



HOLME PIERREPONT HALL

Holme Pierrepont Hall
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrating the Peak Season for Wedding Proposals at Holme Pierrepont Hall



The Brackenbury family of Holme Pierrepont Hall are preparing for the forthcoming peak season for wedding proposals by sharing the heritage of some old English wedding traditions.

Contrary to popular opinion that Valentine's Day is the peak time of year for wedding proposals, internet traffic evidence suggests that Christmas is actually the favoured time for 'popping the question', with a surge in online searches for wedding venues being seen from tea-time on Christmas Day.

Being at the heart of both wedding ceremonies and receptions since 1997, Holme Pierrepont Hall has celebrated weddings of all tastes and styles but the Tudor heritage of the manor house has wedding tales to tell which date back centuries.

Robert Brackenbury, 19th generation owner of Holme Pierrepont Hall says: *"We're all familiar with many popular wedding traditions such as throwing confetti and cutting the cake but many long held customs have been forgotten through the generations or are only discovered when couples start doing their research when they first get engaged."*

For example, there are lots of traditions and superstitions associated with wedding dresses and how they are made and it's fascinating to see how the origins of many of these traditional customs are shaping new trends today."

Holme Pierrepont Hall is a Grade I listed Tudor Manor House dating back to circa 1500 set in a 30 acre secluded estate, just a few minutes away from Trent Bridge. With some of the oldest brickwork in the county and a Grade II listed courtyard garden and grounds, Holme Pierrepont Hall is now an exclusive-use wedding venue but opens the house and gardens to the public for selected events throughout 2018.

To find out more visit www.holmepierreponthall.com or email Robert Brackenbury direct at weddings@holmepierreponthall.co.uk

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Source for seasonal peak in online search traffic

Google Trends data 2004 – 2017 available at www.google.com/trends

Wedding Traditions and Superstitions from the Holme Pierrepont Hall Archives:

- **Sewing the Dress**

Up until recent times, women wore a more elaborate everyday dress rather than a special wedding dress because even for the rich wealthy, the idea of wearing a dress for one day was unimaginable.

When wedding dresses were made, in English tradition a small coin was often sewn into the hem of the gown to bring good luck and prosperity.

It was believed that a small detail should always be left unfinished on the dress until the day of the wedding, as over-confidence could bring disaster! Absolutely nobody working on a wedding dress, in a commercial work room or at home would have dreamed of 'whistling while they work' because whistling (in days gone by) was believed to summon the devil. Black or dark thread was also never to be used on a wedding dress - even for tacking, as this was deemed to bring bad luck.

- **Veils and Chastity**

In the past, brides were often guarded carefully until the ceremony, to protect their chastity and the bride would wear her hair down and have her face covered as a sign of this chastity. Traditionally, the bride would be easily distinguishable in an age when all other women kept their hair up. The modern wedding veil symbolises this today. Historical superstitions suggested that the veil was not to be worn or tried on prior to the wedding day – so as not to encourage bad luck.

The bridal veil is a symbol of youth, modesty, and virginity and was used to ward off evil.

- **The Colour of the Dress**

In the earliest times, the colour of the dress was not important, then in medieval times red was popular, and blue and yellow followed in popularity.

We believe it was Henry V's daughter in 1406 who is first recorded as wearing white, where cloth of silver was the traditional material for royal brides. White caught on after this, initially a colour denoting power, it eventually became a symbol for purity. By the mid 1700s, nobility was shaping royalty with opulent wedding dresses and trend-setting designs.

A traditional wedding poem about wedding dress colours says,

“Married in White, you have chosen right,
Married in Blue, your love will always be true,
Married in Pearl, you will live in a whirl,
Married in Brown, you will live in town,
Married in Red, you will wish yourself dead,
Married in Yellow, ashamed of your fellow,
Married in Green, ashamed to be seen,
Married in Pink, your spirit will sink,
Married in Grey, you will go far away,
Married in Black, you will wish yourself back.”

The particularly negative reference to ‘She wore a green dress’ was a saying that suggested the lady had loose morals!

- **Flowers and ‘Tossing the Bouquet’**

The wreath of flowers carried by the bride symbolised the victory of purity over temptation.

Traditionally brides had worn roses in their hair, but Queen Victoria's adoption of the German tradition for orange blossom entwined around her veil started a craze for orange blossom which lasted for many decades.

Flowers each have a symbolic meaning. Orange blossom signifies purity and chastity. Roses symbolise love and snowdrops represent hope. The groom often chooses the same flower for his buttonhole as a vestige of the time when a Knight would wear his Lady's colours to display his love.

The modern throwing of the bouquet follows on from the alarming ancient tradition of the wedding party participating in preparing the bride and groom for bed. The bride and groom's stockings were removed and thrown to the crowd, bringing good luck to those lucky

enough to catch them. Then the couple were finally left in peace!

- **Wedding Cakes**

Cakes have been associated with weddings throughout history.

The Romans shared a cake during the wedding ceremony itself. In Anglo-Saxon times guests would bring small cakes to the wedding and stack them on top of each other. Later the cakes were iced and the tiered cake was born. The top tier of the cake is often kept by couples for the christening of their first child today. Cutting the wedding cake is now part of the ritual celebrations at the reception. The couple make the first cut together to symbolise their shared future.

- **'The Ribbon Pull'**

A Victorian ritual was to have a sterling silver charm made for each bridesmaid. Each charm was attached to a ribbon and placed between the layers of the Wedding Cake by the baker. Before the Bride and Bridegroom shared the first slice of cake, the Bridesmaids assembled around it to each pull on a ribbon to extract their charm which would bring them good luck for the future.

In less opulent times of wartime when sugar and fruit were hard to come by, thrifty Brides hid a lowly sponge inside a cover made of cardboard and plaster.

- **Wedding Rings**

The Wedding Ring has been worn on the third finger of the left hand since Roman times. They believed that the vein in that finger runs directly to the heart.

- **Lucky Horseshoes**

In the past, it was customary for the bride to be given a horseshoe, which she carried on her wrist. These days the horseshoes are lightweight paper or handcrafted versions, given for good luck.

- **'Something old, something new...'**

The rhyme originated in Victorian times, based on much older customs. The "something old" was an old garter given by a happily married woman in the hope that her happiness in marriage would be passed on to the new bride. "Something new" is often the Bride's dress. "Something borrowed" is often lent by the bride's family and must be returned to ensure good luck.

"something blue" originated in ancient Israel where the bride wore a blue ribbon in her hair to represent fidelity. A silver sixpence in the bride's shoe was to ensure wealth in the couples married life. Today some brides substitute a penny in their shoe.

- **Confetti**

Confetti is Italian for sweets which in Italy are thrown over the couple as they emerge from the Church. In Britain, before the use of paper confetti the married couple were showered with flowers, petals, rice or grains, to bestow prosperity and fertility.

Snowdrops 2018:

Holme Pierrepont will open its Snowdrop Gardens to the public in February 2018. See www.holmepierreponthall.com for details of opening dates.

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