



THE GROOM: Keith Irwin, European pricing director, Hewlett Packard
THE BRIDE: Caroline Lloyd, projects finance manager, Victoria and Albert Museum
DATE OF WEDDING: 27th September, 2008
CEREMONY VENUE: Nash Point Lighthouse, Margate
RECEPTION VENUE: Cardiff Castle



Love at the Lighthouse

Love and laughter was the order of the day for Caroline and Keith

How it all began: Wedh Caroline and Australian Keith say they met in the style of television show *Gain and Stacy* in 1993, whilst Keith was working in London and Caroline in Cardiff. "We were both accountants for the same company," says Caroline. "Our emails and phone conversations were work related at first and then one day took a turn – it was the manly voice and Aussie accent!" Their conversations prompted Keith to invite Caroline to London and their relationship grew. "Keith went back to Sydney to live after our romance and we didn't see one another again for eight years," says Caroline. But despite living in different countries, the pair kept in touch and when Keith returned to the UK their romance developed once again. "I came back to visit the UK for a job interview," recalls Keith, "and Caroline was swept off her feet again by my big hairy Australian ways."

Caroline proposed to Keith a few years later as they flew over New York. With their engagement set, Keith gave Caroline a family engagement ring. "It's an 18 carat gold art deco ring made in Japan during the war," says Caroline. "Keith's uncle had it made for when he proposed to Keith's aunt in Sydney after the war."

The hen and stag parties: To say goodbye to their single statuses, Caroline celebrated with family and friends in Las Vegas, a restaurant in Cardiff's buzzing Café Quarter. Meanwhile Keith celebrated in Cardiff's Spice Quarter along with his brothers from Australia, Caroline's best friend from Texas and other family and friends.

"The real party animals all ended up together in Flares until closing time," says Caroline.

The wedding party: Caroline asked her sister Claire to be her bridesmaid along with Claire's daughter, two year-old Darcy. Caroline chose metallic colours for them to wear, to complement her pale gold bridal gown. Claire wore a black dress with gold shoes and a sparkling gold shrug and flower girl Darcy was dressed in a white and silver dress, finished with silver accessories.

Keith and Caroline both chose a best man for their big day. Keith's was his friend Jerome from France and Caroline's was her friend Jason from Texas. The pair were joined by Caroline's four year-old nephew, Harvey. All three wore black tie to complete the wedding's glamorous look and Keith stood out as the groom in white tie.

The dress: Caroline chose a modern yet glamorous bridal look. She wore a gold silk Jim Hjelm bridal gown with gold and silver embroidery and layers of tulle over the skirt. The dress' detail was complemented by embroidered silk Gina shoes. To add a touch of tradition, Caroline accessorised with her great grandmother's gold locket and ring. For her bouquet, she chose contemporary calla lilies which were embellished with twigs and diamonds.

The setting: Caroline and Keith exchanged their vows at the

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- THE BRIDE ”

Nash Point Lighthouse in Marcross. Caroline says: “We visited several venues near Barry and fell in love with the lighthouse on sight.” For Caroline, who grew up in Barry, the venue had a special significance. “Caroline’s grandfather and ancestors all worked at sea and she grew up listening to the sound of fog horns in the morning,” says Keith. Inside the lighthouse a male choir from the Welsh College of Music and Drama performed during the ceremony. After exchanging their vows, Keith and Caroline had their first dance in the lighthouse to the choir’s rendition of *Waltzing Matilda*. “The lighthouse keepers and staff in the café were wonderful,” says Caroline. “We knew they’d make our day fabulous – which they did!”

With the ceremony over the couple and their guests travelled to Cardiff Castle for a medieval-style reception that combined a Welsh and Australian theme.

It’s all in the details: Caroline and Keith describe the theme for their wedding day as ‘Australian and Welsh fun’. Chosen to reflect their nationalities, the theme began with their transport: a vintage double-decker bus in the Australian colours of yellow and green. “We travelled with most of the wedding party and the bus was complete with a supply of Champagne and music that we sang to,” says Caroline. The famous Cardiff Castle was the setting for the couple’s reception party where they had a four-course vegetarian banquet. The atmospheric room was simply decorated with candles and singers and a harpist provided the evening’s entertainment.

Their wedding cake was a true blend of Australian and Welsh style: a three-tier cake of sponge with lemon buttercream, chocolate and fruit cake. “The top tier was held up by four sheep,” says Caroline. “It was also decorated with a Welsh dragon being chased by a kangaroo, daffodils and the Welsh and Australian flags.”

On reflection: Trouble with transport on the way to the ceremony was the only problem the couple encountered on their big day. “The double-decker bus hit an overhead branch on the way to the lighthouse which put a crack in the roof so we all had to get out and walk,” recalls Caroline. “Some friends with cars provided a shuttle service for guests and the bus had to reverse up the lane and park where there was room. To everyone’s relief we arrived right on time.”

But the mishap had little chance of dampening the couple’s day. “All the suppliers, venues and registrars were amazing and very helpful,” says Caroline. Her advice to other couples is to “relax and don’t forget it’s your day”. Another tip from the couple is to pick a wedding list that works for you. After being a couple for eight years, they decided against a traditional list. Caroline says: “We asked our friends and family for donations to the Children’s Cancer and Leukaemia Fund in memory of my nephew Charlie – big brother to Harvey and Darcy – and would love to say thank you to them. We raised over £1,200.”

The honeymoon: With their big day over, Caroline and Keith jetted off to Australia for a wedding party for Keith’s friends and family who were unable to attend their Welsh wedding. Caroline says their “proper” honeymoon is booked for May 2009, a week in St Lucia as man and wife.

GET THE LOOK

Take tips from Caroline and Keith’s wedding style...



MEDIEVAL STYLE

If you love historic-style keep decorations to a minimum and allow the natural features of your venue to shine through, Caroline and Keith’s reception at Cardiff Castle was complete with banquet-style tables, candles and medieval-style entertainers.



TIME TRAVEL

Make an impact on your big day and arrive in vintage-style transport. Caroline and Keith chose a vintage double-decker bus and travelled with their wedding guests. All aboard!



BY THE SEA

If you love the sea, why not pick a coastal venue in South Wales for a romantic setting that will provide photo opportunities aplenty – like the Nashpoint Lighthouse in Marcross.



A TASTE OF FUN

Have fun with your wedding cake. Caroline and Keith’s cake was decorated with an edible dragon, sheep, kangaroo and daffodils and topped with an Welsh and Australian flag to reflect the day’s theme.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Photographer
Nic Cleave Photography
Tel: 01792 429 201
www.niccleave.com

Venues
Cardiff Castle
Tel: 029 2087 8100
www.cardiffcastle.com

Nash Point Lighthouse
Tel: 01656 664 063
www.trinityhouse.co.uk
(events and leisure)

Bride’s dress
New York

Groom’s suit
Hired from: Moss Bros
www.mossbros.co.uk

Wedding cake
Dragons & Daffodils
Tel: 01443 671 314
www.dragonsanddaffodils.com

Flowers
Canad Designs
Tel: 029 20214832
www.canaddesigns.co.uk

Transport
Chepstow Classic Buses
Tel: 01291 625 449
www.chepstow-classic-buses.co.uk