

Deaf couple bring big challenge

By Mary Ferguson

A HERTFORDSHIRE wedding planner faced one of her biggest challenges when asked to organise the big day for a deaf couple.

Clare Beckwith planned the marquee wedding for Melissa Mostyn and Miles Thomas, who have both been deaf since childhood.

She said: "The main consideration for me was communication and the best way for us to conduct our meetings was either through type talk or email. During the face-to-face meetings I just made sure I spoke slowly so they could lip read and it worked well."

Along with the catering and bar staff, Clare received awareness training from the bride herself on issues such as how to identify a deaf person, the best methods of communication and the correct etiquette.

Almost half of the 100 wedding guests were deaf so Clare had to rally people for the speeches by flashing the marquee lights and she brought in four sign language interpreters to help the day go smoothly. The bride found her own photographer - who was also deaf.

"The wedding was a huge success, mainly because of the preparation that went into it. There were so many things I wasn't aware of before - for example the marquee lighting needed to be extra bright for the deaf to compensate for their lack of hearing - but Melissa and Miles are such an inspirational couple."



Clare Beckwith

The couple both work in the arts and Melissa designed her own dress, the bridesmaid's dresses and the page boy outfits while Miles designed all the stationery and the wedding cake.

And as a surprise for her new husband, the bride presented him with a film of her sign-singing Yellow by Coldplay, shot by an up-and-coming deaf director.

Clare added: "The video had everyone in tears. It was an unusual wedding but the day went like clockwork and made me so much more aware of the issues some people face on a daily basis. And it's definitely given me the confidence to organise similar weddings in the future."



The bride in her self-designed dress

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New wedding planner has a Jamaican twist

A NEW Wedding planner has set up business in London, specialising in destination weddings to Jamaica.

Michelle Pierre-Carr, a former professional athlete, has her roots in the country so has an intimate knowledge of the island and its culture.

Exclusive Tropical Weddings by

Pierre Carr specialises in the areas of Montego Bay, Ocho Rios and Negril and Michelle came up with the business idea after her own wedding there.

She said: "Getting married abroad is a dream, but many people are put off by dealing with suppliers who are so far away."

"I spent a lot of time making phone calls at odd times to stay on top of it all. The day was perfect, but it made me realise that engaged couples could really use some help with this."

An official launch for the business took place in London at the end of November, with a special visit by one of the Pierre Carr partners in Jamaica.

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