

# An Island Wedding

*The Isles of Scilly are a magical and romantic group of islands, set amongst crystal blue waters and white sandy beaches. Whilst they are already a popular holiday destination, the islands are fast becoming a favourite choice for weddings and civil partnerships.*

BY SARAH HANDY

The islands inspire all sorts of weddings and civil partnerships from just the bride and groom wanting to get married quietly whilst on holiday, to couples bringing their entire families and hordes of friends to share their special day. We have even had gig rowers tying the knot before rowing a race in the World Pilot Gig Championships! For Kate and Peter Johnson, the decision to get wed on Scilly was easy to make:

*"We have been to the islands several times over the past ten years and love them very much. We talked about going away and having a small wedding. Scilly just seemed the ideal place – somewhere we both love rather than somewhere we have never been before. We can't understand why everyone doesn't get married on Scilly!"*

For residents of England and Wales, arranging a wedding or civil partnership on the islands is very



*Bryher Beauties!*



Peach and Jamie Judd. Photograph by Danni Hudson.



Sandra Gibson at work.



Max and Justin.



Photograph by Chris Hall.

straightforward as Peach and Jamie Judd found earlier this year. They got married on St Mary's in April this year. Jamie had proposed to Peach the previous April on St Mary's Town Beach and as great fans of the Isles of Scilly, they both wanted to get married here.

"As soon as we contacted the registrar's office, enquiring about getting married, we were sent an information pack which included everything that we wanted to know. Any questions we had, no matter how small, they were always there to help. They say that organising a wedding is one of the most stressful things you can do but we found this wasn't the case at all. We had a very simple, stress-free wedding thanks to the registration team and everyone at Juliet's Garden." says Peach.

The first thing you need to do is choose your venue and there are five different locations available within the islands to hold your marriage or civil partnership. Each one will make every effort to ensure that your special day will be everything you always dreamt it would be. The Register Office is situated on St Mary's. It is part of the Superintendent Registrars office and overlooks Porthcressa Bay. Unfortunately, this is as close to a beach ceremony as the law currently allows. The Register Office is best suited for small wedding parties as it is restricted to eight people including the bride and groom.

St Mary's is also home to two other, very different approved venues. Built in 1825, the Old Wesleyan Chapel is situated in the centre of Hugh Town and is a tastefully decorated listed building, full of character and atmosphere. It is a popular choice for ceremonies, being equally suitable for both large and small events. The esteemed Juliet's Garden Restaurant, up above Porthloo Beach is St Mary's other approved venue. Here you can have your ceremony and then enjoy an excellent meal, whilst looking out at the stunning views across the harbour and neighbouring islands.

As an alternative to the traditional wedding limousine, you may wish to consider travelling to your wedding or civil partnership on a jet boat. This could be easily arranged if you chose to marry at either the Island Hotel on Tresco or St Martins on the Isle hotel on St Martins. Both hotels represent the very best that Scilly has to offer in terms of location and quality. Situated right by the water's edge these luxury venues are noted for their fine dining. Both hotels can offer a choice of beautiful rooms in which to hold your wedding or civil partnership, ensuring you will have a most memorable day.

After their wedding at Juliet's Garden, Peach and Jamie Judd honeymooned at St Martin's on the Isle:

"We had the most perfect holiday and this is mainly due to the friendly locals, idyllic setting and the relaxed, peaceful and happy vibe which surrounds our favourite place – the Isles of Scilly. We hope to return to celebrate our anniversaries and enjoy these incredible islands for years to come!"

We are a very small Registration department here on the islands and because of that we tend to offer a more flexible and personal service than you would find from the larger departments on the mainland. We always try to



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leave plenty of time in between our ceremonies, so that the couples and their families can take their time over photographs and not feel rushed through.

You will also find within the islands all the extra services you may need to make your day extra-special, from photographers and florists to hair and make-up professionals. You may even want to book a high-speed jet boat to take you around the islands to round off an already magical day!

Once you have made all the arrangements for your Wedding or Civil Partnership on Scilly, you will then need to make your travel arrangements to get to the islands. We would advise that you arrive a couple of days prior to your ceremony, as the weather can be unpredictable. On a few occasions, we have had to reschedule weddings at short notice due to fog or bad weather. However, when the sun is shining, the sea is sparkling and the beaches are shimmering with the finest white sand, then there is no better place to be married. As Dot and Jo declared after celebrating their civil partnership on Scilly this year:

"A lovely setting and a relaxed atmosphere. Everyone on the islands is always very helpful and friendly. Idyllic, great photo opportunities, the perfect place – what more could you wish for? We would highly recommend it!"

The Registrar's fee for the Register Office and all the approved venues can be obtained directly from the Superintendent Registrar. There will also be a charge for the hire of the Approved Premises with the exception of The Old Wesleyan Chapel. These charges and the availability of the venue need to be obtained directly from the premises. ❄️

Sarah Handy is the Superintendent Registrar for the islands and, along with eight deputies, conducts all the Civil Weddings and Partnerships within the islands as well as dealing with all the legal preliminaries to Marriages and Civil Partnerships. Telephone 01720 424321 Email shandy@scilly.gov.uk



Sarah Handy, Superintendent Registrar for the Isles of Scilly.



Photograph by Chris Hall.



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