniversary gift, the possibilities are boundless – and what could be better than working with your own private jeweller to design something exclusively yours? "Clients come to us because they want something personal, not something off the shelf," said Sandy Menzies, who has been a jeweller for 25 years. "And they are a lot more adventurous in their taste for jewellery these days. "They travel much more and pick up ideas from abroad – for example, from Germany, where minimalist jewellery is currently more in vogue. "We are quite often asked to make incredibly simple pieces

because these are not what you find in the high street." The process begins with an initial design consultation to establish what the client wants – magazine photos, rough sketches and stock samples can help crystallise ideas. Once the style is identified, advice is given on the best method of manufacture and how to set any stones to be used. The most popular are still traditional diamonds, but a wide variety is available, including blue/purple tanzanite and pink/lilac kunzite, and any others can be sourced. Technical coloured drawings are produced to offer several, fully costed design options before a wax model is made which allows clients to make any changes before it is cast. The piece is then sent to a specialist company for the lost-wax casting process in which the model is put on to a tree containing dozens of other designs and is covered with an aluminium tube filled with plaster of Paris. Once solidified, the wax drains out, leaving a space into which molten gold or other precious metal is poured. When the metal is solid, the plaster is removed, leaving a metal tree. The branch containing the specific design is cut off and returned to the team for checking before being marked with the McCalls stamp and sent to the assay office in Edinburgh for verification and hallmarking. Back with McCalls, it is then polished, set with any chosen



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stones and re-polished. The whole process from idea to completion takes four to six weeks. Most of McCalls' bespoke pieces range from £500 to £2,000, and many are requests for diamond-set platinum wedding bands or rings to fit

around unusually shaped engagement rings such as marquise diamonds or clusters. Designer Aubin Stewart said: "There's much more that goes into designing bespoke jewellery than people realise. "It's worth the effort, though, especially when the customer

sees the finished piece for the first time." Sandy, whose inspiration often comes from Art Deco jewellery in the Bridge Street store's stock, also remodels pieces. "Our customers are from all walks of life, and many are getting married," he said.

"But what they all want from us is something that's unique to them, and it's a privilege for us to create that and share their aspirations." **Call 01224 405303, or visit www.sandymenziesatmccalls.co.uk**

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