

Mad about the boy



The outfits



A change in law made it possible for Rob and Rob to have the wedding of their dreams.

Rob first met Rob Q when their eyes met over a bar in Windsor. Unfortunately, Rob was already on a date which was not working out, to say the least, and he didn't have the chance to swap details with the handsome man who he had only shared pleasantries and smiles. A few weeks later the guys ran into each other again and this time Rob ensured he gave Rob

Q his mobile number. A date ensued the following day in a pub in Marlow, Buckinghamshire. Since then the boys haven't left each other's side.

Rob tells us the rest of their story. "The proposal was unexpected and not well planned out, but it delivered the correct answer! So, it couldn't have been too bad.

"Before Christmas 2013, we heard the law was due to change in spring 2014. I took the decision that now was the time to get our marriage secured and start a formal joint life together. After many trips to local jewellers, I decided upon a bespoke ring –

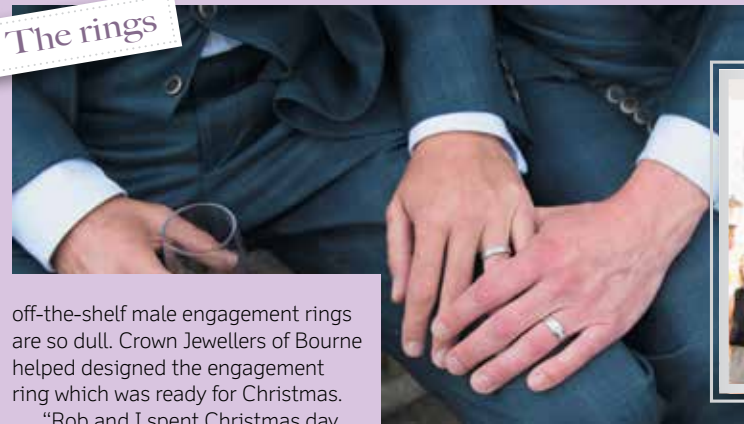


The stationery



The venue

The rings



off-the-shelf male engagement rings are so dull. Crown Jewellers of Bourne helped design the engagement ring which was ready for Christmas.

"Rob and I spent Christmas day on our own giving me the perfect opportunity to pop the big question. With the first bottle of bubbles popped, we sat down to open some presents, with me pushing the ring box to the top of the pile. Rob slowly opening the box as I asked: 'Will you marry me?'"

How did the change in law make you feel?

"We have been a couple now for more than 10 years and having built a life together in that time it was important for us to know we both had the safety and security of a marriage certificate and the legal right to be the others next of kin.

"The option of a civil partnership has been available for many years but it somehow always felt second rate and belittling to only be civil partners and not be formally husband and husband. For some a civil partnership is a perfect solution, for us we wanted something more mainstream and to match what our love for each other warranted. The impending change in the law gave us that option at last, so with the promise of the legal changes being in place by spring 2014, we booked our place at Stamford registry office."

How long did it take to organise the wedding?

"Due to the law change, our personal situation, and us being men, we didn't give ourselves much time at all to organise a wedding. We took the first available date at the registry office

IRNHAM HALL



at Stamford – 28 June, which also happened to be the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York in 1969 and also the national UK Pride Day. A massive day in terms of gay liberation and gay rights across the world. It also happened to be the height of summer and one of the longest days. After popping the questions on Christmas day, we had only six months to organise everything from scratch. We worked hard to get the wedding organised in such a short period of time, but to be honest, it wasn't that difficult. We wanted a smart, relaxed and casual summer garden wedding."

How did you decide on the venue?

"With only six months until the big day nearly all the regular wedding venues were booked. So we looked at having the wedding reception in our garden. However the cost of a marquee and all the required paraphernalia to host 90 people meant the cost was prohibitive.

"Luckily our catering contractor (Rutland Gourmet) suggested we looked at Irnham Hall which is only a few miles from our house – it suited us perfectly. Irnham was a wonderful, private and beautiful discovery; it gave us the space we wanted for our family and friends to come and enjoy the day with us. We had our dinner and evening event in the walled garden which was filled with beautiful borders and in the large, light orangery."

Who were your wedding suppliers?

"We chose Rutland Gourmet as they were highly recommended by local friends and after reading the selection of menus we knew the food on offer was to our tastes. We are both massive foodies, and we wanted the best. The one thing people remember about a wedding is the quality of the food. We decided on an informal barbeque-based main meal, with a tasty finger buffet for our evening guests.

"Our wedding furniture was supplied by Events and Tents of Grantham. We chose some lovely teak garden furniture and cream parasols which sat in the walled garden of Irnham for our guests as well as chairs and tables for the evening event.

The venue



“Whittlesey Catering Supplies provided the linen and cutlery. They were also highly recommended and were extremely understanding with our ever-changing list of requirements.

“Stamford Executive Chauffeurs provided the car. Sleafordian Coaches organised the transportation for our friends and family, many of whom came from London and the Home Counties to be with us on the day. Coaches took our guests to the registry office, to the reception and then back to their hotels so everyone enjoyed a few drinks.

“We used Emma Joy Photography of Peterborough to capture the day. Well, technically, we used her husband, Paul, who has branched out into wedding photography. We wanted Paul to photograph informal moments rather than formal group photos – something altogether more casual, natural and fun.

“Party Power PA of Nottingham supplied the PA, sound system and lights. Majestic Wines provided the beverages. Rustic, country garden themed flowers were selected by Stephanie’s Florists of Bourne.

“Our suits and shoes came from Hackett London – two three-piece Italian suits specifically tailored for us, with classic brown brogues. Our



All photographs, Paul from Emma Joy Photography



matching Duchamp ties were from Selfridges, our shirts from TM Lewin and cuff links from Simon Carter.

“The tables were decorated with mixed delphinium petals and small love hearts confetti made from recycled paper which mainly came from the John Lewis collection.”

What was the theme?

“Our theme evolved naturally over the last few months. We knew we didn’t want a confirmative wedding, so didn’t have a best men, ushers, bridesmaids, speeches or a first dance. We wanted our wedding to be different to every other wedding. This a double celebration for Rob and I, not only does it mark the biggest day in our lives, it marks a point in history that hopefully will bring further acceptance and understanding of gay couples and how they too can build, grow and

experience long and meaningful relationships in the eyes of the law and the community.

“With our original idea of having a home wedding, the theme that grew with our plans was a rustic but elegant country garden party. We chose light pastel colours for all our decorations and flowers with hessian and lace. The hessian table runners were hand made for the occasion to dress the centre of each table and jam jars covered with hessian and a simple ribbon and bow held our summer flowers.”

What was your most memorable moment?

“All of it! The venue, the guests, the flowers and the food were all amazing. We haven’t stopped wishing that we could do it all again! If we had to pick one thing it would definitely be our first dance. We were both extremely nervous, but when the moment came it was just perfect – lost for a few minutes in each other’s arms. Bliss.

Where was the honeymoon?

“We had a week in a villa in Port De Dollenca, Majorca. We couldn’t afford a grand honeymoon as we self-funding our wedding, but we hope to save up to spend Christmas in Barbados – one of our favourite holiday destinations.” **W**

