**CEREMONY**

**ENHANCEMENTS**

**You may wish to enhance your ceremony by incorporating any of the following suggestions, making it more personal and individual.**

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**Hand-fasting**

Hand-fasting is an ancient Celtic/Medieval custom, especially common in Ireland and Scotland, in which a couple came together at the start of their married relationship to declare of their own free will that they intended to marry.

While facing each other, the couple will join hands while a cloth is tied around their hands in a knot. This where the term “tie the knot” came from. Couples often choose to use a cloth made of a particular clan tartan or a specific colour of cloth symbolising something important to them.

**What you will need:**

* A Cloth or ribbon suitable for hand-fasting

**Quaich Ceremony**

The Quaich was a two-handled loving cup for the wedding feast. From it the couple took their first communion together as a married couple. They also used the Quaich at the reception for their first toast together.

Symbolic of the sharing between the couple, it’s an ancient vessel used by two families or clans to celebrate a bond with each leader partaking of the offered drink.

The groom drinks from the Quaich and then offers it to his bride. The order in which it is then passed is purely a matter of choice although historically it would have been the leaders of each family or clan who would have passed the Quaich around.

**What you will need:**

* A Quaich (sometimes the couple have this engraved with their names and date of marriage)
* Preferred drink to fill the Quaich

**Oathing Stone Ceremony**

The Oathing Stone is an old Scottish Tradition where the couples place their hands upon a stone while saying their wedding declarations. Taken from the ancient Celtic custom of “setting an oath in stone” inclusion of the Oathing Stone ceremony in the declarations can be deeply moving.

During the declarations, the couple hold the Oathing Stone, together in their hands. It is believed that holding the stone during the declarations in turn casts or sets them in stone.

**What you will need:**

* A stone suitable for use as an Oathing Stone
* Prepare the stone and have it engraved if desired

**Unity Candle Ceremony**

The lighting of a Unity Candle is a relatively recent addition to the traditional ceremony. It symbolises the joining of the two families and two individuals becoming one in commitment.

The Unity Candle Ceremony uses two taper candles with a large pillar candle in the centre. At the beginning of the ceremony, a representative from each family (usually the mothers of the couple) light the two taper candle. Later in the ceremony, the couple use the two taper candles to light the large pillar (Unity Candle) together.

**What you will need:**

* **Two Taper Candles**
* **1 Larger pillar candle (Unity Candle)**

**Sand Ceremony**

This ceremony requires the couple to provide two containers of coloured sand – one for each of them.

The two containers of sand are then poured into a third larger container at different points in the ceremony, each symbolising a different aspect of the couple, their relationship and their families. The sand then forms a pattern in the container, which is kept by the couple as a keepsake of their day.

**What you will need:**

* Two containers of sand, a different colour in each
* One larger container capable of holding the sand from the two smaller containers

**Remembering Absent Loved Ones**

There are many ways you may like to remember loved one(s) on your special day. You may wish to ask the Registrar to mention loved one(s) in your ceremony.

You may wish to include one of the following acts of remembrance:

* The lighting of a Memorial Candle in memory of an individual or a group of individuals
* A table of remembrance with a photograph of your loved one(s) – you can also include a memorial candle here
* Have a friend or family member recite a poem or reading in memory of the person/people
* Include a favourite song of your loved one(s) within your ceremony music

**Including Children in a Ceremony**

You may like to involve children in your ceremony in some of the following ways:

* Have them bring the rings forward
* Have them do a poem/reading/song
* Tie the know for a hand-fasting ceremony
* Giving the child(ren) a ring or gift as a welcome to the new family unit
* Holding the stone in an Oathing Stone ceremony

**Guest Declarations**

Ask your guests to join in the declarations; the Registrar can offer suggestions.

**There are various ways of enhancing your ceremony and making it personal to you. Please discuss with your Registrar/Assistant Registrar who will be happy to incorporate any of these or any new suggestions into your bespoke ceremony.**