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**He Says, She Says: How to Plan the Perfect Celtic Wedding**

**By Kenna O'Carroll**

Planning the perfect Celtic ceremony involves combining traditions with making decisions. Education on the historical wedding traditions of the Celtic community will help the both of you plan a ceremony that is sure to be everything you dreamed. Making the necessary decisions in wedding planning can be simplified if you know your choices. Lets get started in planning your beautiful and traditional Celtic ceremony with the words to the most widely used Celtic wedding song.

THE WEDDING SONG

THERE THEY STAND HAND IN HAND, AND EXCHANGE WEDDING BANDS. TODAY IS THE DAY ALL OF ALL THEIR DREAMS AND PLANS. AND ALL OF THEIR LOVED ONES ARE HERE TO SAY GOD BLESS THIS COUPLE WHO MARRY TODAY

IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD TIMES, IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH MAY THEY KNOW THAT RICHES ARE NOT NEEDED FOR WEALTH HAVE THEM FACE PROBLEMS THEY'LL MEET ON THEIR WAY GOD BLESS THIS COUPLE WHO MARRY TODAY

MAY THEY FIND PEACE OF MIND, COMES TO ALL WHO ARE KIND MAY THE ROUGH TIMES A HEAD, BECOME TRIUMPHS IN TIME MAY THEIR CHILDREN BE HAPPY EACH DAY GOD BLESS THIS FAMILY WHO STARTED TODAY

IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD TIMES, IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH MAY THEY KNOW THAT RICHES ARE NOT NEEDED FOR WEALTH HAVE THEM FACE PROBLEMS THEY'LL MEET ON THEIR WAY GOD BLESS THIS COUPLE WHO MARRY TODAY

AS THEY GO, MAY THEY KNOW EVERY LOVE THAT WILL SHOW AND AS LIFE GETS SHORTER, MAY THEIR FEELINGS GROW WHEREVER THEY TRAVEL, WHEREVER THEY STAY GOD BLESS THIS COUPLE WHO MARRY TODAY

IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD TIMES, IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH MAY THEY KNOW THAT RICHES ARE NOT NEEDED FOR WEALTH HAVE THEM FACE PROBLEMS THEY'LL MEET ON THEIR WAY

GOD BLESS THIS COUPLE WHO MARRY TODAY GOD BLESS THIS COUPLE WHO MARRY TODAY

## Traditions

The ancient and symbolic ceremony of hand–fasting was often performed by our Celtic kinsmen. To include this beautiful tradition into a wedding, either a rope or a length of fabric will be needed to wrap around the couple's hands. Decision in the type of "wrap" could include anything that has meaning to the both of you. It could also be created to compliment the colors or theme chosen for your wedding. Some couples have used the remnants of their personal baby blankets or a cherished scarf their grandmother wore. In some families the wrap or rope is passed down through the generations. Whatever your choice of "wrap" the tradition is significant in that it means the bride and groom are becoming one and united. This symbolic tradition is often referred to as tying the knot. In your ceremony the two of you will face each other, join right hands to right hands and the left to the left

hands and the chosen fabric or rope will be wrapped around the interlocked hands. A decision can be made to either have the person performing the ceremony or a family member perform the wrapping.

Another widely utilized and very meaningful tradition is the use of a bag piper. The piper has been used in a variety of ways in Celtic weddings. The piper can be presented as a musical accompaniment, standing next to the groom, as the bride walks down the aisle. Other couples have chosen that the piper lead both the bride and groom into the location of the wedding. Locations can be churches, outdoor gardens or other places and will be discussed later in the "decision" section of this article. Whatever your choice of the piper's role, a bag piper will make the ceremony rich in Celtic heritage and custom.

While the traditions of hand fasting and bag pipers are the most commonly practiced rituals for a Celtic wedding, there are several others to consider.

\* Carrying of a horseshoe by the bride is a custom dating back as far as 3–400 years. Carrying an actual horseshoe is a bit cumbersome and heavy. Many brides today choose to have the emblem of the horseshoe sewn inside her dress or embroidered onto the hand–fasting wrap. The symbolism of the "shoe" is what is important. It is meant to bring good luck to the couple.

\* The "Grushie" custom is performed by the groom. He is to toss a handful of coins into the crowd at the wedding reception or line of recession as he and his new bride leave the church or have been pronounced as lawfully married. It is best to make sure the coins are small or ones that have been especially made for this purpose. Heavy coins could injure someone.

\* The custom of a barefooted bride and groom symbolizes a grounding or connection to the earth. This very old custom was performed for those Celtic peoples that wanted to honor mother earth. I still think that this tradition was designed to honor but for comfort as well. Unless of course you're getting married on a ground laden with sharp stones or rock.

The above mentioned Celtic traditions are by no means the only ones. They are however, whether you

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choose to use one or all, certain to give your ceremony the atmosphere of love and at the same time an honoring of our Celtic heritage.

### Decisions

Every wedding is full of having to make decisions. Deciding which tradition(s) you want is just a start. The next step is to decide on a location. No matter what traditions you choose to follow, there has to be a place to perform the marriage ceremony. After choosing a location, the bride and groom should decide who is going to make the rest of the decisions. Making wedding arrangements can often run into a "He says, She says" endless problem. Knowing who is going to be responsible for each task in ceremony preparation can often decrease a great deal of stress and arguments. The following are some suggestions on who should do what. Of course, depending on the couple, these can be rearranged to suit who may be better at performing or deciding on specific matters.

Both the Bride and Groom should:

- \* Decide on the location of the wedding.
- \* Decide who is going to perform the ceremony. Not all licensed clergy are aware of the traditional

Celtic wedding vows or exchanges of commitment.

- \* Choose the rings that will symbolize your love for each other as well as rings that are reflective of your Celtic heritage. This task does not have to be agonizing. I have found the website

<http://www.celtic-weddingrings.com>

to be a great place to start in researching a Celtic knot work design

suitable for my fiancée and I.

- \* Choose the remaining male attendants (groomsmen, ushers) together.
- \* Choose the male wedding attire. Both of you should do this so that the groom can wear a color he likes and one that suits the color theme of the wedding and the bride's dress and flowers. This is done by both because the groom does not know (well he shouldn't anyway) what color(s) are in the wedding gown or on the gowns trim and embroidered work.

Just the Bride:

- \* Needs to decide on the wedding gown. You may need to consult with a dress designer or company that specializes in Celtic wedding attire. If your wish is to have a dress that reflects your Celtic heritage, many options are available to you. Many Celtic brides choose, somewhere on the dress, to have the Celtic knot sewn or patterned into the gown. The "knot" is symbolic of love, commitment and life. This would compliment nicely with the hand-fasting ceremony too.

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\* Chooses the maid or matron of honor and other attendants.

\* Plans the flower arrangements, wedding favors (name cards, catering, stationary to name just a few). When you choose your attendants be sure to have them help you with these too.

Just the Groom:

\* Needs to plan the honeymoon. How about a trip to a Celtic land? What better place to go than where your Celtic roots began.

\* Needs to choose a best man. A best man is a male friend or family member you feel cares the most about you. This is an important choice because you will need some help with the time consuming tasks that always come with planning a wedding and honeymoon.

Planning your Celtic wedding will be one of the most important events you will ever oversee. Someday, whether it is 30 or 60 years later, the both of you will remember your wedding day as a blessing. It is the day the two of you announced your commitment to each other. It is a day your Celtic ancestors looked upon you in spirit and smiled.

This article was written by Kenna O'Carroll sponsored by

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### **Celtic Wedding Rings**

**By Kirsten Hawkins**

A fairly new trend in wedding ring design has risen in popularity over the past few years and it's based on something that is anything but new. Celtic wedding rings, wedding bands and engagement rings that are designed featuring classic Celtic knot work are adorning more and more matrimonial fingers

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than ever before, perhaps since the days of the Celts themselves. At one time these rings could only be special ordered from specific companies and were very costly. Today, however, with the rise in popularity of ancient Celtic design, many jewelers are carrying Celtic wedding rings and jewelry of all kinds on a regular basis.

The best and most beautiful Celtic wedding rings still come from companies that design the jewelry and do all the work themselves. Special intricate designs can be custom ordered and there are companies that will work your initials into a unique Celtic design for your wedding band... Purchasing your wedding rings from one of these companies can result in your having a true one of a kind ring that is completely unique to you. If you love the Celtic look but want to spend a bit less, however, you can simply go to your closest jeweler and find a Celtic wedding ring that suits your tastes. The method you use is entirely up to you.

Celtic wedding rings take their laced designs from the patterns of the ancient Celts, European peoples in the areas of England and Ireland in the last few hundred years B.C. At one time the Celtic civilization stretched across most of Europe, but it is from Ireland that most of the Celtic traditions and designs have been gleaned. Celtic wedding rings incorporate the most recognizable of Celtic designs, the interwoven lacework of basic shapes, entwined and overlapping in a distinct pattern.

Celtic jewelry, including Celtic wedding rings, first gained popularity with followers of neo-pagan religions like Wicca, but are now worn by people of many faiths who simply like the look of the designs. Influences of Celtic design can be seen in many cultures, traditions, and religions of today, most notably in Roman Catholicism which has long since adopted the image of the Celtic Cross as one of their own. It seems only natural that the intricate, ornate, and beautiful designs of the Celts would once again find their way into popular culture. Celtic jewelry began appearing in mainstream America again about ten years ago, although it has been around in one form or another for ages before that.

Celtic wedding rings and other Celtic jewelry make a statement about the person who wears them to the rest of the world. Wearing it says that this is a unique and different person with their own style and a different perspective. Having a Celtic wedding ring on your finger will let you hear some things as well. Most common is the comment, "Oh my gosh, what a gorgeous ring! Where did you get that?"

Kirsten Hawkins is an event planner from Nashville, TN. Visit

<http://www.wedding411.net/>

for more

event planning tips, strategies, and resources.



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