

How to Enjoy the Perfect UK Elopement



Langley Castle's Guide to the Truly
Intimate Wedding

What is Eloping?



Eloping has been on the wedding landscape roughly around the same amount of time as Langley Castle has been on the horizon. Our fairy-tale castle was built in 1350 and 'eloping' was first mentioned around 1338.

The word 'elope' comes from the Anglo-Norman world, 'aloper', meaning 'to leap'. Back in history, eloping really meant one of two things. Sometimes, it was the act of a wife escaping an abusive husband; at others, as in Shakespeare's 'Romeo & Juliet', Act 2, Scene 6, it was a case of lovers having to steal away, to try to marry and make the ultimate declaration of their love for each other, when their families were very opposed to them being together.

Nowadays, eloping can have an element of this, but is usually a couple simply deciding that the most meaningful wedding for them is one just focused on their love for each other; an intimate and special occasion free from many of the trappings and frills of the grandiose wedding. For this reason, here at Langley Castle, rather than calling them 'elopement weddings', we often call them 'Weddings for Two'.



Did You Know?



In English history, elopement was given a major push by Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1754, which stated that couples needed to be aged 21 if they were to marry without parental consent. English couples fled to the famous 'centre of elopement', Gretna Green, as it was just over the Scottish border and, in Scotland, rules allowed anyone over the age of 15 (as long as not closely related to each other or in a relationship with another person), to tie the knot.



Why Elope?



Eloping is very much about personal choice. Remarkably few couples 'elope' so as to marry against their families wishes.

So what are the reasons for 'eloping' or, as we prefer to phrase it, selecting a 'Wedding for Two'?

Here are some reasons that are making it one of the biggest wedding trend.

Reasons to elope and choose a wedding for two: Love and Romance



- ❧ A wedding for two people, which is what you achieve by eloping, creates a highly authentic, romance-fuelled experience that is a true affirmation of a couple's love for each other, forsaking all others.
- ❧ There is a spine-tingling focus on just the two of you and your vows.
- ❧ The intimacy of the occasion is truly memorable and there are no other distractions or outer 'circus' around you.
- ❧ If you are an introvert, there is no reason to fret or worry about all the attention. You can just be you and be as shy or retiring as you wish.



- ❧ You can escape much of the stress of planning a grand wedding and that can be a huge weight off the shoulders for some people. Not everyone loves browsing wedding magazines for hours on end, or shopping for the exact shade of wedding favours box that will match the bridesmaids' dresses.
- ❧ The shared escape that you both experience by 'eloping', and the secret that only the two of you are in on, is a true two-person-only adventure and one which can strengthen the bond between you.

- ❧ There is none of the stress of deciding who to invite and who to leave off the invitation list, which can be a massive relief, taking potential family rows and dramas out of a day that should be about you.
- ❧ If parents have passed away and you only have wider family left in your life, a wedding for two can be a perfect choice. You can have your parents with you in touching and different commemorative ways, adding to the unique feel of this type of wedding.
- ❧ Similarly, if your family are largely overseas, it may make more sense to enjoy an intimate elopement wedding, rather than asking them to travel.
- ❧ An elopement wedding suits more spontaneous couples down to the ground.
- ❧ Sometimes, a wedding for two is a second wedding, chosen to be more intimate and meaningful because a couple have experienced the bigger event and now do not wish to repeat that format of wedding.
- ❧ Elements of true mindfulness and tranquillity can be built into a wedding for two. With just two of you, you set the schedule, you have complete we-time and you can create a day that is totally 'intentional' as an expression of love.
- ❧ In a venue such as Langley Castle, where the backdrop is truly breathtaking and awe-inspiring, a wedding for two can be far more memorable than one undertaken in a registry office.



- ❧ The average wedding planning time is 13 months. If you don't wish to wait that long, eloping and creating your own intimate wedding 'bubble' is a hugely attractive proposition.

Reasons to elope and choose a wedding for two:

Practicalities and Principles



Whilst a wedding day should always be about a couple's love for each other, there are other good reasons to select an elopement wedding, when the head is ruling the heart.

The average cost of a UK wedding is around £32,000. If you are a couple that wishes to get a foot on the property ladder, travel the world together, raise children or just not struggle in your early years together, you might find better ways to spend such money, or save your parents from spending it, if they are offering to pay for the day.

Wedding food alone costs, on average, £4,151. You may simply wish to reject the consumerism associated with feeding people you hardly know and who may simply waste the food provided. You could decide, instead, to be altogether more frugal.



Average UK Wedding Cost: £32,000

You may also recognise that having hundreds of people travel to a marriage venue has an eco-impact. If green principles matter to you, you may prefer to take the wedding to them, rather than have them come to the wedding.

You can combine the honeymoon with the elopement wedding, if you choose to enjoy a wedding for two at a venue like Langley Castle. Here with us at Langley, you can have a magical experience in the round, not just a wedding ceremony, in a true fairy-tale castle.

Why the elopement wedding is more popular than ever



In the decade of the 2020s, we are discovering that the elopement wedding is truly in vogue. Couples have reassessed what truly matters to them during the pandemic and, in many cases, this process has truly reaffirmed their love for each other. The 'all that matters' factor has come to the fore, with all that matters being their reciprocated feelings.

With many couples having been in a two-person bubble for so long, it makes great sense to continue that through into a wedding ceremony. Many couples also simply do not wish to wait. The 'life's too short' philosophy has been very much bolstered.



Other couples have suffered economic hardships and have re-examined the finances behind a wedding. Some have lost key relatives and now just want to be with the one they love.

And, we should also remember that the mental health impacts of the pandemic have been profound. The need for mindfulness has never been greater. If you can create an intimate, mindfulness-filled wedding, spend time together in Langley Castle's gorgeous woodland grove, soaking up the benefits of biophilia, or simply sit in quiet, tranquil contemplation in our unique battlements chapel, why would you not wish to do so?

Celebrities and the elopement wedding



Many celebrities have opted for elopement weddings and weddings for two and it is easy to see why. They've been able to escape and celebrate their love together, rejecting the media circus environment. It's simply a magnification of some of the reasons why 'normal' couples choose a wedding for two. Some celebs who have made that choice are:

Clark Gable & Carol Lombard (1939)

Rita Hayworth & Orson Welles (1943)

Marilyn Monroe & Joe Di Maggio (1954)

Frank Sinatra & Mia Farrow (1966)

Elizabeth Taylor & Richard Burton (1975)

Melanie Griffith & Don Johnson (1976)

Demi Moore & Bruce Willis (1987)

Billy Bob Thornton & Angelina Jolie (2000)

Gwyneth Paltrow & Chris Martin (2003)

Ryan Reynolds & Scarlet Johansson (2008)

Penelope Cruz & Javier Bardem (2010)

Harrison Ford & Calista Flockhart (2010)

Daniel Craig & Rachel Weisz (2011)

Sophie Turner & Joe Jonas (2019)

Lily Allen & David Harbour (2020)

Did You Know?



Elopement weddings have been enjoyed by TV soap characters, albeit largely focusing on the elopement cliché of a marriage conducted at Gretna Green.

Sam Mitchell and Ricky Butcher and Tiffany Butcher and Keegan Baker from *Eastenders* and Leanne Battersby and Nick Tilsley (*Coronation Street*), all took the 'leap' to Gretna Green to marry.

In the USA, the equivalent venue is, undoubtedly, Las Vegas!



How to elope in the UK - the legal bit



Whilst an elopement wedding can definitely be a more spontaneous occasion (although many are planned well in advance), it cannot simply be a spur of the moment thing in the UK.

You need to give notice to marry at your local registry office at least 29 days before the intended marriage date and supply the registry office with details of your venue. That means you need to have arranged a venue first.

Should you choose to have an elopement wedding but hold a ceremony in a church – which Langley Castle can arrange for you in the nearby village of Haydon Bridge – you would need to have banns of marriage read in a church on three Sundays in the three-month period before the wedding. Once this has been done, you need to marry within 12 months. Should the banns be read in under 29 days, you will still have to wait the 29 days before you can marry.

If you live outside of the UK, you will need to check rules according to your own status, whether your partner is a UK citizen and whether or not your country is part of the British Subjects Facilities Act.

You will need to be aged over **16** (to marry in England or Wales) and will also need parental permission to marry, if you are aged under 18 and marrying in England or Wales. Different rules apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

You will also need to have two witnesses to the marriage. If you decide to enjoy a Wedding for Two at Langley Castle, we can provide witnesses for you. Members of our team have shed a tear at many a moving Wedding for Two, when called upon to be official witnesses to the marriage.

How to create the perfect elopement-style wedding for two



Langley Castle has staged hundreds of weddings for two, so feels well-placed to offer some advice as to what maximises the potential of such an intimate and romance-fuelled occasion. Here are our tips:

- ❧ Plan the wedding just as efficiently as you would a larger wedding day, but focusing on the little touches that will make the day as personalised to the two of you as possible. Create an inspiration board and think how to truly make this day work for the two of you and your own personalities.
- ❧ Construct your day. Remember it's just about the two of you, so schedule your high-points. Do you want to have a limousine or horse-drawn carriage taking you to the front door? Do you wish to arrange special flower displays? When will you eat? What time will you marry? Will you cut a cake? Will you have a romantic breakfast before saying your vows? Will you enjoy a romantic stroll afterwards? What activities are 'you'?
- ❧ Consider how you will dress. Do you want the full wedding dress, or something such as a boho maxi dress, a jumpsuit, a polka dot tea dress, satin slip dress or a tailored suit? Will you wear a formal wedding suit or a day suit? Should you opt for a kilt? Do you want to go tie or open shirt? Plan the look that the two of you want to achieve together.
- ❧ Do not forget to pack the rings. It's easy to do when it's just the two of you, with no Best Man in tow to remind you!



❧ Work especially hard on your vows. This day is all about the two of you and a truly heart-felt occasion, so you can speak from the heart without fear of family and friends learning your innermost thoughts and feelings, unless you want these to be communicated on a wedding video. Make your vows super-special, as they are such an integral part of this experience.

❧ Choose a venue with stunning backdrops. Focus not just on the wedding 'room', or location in which you will exchange vows, but also on the architecture, the grounds, the features within the grounds and places around, to which you could head.



❧ Capture memories. This may mean some investment in wedding photography, to capture memories for you and for those not present. Select a photographer who is used to handling weddings for two and working in a non-obtrusive way, so you hardly know they are there. You are likely to want the 'drama shot' that can be shared on social media, so that all of your friends get a feel for your day. You may also wish to have a live video of the day, so that you can share that with your family afterwards, to help them feel a part of what went on.

❧ Reflect on sounds. Do you wish to have music played during your ceremony and what should that be? Do you wish it to be a playlist or have a live musician, be that harpist, keyboard player or Spanish guitarist. You may even wish to have someone play the Northumbrian bagpipes!

❧ Choose the right room. If your elopement is going to be your honeymoon and wedding in one, make sure you stay in the right room for you, full of romance and an extension of the 'mood' of the wedding itself. Also make sure you plan other romantic activities during your honeymoon stay, so there are memories to last a lifetime.

Handling family concerns and disappointments



Nobody is going to tell you that an elopement wedding is going to necessarily be easy, despite its relative simplicity. Even when you do not need parental permission to marry, parents often have an expectation of “being there” on your big day and so do many other family members and friends. Communication is the key to avoiding family rows and rifts and you need to create a plan of action as to how and when you will reveal what is going on.

It is often best to have the discussion with family and friends up front, explaining your personal reasons for wanting to have a wedding for two. That also gives you the opportunity to set out expectations and explain how you will share the day with your loved ones, at a later time.

It may be best for you to do this and then head off for your wedding quickly, rather than allowing time in which people try to talk you out of things.

You could also try to include them, in ways such as by creating special cards, which you mail out and ask them to complete and return, to offer best advice, or special thought.

Of course, whilst we talk about a “wedding for two”, you do need two witnesses, so you could have parents present. Even if you have four or five people with you, it is still a lovely intimate occasion.

Simply going away, marrying and then delivering a shock on social media is not recommended. If you do not tell anyone in advance, try to make the effort to phone everyone or speak to them in person, so that you can explain why this was the right thing for you.

Otherwise, do something thoughtful, such as sending handwritten letters to everyone, perhaps including a photo of the day.

Suggestions of ways to perhaps handle things, should you need to be sensitive to anyone's emotions are:



- ❧ Enjoy a video call with friends and family before the ceremony.
- ❧ Incorporate family elements into your wedding day, so loved ones are with you in spirit.
- ❧ Save flowers from your bouquet for loved ones, or have them pressed, to give as gifts, accompanied perhaps by a special and personalised message.



- ❧ Create a video that can be shared with those you love afterwards.
- ❧ Stage an after-wedding dinner or party, so all can celebrate your marriage.
- ❧ If your reasons for wanting to 'elope' and have a wedding that is just about the two of you are sound and right for you, you should not feel any guilt, as it should be your day, your way.

Elopement wedding or micro-wedding?



Some couples have an elopement wedding that is a little bit more than that. The same is true of celebrities too. After all, Elvis is said to have eloped to marry Priscilla, but he actually had 14 guests at his Vegas wedding.

If you want a very intimate wedding, this can still be achieved by opting for these smaller guest numbers, which enable you to have just the key people in your life present. Langley Castle is also an expert on these micro-weddings, having been the inventor of the **Bubble Wedding** during the first UK pandemic lockdown.

There is slightly more to this wedding, in terms of catering, but our venue has such intimacy anyway, within seven-foot-thick walls and with stunning architectural backdrops, that you can still hardly notice that there are more people in the room. You will still hear a pin drop, as you take your vows within our stunning fairy-tale castle venue.



Why elope to Langley Castle?

For centuries, couples have been heading to the area close to the Scottish border to elope. In fact, Langley Castle is just 40 miles from Gretna Green. The area is vast, with unspoilt landscapes and lots of wide open space – just the thing that couples wanting an escapist-focused wedding for two want.



We are also located in a dark-sky zone, where the tranquillity of the skies can add exquisite touches of romance.

We have 10-acre grounds at your disposal, complete with resident peacocks who often oblige for a photo.



Above all, we have a fairy-tale castle which looks drop-dead gorgeous in any photography, from both the outside and the inside.

Our fairy-tale castle gives you a playground for pictures, whether you take to the battlements or stand in front of our huge drawing room window, framed by its velvet drapes.



It provides you with chandeliers and suits of armour, making you, for all the world, a prince or princess for the day.

It has its own private chapel, in which to enjoy a quiet moment, and it has irresistible made-for-two window seats, set into its seven-foot walls and offering an arbour for private thoughts, whispered 'I love yous' and cuddles.

Add to this a roaring log fire in winter, four-poster beds and a woodland grove – which you could have decorated if you wish – and it's got everything a couple could desire.

This castle was built for a small family and has the intimacy that results from that. It was also deemed a fit abode for a cousin to the King, shortly after its build. It has everything to help you feel that you are marrying in noble style, despite the size of your wedding.

10 Romantic Things to do at Langley Castle after your wedding



- ❧ Stroll the grounds and woodland and enjoy the sights of nature, from squirrels to birdlife.
- ❧ Head to the summerhouse for a glass of Prosecco.
- ❧ Spend a quiet moment or two in the chapel, at the very top of the castle.
- ❧ Gaze out towards Hadrian's Wall from the castle battlements.
- ❧ Order hot chocolate and curl up in front of the log fire in winter.
- ❧ Climb up the few steps to your bedroom window seat or one in the drawing room and enjoy private time side by side, or sitting opposite each other gazing into each other's eyes.



- ❧ Enjoy a romantic candlelit dinner in the 2AA 'Josephine' restaurant.
- ❧ Lounge on your four-poster bed, as you sip your bubbly or devour chocolate dipped strawberries.
- ❧ Ask someone to take your picture, as you pose in our 'throne chairs' or with our full-sized knight, Gilbert.
- ❧ Wait for nightfall and then stargaze together from a bench in the gardens.

14 romantic things to do during your Northumberland elopement honeymoon



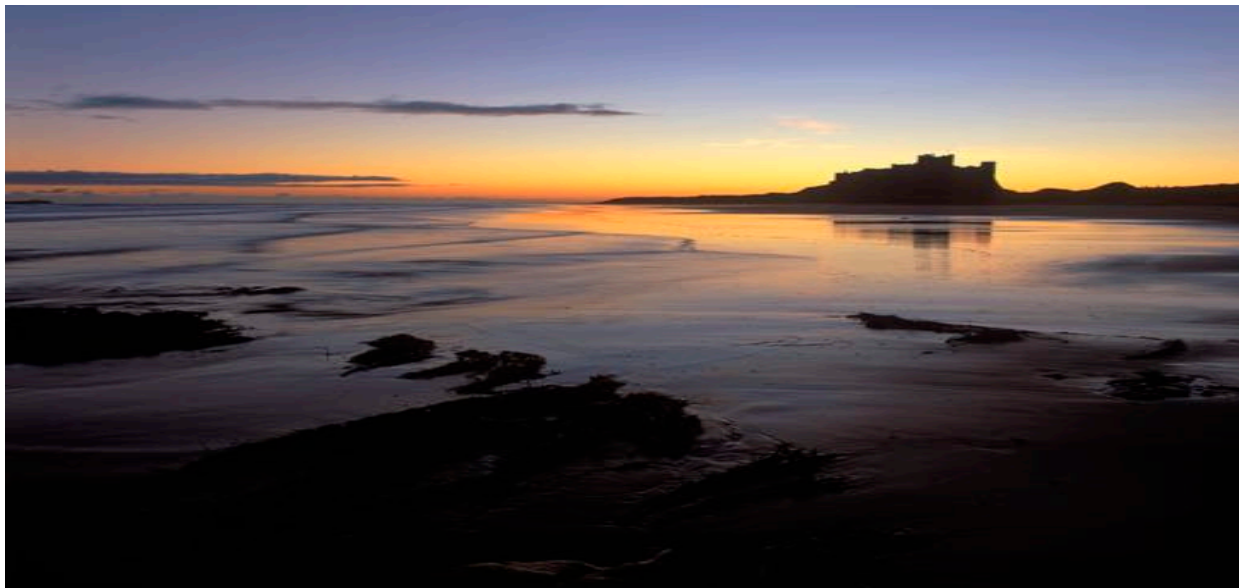
If staying for a few nights during your elopement escape, explore the wider area and all the romantic things to do within it. Here are some suggestions:

- ❧ Head to Kielder Forest and explore trails together, arm in arm, whilst trying to spot inquisitive red squirrels and shy roe deer. Make a beeline for the Janus Chairs, which easily accommodate two people and allow you to turn to face the sun, the moon or the lake.



- ❧ Visit the Kielder Observatory and explore the galaxy and the Milky Way together, in an International Dark Sky Park that is one of the starriest places in Europe. You may even be lucky enough to see the Northern Lights together.
- ❧ Walk the tranquil tarn path around Talkin Tarn near Brampton and admire the reflections.
- ❧ Head to Hexham Racecourse together, if there is a race meeting, and have a little flutter – on the horses, as well as in the heart!

- ❧ Go to Hexham and enjoy a romantic walk along the Tyne Green Trail, either taking a linear walk along the course of the River Tyne, whilst taking in the Hexham skyline of Abbey and Moot Hall, or enjoy a longer circular stroll.
- ❧ Take selfies together on Hadrian's Wall and walk in the footsteps of Roman soldiers, visiting milestones from a starting point such as Cawfields.
- ❧ Walk hand in hand along the quaint streets of Corbridge, visiting the town's artisan bookshops and its lovely art galleries and pick strawberries together, if in season, at Brockbushes Farm Shop, for a romantic treat of strawberries and cream.
- ❧ Drive to Alnwick and become bookworms together in the amazing emporium that is Barter Books, or else head to the Alnwick Castle treehouse for an atmospheric morning coffee or meal set high in the treetops and amidst magical twinkling lights.
- ❧ Sit together on the bench that overlooks the exquisite beach at Low Newton, where Dunstanburgh Castle hovers in the distance and where there is every opportunity to search for driftwood, or explore rock pools together.



- ❧ Take a sunset walk along Bamburgh Beach, watching the sun slip behind the stunning Bamburgh Castle, perched up high above the waterline. Return to Langley for a pre-ordered midnight feast or warming spirit chaser, perhaps.

- ❧ Book a boat trip out to the Farne Islands from Seahouses and spend your day together watching puffins, seabirds and seals.
- ❧ Head to Newcastle and climb Grey's Monument, gaining a view of the city from a place that has long been a meeting place for lovers. Perhaps, having worked up an appetite, you could enjoy fresh seafood out of the box, at the acclaimed Riley's Fish Shack in King Edward's Bay, Tynemouth.
- ❧ Take the causeway out to Holy Island, if at low tide, and become spellbound by the saintly beauty of Lindisfarne. Make it even more special, by walking the sands out to Lindisfarne Priory together, with the help of expert guides.



- ❧ Visit the iconic Sycamore Gap on Hadrian's Wall, one of the most photographed places in the area, thanks to its definition of solitude - a lone tree set against the expansive Northumberland skyline in an unusual dip in the terrain. Grab the selfies that will encapsulate your wonderful honeymoon experience.



Next steps for your elopement and wedding for two plans



If slipping away for your own, incredibly crafted wedding for two sounds like the marital plan for you, why not start putting things in place today? Just check that it is what you both want and then make sure you find the venue that will provide you with the perfect set of memories to last your entire married life.

If you wish to tap into our vast experience of weddings for two or find out more about our unique and breathtaking castle and hotel, just visit **www.langleycastle.co.uk** or pick up the phone and call us on **01434 688888** to talk about your hopes, dreams and wishes for your wonderful wedding for two. Eloping to Langley Castle has no parallel.

