

YOUR SPECIAL DAY
IN THE
SCOTTISH
BORDERS



Civil Ceremonies

Ceremony Pack





Congratulations

Welcome to the Scottish Borders

We are delighted that you have chosen the beautiful Scottish Borders for your marriage/civil partnership ceremony. Scottish Borders offers a unique range of wonderful locations and venues. Whether you are looking for an intimate room, a bustling town, a picturesque village or a scenic location, your marriage/civil partnership can be performed in a setting that is tailored to your needs.

Our experienced and friendly staff take pride in making your day memorable, special and personal and will therefore take great care when arranging the ceremony, down to the smallest detail.

The Scottish Borders is peppered with handsome market towns, many of which are steeped in time-honoured traditions. Discover the rich textile-making heritage of Hawick and Galashiels, or encounter the historic abbeys in Kelso, Melrose, Jedburgh and Dryburgh.

Explore the coastal community of Eyemouth, while gentle Peebles is a gateway to countless forest adventures - no matter where you go, you will receive the warmest of welcomes.

Marriage in Scotland

In Scotland you can be married in the following ways:

A civil marriage ceremony which is carried out by a Registrar or Assistant Registrar who has been authorised by the Registrar General for Scotland.

A religious/belief system ceremony which is carried out by a minister, clergyman, pastor, priest or other person entitled to do so under the Marriage (Scotland) Acts.

Civil Partnership in Scotland

A civil partnership registration can only be carried out by a Registrar or Assistant Registrar; however a civil partnership ceremony can be carried out by a Registrar and certain appointed religious bodies and belief systems.

Civil Ceremonies

This brochure concentrates specifically on civil ceremonies. It illustrates the range of services and options available to you and we are sure you will find everything you need to make your day special.

Whatever kind of ceremony you are having, you will need to contact the Registration Office to complete the necessary paperwork.

Your Day, Your Way

Civil Ceremonies

If you choose a civil ceremony, you are opting to have something that is unique and personal to you and your families. You will have freedom of choice on how you wish your special day to be. From traditional to modern, we will be happy to discuss the options with you, whatever your choices. We will make every effort to ensure a special and memorable day.

The fee quoted is inclusive of meeting the Registrar to plan your personal ceremony, legal requirements and one copy of your marriage certificate. There are no hidden extras. Marriage Schedule collection and return is all part of our unique service.

It is your day, your way, and we want to make it as special as possible for you. You may choose to have a quiet informal ceremony with just yourselves and your two witnesses. However, you may prefer something more traditional with guests, readings, music and enhancements. It all comes down to your own personal choice.

For full information and arranging your unique ceremony, please contact the Registration Office in the area in which you are to be married, where our experienced Registration staff will be delighted to assist you:

- Coldstream – 73 High Street, Coldstream
- Duns – 49 Newtown Street, High Street, Duns
- Eyemouth – Albert Road, Eyemouth
- Galashiels – Paton Street, Galashiels
- Hawick – Town Hall, High Street, Hawick
- Kelso – The Town House, The Square, Kelso
- Melrose – Market Square, Melrose
- Peebles – Chambers' Institute, Peebles

Arranging your Ceremony

Your civil ceremony may be held at a Registration Office or any other venue/place agreed between the couple, venue/place owner and Registrar.

When you have decided on a date and venue for your ceremony please contact the Registrar to check availability. You can then secure your choice of date and time by paying an advance booking fee.

Registration Staff will be happy to assist in the planning of your ceremony. Whether you choose a simple intimate ceremony or a large, grander event, our staff are here to develop and provide bespoke, tailor-made ceremonies to reflect your personal requirements.



Your Day, Your Way

The Ceremony

A Civil Ceremony is a statement of commitment of your new life together, creating your own ideas and setting your own expectations for each other – a ceremony as unique and individual as you are.

Your ceremony will be conducted by an authorised Registrar. Our Registrars are highly trained and many of them hold the Certificate of Proficiency in the Law and Practice of Registration. They have a wealth of experience and expertise in planning and conducting civil ceremonies. From the minute you book your ceremony we will guide you through the full process, leading to the day itself, ensuring that you can truly have your day, your way.

A Registrar will be assigned to your ceremony and will contact you as a means of introduction and to discuss your arrangements. We offer a pre-marriage meeting which allows couples and the Registrar to build up a relationship, plan your ceremony and discuss arrangements for the day itself.

There are certain declarations that you must make, but you may wish to add your choice of words to these.

You may also wish to involve family or friends in your ceremony by having them read poetry or readings for you.

Music can add to that special sense of occasion and is welcomed during a civil marriage ceremony. This may be recorded music or perhaps a live musician. It is customary to have music played while your guests are waiting for the ceremony to begin. Perhaps a special piece for the entrance into the ceremony room, a piece as the main parties sign the marriage schedule and a final piece for the official exit from the room.



Ceremony Enhancements

You may also wish to enhance your ceremony by incorporating any of the following suggestions, making it more personal and individual.

Guest Vows

Ask your guests to join in on the vows after you make your own vows to each other, the Registrar can offer suggestions.

Handfasting Ceremony

Handfasting is an ancient celtic/medieval custom.

Whilst facing each other, the couple join hands and then the cloth or ribbon is tied around their hands in a knot. This is possibly where the saying "tie the knot" came from.

Couples often choose to use a cloth or ribbon made of a particular clan tartan or a specific colour of cloth symbolising something important to them both. Here in the Scottish Borders we do many types of handfasting and you should speak to your Registrar about your requirements.

What you will need:

- A cloth or ribbon(s) suitable for handfasting



Your Day, Your Way

Including Children in a Ceremony

You may like to involve children in your ceremony in some of the following ways:

- Have them bring the rings forward
- Have them do a reading/poem/song
- Tie the knot for a handfasting ceremony
- Giving the child(ren) a ring or gift as a welcome to new family unit
- Holding the stone in an Oathing Stone Ceremony
- Pouring the sand in a Sand Ceremony



Your Day, Your Way

Jumping the Broom Ceremony

The “Jumping the Broom” is a ceremony in which the couple signify their entrance into a new life and their creation of a new family by symbolically “sweeping away” their former single lives, former problems and concerns, and jumping over the broom to enter upon a new adventure as a married couple.

This “leap” into a new life is performed in the presence of families and friends.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, after the kiss and presentation of the couple to their guests, one of the attendants produces the broom or a special person from the audience brings the broom and places it in the path of the couple and they then jump over the broom.

What you will need:

- A broom





Love Lock Ceremony

If you are looking for a unique add-on ceremony to include in your wedding/civil partnership, the Love Heart Lock Ceremony may be the perfect one!

Its origin is said to come from an ancient Chinese tradition, although it's unclear if this is true. Regardless, it is a sweet, visible metaphor for demonstrating the couple's dedication to remain joined together for the rest of their days.

There are several ways the ceremony can be done. The couple can use a pair of heart locks that they padlock together on a single chain or, the couple can use a single lock and secure it to a permanent structure.



Toss or Keep the Keys

The ceremony does not end with simply securing the locks though. The key to this successful love lock ceremony is to throw away the keys so the locks can never be unlocked, opened, and released from the chain. This key tossing would make for a great photo opportunity.

Traditionally, couples have tossed their keys into the water or woods where there is no hope of retrieving it. You may even bury the keys in a meaningful location. However, due to sentimental value and environmental concerns, many couples choose to keep their keys as a special keepsake of their special day. The trend is for brides to string the keys onto a plain bracelet or necklace chain, which she then wears around her wrist or neck during the ceremony. You may also want to give them to a trusted family member for safekeeping.

What you will need:

- A lock (this may be personalised with your initials/names and date of marriage)

Your Day, Your Way



Wine Box/Love Letter Ceremony

The Couple can celebrate their unity and forever seal their love after their vows with a Love Letter Ceremony. This love letter locked box is a time capsule to forever safeguard their vows or love letters to each other to be revealed at a later date.

How does the love letter ceremony work?

Before the Ceremony:

The couple write each other a love letter, telling them how much they mean to one another, what they love about each other, and why they want to spend the rest of their lives with this person. The letters are then sealed in individual envelopes to be placed in the box.

After the Vows:

The Registrar will give a short presentation on the meaning and use of the love letter box. Then the bride will hand her letter to the groom and the groom will hand his letter his bride. The couple will then place their letters in the box along with their favourite vintage, close the lid and together, turn the key to lock the box for safe-keeping.

After the Ceremony:

The love letter box is only to be opened for one of two reasons. First, if ever the couple are facing difficult times and questioning their marriage, they are to open the box, have a glass of wine or other beverage they chose to insert, and then read the letter written for them in privacy to reflect on the reasons they married many years ago.

The second reason to open the lock box is for an anniversary date the couple may choose to reflect on the beginning of their marriage and life together.

What you will need:

- Box that will hold a bottle of wine and two letters

Your Day, Your Way

Oathing Stone Ceremony

The Oathing Stone is an old Scottish tradition, where the couple place their hands upon a stone whilst saying their vows. Taken from the ancient Celtic custom of “setting an oath in stone”, inclusion of the Oathing Stone Ceremony in the vows can be deeply moving.

During the declaration, couples hold the Oathing Stone together in their hands. It is believed that holding the stone during the vows in turn sets them in stone.

What you will need to do:

- Collect a stone suitable for use as an Oathing Stone.
- Prepare the stone and have it engraved if desired.

Quaich Ceremony

The Quaich was a two-handled loving cup used during the wedding feast. From it the couple took their first communion together as a married couple. They also used the Quaich at the reception for their first toast together.

Symbolic of the sharing between the couple, it's an ancient vessel used by two families or clans, to celebrate a bond, with each leader partaking of the offered drink.

What you will need:

- A Quaich (sometimes the couple have this engraved with their names and date of marriage)
- Preferred drink to fill the Quaich



Remembering Absent Loved Ones

There are many ways you may like to remember loved ones on your day, the most obvious of which being asking your Registrar to mention loved ones in your ceremony. However you may also wish to include one of the following acts of remembrance:

- The lighting of a memorial candle in memory of an individual or a group of individuals.
- A table of remembrance with a photograph of your loved one(s) – you can also include a memorial candle here.
- Have a friend or family member do a reading or small speech in memory of the person/people.
- Include a favourite song of your loved ones within your ceremony music.



Your Day, Your Way



Sand Ceremony

This ceremony requires the couple to provide two containers of sand – one for each of them. The two containers of sand are then poured into a third larger container at different points in the ceremony, each symbolising a different aspect of the couple, their relationship and their families. The sand then forms a pattern in the container, which is kept by the couple as a keepsake of the day.

What you will need:

- Two containers of sand, a different colour in each.
- One large container capable of holding the sand from the two smaller containers.



Unity Candle Ceremony

The lighting of a unity candle is a relatively recent addition to the traditional ceremony. It symbolises the joining of the two families and the two individuals becoming one in commitment.

The unity candle ceremony uses two taper candles with a larger pillar candle (called the unity candle) in the centre. At the beginning of the ceremony, a representative from each family (usually the mothers of the couple) light the two taper candles. Later in the ceremony, the couple use the two taper candles to light the large pillar (unity) candle together.

What you will need:

- 1 large candle (this is the unity candle).
- 2 smaller candles (1 each for the couple) and tapers to light them.

A suitable heat resisting container for the unity candle.



These are just a small example of the various ways of enhancing your ceremony and making it personal to you. Please discuss any thoughts or suggestions with your Registrar who will be happy to incorporate them into your bespoke ceremony. Our staff are very happy to include any other ceremony traditions that you may suggest.

Your Day, Your Way



Requirements for Marriage/ Civil Partnership

Uniquely placed to assist, our experienced Registration Staff will advise on individual Statutory Requirements which can vary considerably depending on nationality, country of residence and any previous marriages/civil partnerships. We will guide you through the legal preliminaries and will check and process all submitted documents.

Approximately 10-12 weeks before your marriage/civil partnership, both parties should complete Marriage/Civil Partnership Notice Forms. These forms must be submitted along with birth certificates, and other relevant documents and the fee to the appropriate Registration Office.



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Other Special Ceremonies

Vow Renewal Ceremony

If you are already married but would like to renew your marriage vows, we can offer you a unique and personal way to celebrate your original wedding vows.

Although these ceremonies are often associated with a special anniversary, they can be performed at any time in your marriage. They are a public statement of your continued commitment to each other.

Child Naming Ceremony

A naming ceremony is a great way to celebrate a child or children arriving into the family and officially announce the name(s) you have chosen. Children of any age can have a naming ceremony – they are not just for babies.

They are a great way to include a whole family in a celebration that can be a unique event for you all.

Vow Renewal and Child Naming Ceremonies can take place in one of our Registration Offices or at a venue of your choice. At the end of your ceremony you are presented with a certificate to mark the occasion.



Registration Offices in the Scottish Borders

Peebles Registration Office

Chambers' Institute
Peebles

Melrose Registration Office

Market Square
Melrose

Kelso Registration Office

The Town House
The Square
Kelso

Hawick Registration Office

Town Hall
High Street
Hawick

Duns Registration Office

49 Newtown Street
High Street
Duns

Eyemouth Registration Office

Albert Road
Eyemouth

Coldstream Registration Office

73 High Street
Coldstream

Galashiels Registration Office

Paton Street
Galashiels

For further information please see
www.scotborders.gov.uk.registrars
Email: RegistrationService@scotborders.gov.uk
Call: 0300 100 1800

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