

# Shrewsbury Abbey And St. Peter's Monkmoor

Photography  
and videos  
at weddings



I am sure that most Professional Photographers and Professional Video Camera Operators can eat out on the strength of horror stories about Vicars at weddings.

Sadly the same is also true about some Photographers and Video Operators. Believe me, I have encountered some truly awful and unprofessional practices which this brief guidelines sheet is intended to prevent.

By the time of the wedding itself I will normally have spent plenty of 'one to one' contact time with the couple including a very detailed practice session. My aim with any wedding is this; I hope their guests will tell them afterwards it was the best wedding they have ever been to in their lives. Because of this detailed planning, which has the aim of 'excellence', I have strict guidelines about what Photographers and Video Operators can and can't do.

These guidelines are not about being 'difficult' but, rather, about the wedding service taking place as planned, albeit in a relaxed atmosphere.

A few preliminaries –

- Please turn up dressed smart – after all, it is a wedding.
- Please feel free to come to the practice – the couple will have the date and time.
- Please ask me if you are not sure about anything – underneath all this I am really quite friendly!
- Video Operators must have and use a Tripod during the service.
- Please have any back up cameras loaded, ready and to hand.

The Service itself –

- I ask the Groom to be at the Church 15 minutes before the start in order to check the entries in the Register.
- I ask the Bridesmaids / Pageboys to be at the Church 10 minutes before the start.
- I ask the Bride to be at the Church 5 minutes before the start. This should give you plenty of time to take a few 'shots' and I can always engineer the Bride walking down the aisle a couple of minutes 'late'.

Once the Bride has arrived, **the Wedding Service begins whilst she is still outside**. All congregational notices and a 'Pastoral Welcome' are done before the Bridal entrance.

I will walk down from the back of the Church to the Chancel steps and then invite the Bride to come in to whichever processional music has been chosen. Photographers and Video Operators should not get in the way of this Bridal Entrance.

Once the couple have reached the Chancel steps and the processional music stops the following **must** apply –

- Photography must only be from the back of the pews or from the South Aisle (next to Roger de Montgomery) and must be without flash. Please don't 'wander' around.
- Any Video Camera should be placed on a Tripod and should also be stationary.
- Please do not walk in front of any of the guests – they want to see the wedding and not the back of the photographer.

The reasoning for this is so that the service remains first and foremost a spiritual occasion – in the presence of God – and this will present absolutely no problems at all to a competent and well equipped professional operator.

During the service I will ask Bridesmaids to stand to one side and the couple to face each other. This gives you and the congregation a 'ringside' view. A good lens will bring you right alongside – even from the back of the pews.

The signing of the register is done at the front of the South Aisle and is visible to the congregation.

I don't mind you photographing the actual signing without the use of flash. The signing is of a legal document and it needs to be done correctly. After everything has been signed it is good to have a couple of posed shots which can include flash. Please can photographers be absolutely clear about who the couple want in these pictures and how they are to be posed so this interlude does not detract from the overall flow of the service. I would suggest two to four photos of the signing will be quite enough – and I am happy to 'pose' handing over the certificate after the service.

The prayers and final hymn are usually at the main altar – this gives the couple a 'long' walk out. This 'walk' is meant to be a triumphal procession of husband and wife stepping out into the world. They can always come back inside afterwards to pose!

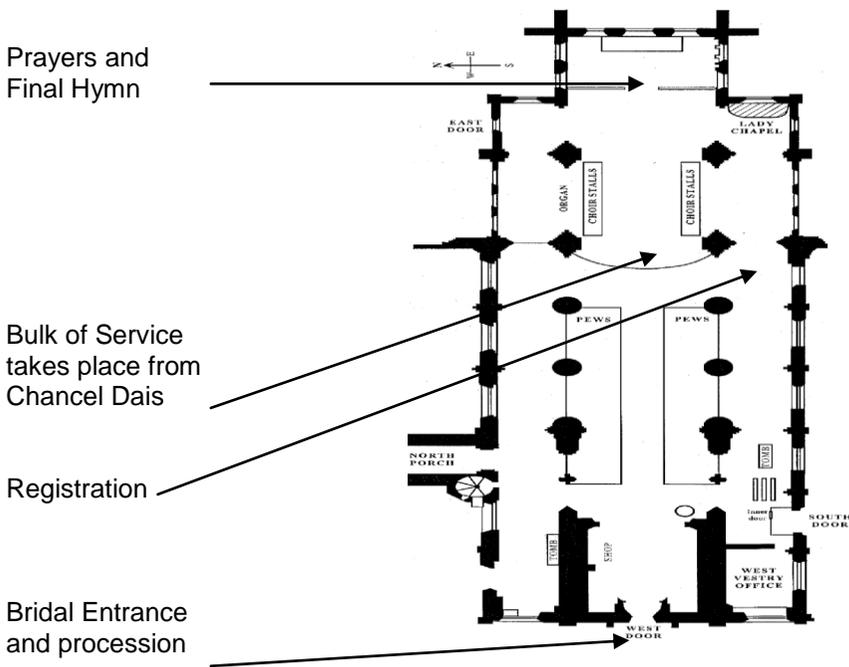
If it is raining I am happy to permit photos in the church afterwards4

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Very occasionally (twice a year perhaps) there is another wedding to follow on from yours – I will place weddings no closer than an hour and a half apart and will expect Photographers and Video Operators to move the former party away from the main 'Bridal' entrance by 15 minutes before the next wedding is due to start. I will advise you about this and make suggestions as to where best to take your wedding party if this is the case.

Video Operators and Wedding Couples are reminded the Parochial Church Council retains Copyright of any films taken inside the Church and these must not be publicly broadcast without the express permission in writing of the Secretary of the Parochial Church Council.

### A Layout of The Abbey



Please will Photographers and Video Operators remember that Confetti is only to be thrown outside the church.

Many thanks indeed – Paul Firmin – vicar@shrewsburyabbey.com