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Long version

The Doll's House Museum Basel presents:

“Yes, I do!”

A special exhibition about bridal fashion, customs and traditions associated with weddings. 17 April - 3 October 2010.

The exhibition presents over 350 objects associated with the most beautiful day in life: enchanting wedding dresses with veils, wonderful wedding shoes, nostalgic bridal bouquets, romantic gloves and bridal wreaths of myrtle with wax flowers and buds. Wedding crowns, bridal crown stands under glass domes, old original photographs and many other items of wedding memorabilia dating from around 1810 to 1960 are on display, too. Historic films of royal weddings from around the globe and a film on bridal fashion in bygone decades get visitors in the mood for the subject.

Customs and traditions

Weddings have been celebrated since time immemorial. Today, it is impossible to say when the very first wedding took place. Certain customs and traditions associated with the wedding ceremony have evolved since then which have been kept up over many centuries, some of them right up to the present day.

These customs frequently served the same purpose: they were intended to protect the bride against evil spirits; after all, young girls were seen as being at particular risk of attack by both supernatural and earthly villains at the time of transition from childhood to adulthood. In addition, many traditions served to ensure that the young couple would be blessed with

fertility and children. This was of great importance at times when farms had to be passed on or family businesses kept going.

Even though we may dismiss these traditions to some extent as superstition and the customs bring no real benefit, they do no harm either. On the contrary, whether throwing rice, kidnapping the bride or wedding night jokes, these traditions are a great source of amusement for the both the bridal couple and the guests and make the big day truly memorable. That's why customs such as a guard of honour or a stag or hen night continue to be a firm fixture of every wedding celebration.

Apropos marrying for love: this concept has not been around all that long. As recently as 150 years ago, marriage was viewed purely as a partnership of convenience. It was intended to ensure the continuation of the family and to increase assets. Parents chose the future partner; the couple only got to meet at the wedding celebration. The journey from the marriage of convenience to the marriage for love was long and slow.

Colour and history of the wedding dress

When we think of a wedding, an image of a bride in a white gown springs almost automatically to mind. White is the colour of innocence, the white dress is supposed to symbolise virginity and maidenhood. White has only been the traditional wedding colour since the 19th century, but one custom has endured for centuries: on the day of her wedding, the bride wore an especially festive gown.

In Europe, the colour of the dress has always had a symbolic value and over the centuries, the colours were governed by various fashion trends. In the Middle Ages, for example, green, red or blue were very popular among the aristocracy, while the common people married in black at that time. Naturally, at court, the wedding attire was a good deal showier. It was made of brocade, velvet and silk and adorned with precious stones. In contrast to the ordinary citizens, the nobility could afford to have special attire made for the wedding. In the late Middle Ages for example, a bride from a noble or patrician family often wore a green outer garment intended to invoke the freshness of youth and fertility of the marriage, over a blue under garment representing loyalty.

Important burgesses had been marrying in red since the 15th century. The colour represents life and youth, strength and beauty. Red is the wedding colour in many areas and epochs in Europe and Asia. Red is the colour of the rose, the flower of love. Red is the colour of the schnapps drunk at the engagement and after the wedding night. Red is the colour of the wine at the wedding reception. The bride thus wore a red veil, red shoes, a red dress, a wreath and bouquet of red flowers. She coloured her hands with henna. This was intended to scare away the evil spirits. In addition, she gave the bridegroom a red belt.

Towards the end of the 16th century, the influence of the Spanish court led to the rise of black as the undisputed fashion colour. Every devout bride wore this colour. Black was also the festive colour of the costume that brides wore for their wedding in the 18th century with pastel-coloured traditional aprons often made of silk brocade and completed with ornaments typical of the region. This was complemented by a crown that was passed down from generation to generation.

Even into the 20th century, it was considered very elegant to marry in black, especially in rural areas. White was therefore also an unpopular colour, on account of the fact that white dresses were very difficult to clean. And since the bride wore her wedding dress not just for this one day, a more practical colour was preferable. Marrying in black was also supposed to remind people that happiness and sadness, life and death were often not far apart.

Incidentally, it was also a common custom to wear the wedding dress again later as a burial gown.

At the end of the 17th century, a change of style occurred: lighter colours became fashionable, not only for weddings. Napoleon even decreed that all members of the French court should wear white.

The wedding dress, whether a traditional costume or city gown, was generally so precious and expensive that it was stored in a chest for the bride's daughters and granddaughters. It was around the end of the 18th century that the white wedding dress finally came to be seen as a new status symbol in aristocratic circles. However the wedding dress remained an ornate garment which was also worn for other festive occasions. The first appearance of a white dress to be worn exclusively for the wedding occurred in 1813, in the French magazine "Journal des Dames". It was not until the 19th century that white became accepted for wedding dresses as the symbol of purity, perfection, joy and celebration. In 1854, Princess Elisabeth of Bavaria, or "Sissi" as she was known, married in a white dress made of silky Duchesse satin with a long lace veil. She was hailed as the most beautiful bride of the century. From now on, it was clear that for a fashion-conscious bride, only white would do as the wedding colour.

With the advent of the washing machine and manufacture of new, synthetic materials, white clothing was being worn by an ever-increasing number of people. As a result, the white wedding dress became popular with broad sections of the public. The flourishing fabric industry and the invention of the sewing machine made wedding dresses fashion-oriented and shorter-lived.

In the following decades, bridal wear became just as subject to fashion trends as normal clothing. For a time, hemlines went up, the next moment ankle-length dresses were the vogue. For a time, a décolleté was all the rage, then clothing would have a more modest styling again.

Today you can tie the knot in a bikini on the beach, say “I do” in the dream world of Las Vegas or in a wetsuit beneath the waves. One thing never changes however: your wedding day should be a very special occasion in your life.

Whether romantic, extravagant, sexy or simple wear, there is a perfect dress for every bride. A white wedding has once again become extremely popular.

By tradition, the bridegroom paid for the wedding dress. Today, however, the cost is met by the bride's parents or the bride herself.

Customs and superstitions associated with wedding dresses.

The most important person at every wedding is the bride. For one day in her life, she can dress like a princess. The bridegroom in his morning suit, tail coat or tuxedo is forced to play second fiddle. As you might expect, there are many customs and myths associated with the wedding dress. Sometimes they defy all logic and should probably not be taken too seriously, but nevertheless they are still amusing.

- It is considered unlucky for a bride to sew her own wedding dress. According to an old proverb “the number of stitches she sews will be the number of tears she will shed during the course of her marriage”. In days gone by, even seamstresses got a colleague to sew their dresses. It was said that the seamstress who sewed the first stitch in a wedding dress would also get married within a year.
- The appearance of the wedding dress is a secret. The bridegroom is not permitted to set sight on it before the ceremony, he must not see the bride wearing it under any circumstances. And even the spirits may not set eye on it – so peace and tranquillity must prevail in the room in which it is sewn. Loud singing, crying, whistling or arguing is prohibited.
- The dress should have as many buttons as possible since there is a saying that the bride has as many years to live as the number of buttons sewn on her wedding dress.
- An old custom has it that work should continue on the wedding dress until the wedding day. It is important to add a little something for good luck, even at the last minute: the final seam is closed, a shiny penny sewn into the hem.
- On the day of her wedding, the bride should not look into the mirror too soon. It is alleged to be unlucky for the bride to look in the mirror before she is fully dressed.
- An Austrian custom has it that on her wedding day the bride should wear an item of underwear inside out. This is also said to confuse the evil spirits and ultimately drive them away.

The veil

Right up to the present day, the veil has lost nothing of its fascination. Almost half of all brides wear a veil as a bridal accessory. And yet today's delicate lace and tulle creations convey very little of the former significance. The veil has been part of the bridal trousseau in many different cultures since time immemorial. Most importantly, it serves to symbolise the dramatic transition. It covers the bride at the moment of separation, thus making the parting visible, but not the feelings or the tears that she might be shedding. It protects the bride on the way from the parents to the husband. It is only when she reaches the altar that the veil is lifted or turned back by the bridegroom. This custom goes back to an old precaution: the future husband wanted to reassure himself that he was not being fobbed off with the wrong bride.

Since according to Christian belief, the veil symbolised virginity, for a long time, only "respectable" brides were permitted to wear a veil. Pregnant women were not permitted to do so.

The veil dates back to a much earlier time than the wedding dress. Even wall paintings in the Roman catacombs show Christian women with a wreath and a veil. Christianity adopted the Islamic practice according to which the veil was intended to protect the woman from the view of other men. According to the writings of the Apostle Paul, the veil was intended to safeguard the bride against evil spirits and the gaze of the devil as well as to serve her as a symbol of virginity and chastity.

In the Middle Ages, the bridal veil or the bridal shawl was stretched over the couple like a canopy. In those days, it was the tradition to use the shawl to cover the head of the bride and the shoulders of the bridegroom.

During the Renaissance, the veil consisted of very delicate fabric framing the bride's forehead.

In many rural areas it was the custom until well into the 20th century to wear a white veil with the black Sunday dress on the wedding day. This can be seen on various original photos in the exhibition.

There is also a superstition concerning the veil: no-one but the bride may wear the veil.

If a friend were to try on the veil, according to the legend, she will seduce the bridegroom.

The bridal wreath

The bridal wreath stood for chastity and purity and was intended to ward off evil spirits. The closed circle was regarded as a magical sign to keep away evil spirits. In the early wreaths, the blossoms and buds were made of wax and represented peach or cherry blossoms. Later, the blossoms were made of fabric.

According to an ancient legend, Adam took a myrtle branch with him when he was expelled from Paradise. In 16th and 17th century Germany, the myrtle became well-known and common as a wedding plant, initially in Nuremburg, Augsburg and other free imperial cities that nurtured trade connections with southern Europe. A daughter of Jacob Fugger (renowned in the 16th century as Europe's richest and most powerful merchant and banker) is said to have been the first to wear myrtle in place of the usual wreath of rosemary at her wedding in 1583. The wreaths were so expensive and precious that they were prepared and looked after with immense care. This is probably also the source of the custom of keeping the bridal wreath with the bridegroom's bouquet under a glass cover. These were also called "bridal crown stands". A number of examples are on show in the exhibition.

The German expression "unter die Haube kommen" for getting married (literally "come under the bonnet") derives from the time when unmarried girls wore a wreath, and married women a bonnet. On the wedding day, the custom was for the bride's wreath to be removed and replaced with a bonnet – in other words, she came "under the bonnet".

The bridal crown

The bridal crown is very much older than the bridal wreath. It was already worn by the ancient Greeks and Romans. The bridal crown is also a symbol of the bride's purity because it was seen as a perfect replica of the crown of the Virgin Mary, the celestial goddess. In the various parts of Germany, bridal crowns differed in terms of size, shape and appearance. The crowns were supposed to symbolise blessing and fertility. The bridal crowns soon changed from a fruit still life in a basket to a headdress made of artificial fruit, silver and gold beads, small mirrors, feathers and shells – everything that could be found in the local area and that possessed magical properties. The crown became a family heirloom, looked after and used for generations. Only well-to-do farming families could afford such crowns. They were also a status symbol. A number of very fine bridal crowns can be seen in the exhibition.

The bridal bouquet

Wedding flowers were not always intended solely to adorn the bride. In earlier times, a bouquet also served to pacify the evil spirits. Flowers have played an important role in celebrations for thousands of years. The bridal bouquet has a long tradition. In ancient Greece, brides preferred delicate mimosas, among the Romans, it was only ever roses. On ancient drawings of the Egyptians, you see Nefertiti with a lotus blossom. In Europe, flowers were long reserved solely for the nobility and wealthy citizens. Cut flowers were unaffordable for wide sections of the populace until well into the 19th century. Cheap everlasting flowers were thus a practical substitute.

In the Middle Ages, rosemary was a popular wedding plant that was used both for the bridal bouquet and for the bridal wreath, as were thyme, lavender and orange blossom. After the wedding, the bride would then take a sprig of rosemary from the bouquet and place it in a flower pot. If the sprig rooted and began to blossom, it was seen as a good omen for the newlywed couple. Since the 17th century, rosemary has been replaced by the evergreen myrtle. Myrtle is also regarded as symbol of good fortune and life and is said to possess magical powers. At that time, however, the role of the bouquets was not only to adorn the bride, they were also intended to have a wonderful fragrance. They were held in the hand, attached to the dress or placed in the hair. These fragrant blossoms and herbs were intended to pacify the evil spirits. Red ribbons were entwined with the rosemary and myrtle because red was deemed to have the power to ward off evil.

On his lapel, the bridegroom wore a buttonhole matching the flowers of the bridal bouquet. This tradition originates from the Middle Ages, when a knight wore the colour of his beloved as a sign of his love.

The flowers in the wedding bouquet are full of symbolic power. This is what some of the popular flowers stand for:

Carnations: the woman's love

White lilies; purity and innocence

Lilly of the valley: good fortune and virtue

Ivy: faithfulness and wedding

Orange blossoms: chastity and purity

Sweet peas: pleasure

Roses are the classic wedding flowers, popularly combined with forget-me-nots or small violet wreaths. Here is a brief extract from the language of flowers:

Bouquets and wreaths of paper or everlasting flowers such as were often used in Switzerland and other Alpine regions were burnt on the day after the wedding and the ashes spread on the parents' grave.

It is the general custom for the bridegroom to provide the bridal bouquet and what happens to it after the ceremony varies from region to region. Some brides keep it under a glass cover. Some give individual flowers to their best friends. Others throw the whole bouquet to the dancing crowd as they leave. Whoever catches it will be the next to marry.

The rings

No-one can say when the first rings were given because the materials from which they were made were not of enduring value. They were woven out of grass. Up to the Middle Ages,

wedding and engagement rings were only given to the woman. This tradition did not change until the 14th century. The couple made a vow of mutual fidelity and for the first time, they exchanged wedding rings. By wearing the ring, the husband also pledged to be faithful to his wife. It was around this time that the first partnership rings appeared. The simple wedding ring as we know it today seems to have its origins in the gold band of the 16th and 17th centuries. The ring is the unbroken circle: endless, smooth and seamless, like love with no beginning and no end. It should be different to all other items of jewellery. No embellishments, no precious stone should distract from its significance. Today, the wedding ring is more important and meaningful than ever before.

The glove

The glove ranks among the oldest wedding accessories. This is because in the Middle Ages, gloves served not only to keep the hands warm. They reaffirmed an agreement. If a woman gave her glove by way of a gift, this was regarded as the highest token of favour. The long, richly embroidered gloves were regarded as a legally binding component of the wedding ceremony. By handing the bridegroom her glove, the bride was giving him the symbol of her love. If he returned the gift, his glove was the confirmation of the contract, which a marriage always represents. Exchanging gloves before the altar was an acknowledgement of Christian principles and promises in the marital and family life ahead.

The wedding shoes

In earlier times, the bride-to-be would hide away every penny, saving money with which to buy her wedding shoes. The large number of pennies was supposed to show that the bride was very thrifty and able to look after money once she was married.

If the bride hides a penny for luck in her right wedding shoe during the wedding ceremony, this is supposed to ensure that the couple will never have to complain about lack of money.

In some places the wedding shoe is auctioned, a custom that brings in a tidy sum for the bride which she can use as housekeeping money for the first month of the marriage.

In some regions, it is the custom to remove one of the bride's shoes and fill it with flowers.

At the same time, the bridal couple are served a glass of wine which they drink together.

This custom is supposed to guarantee life-long health.

Something old, something new ...

According to this ancient European custom that originates from Great Britain, on her wedding day, the bride should wear something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. The old and the new represent single and married life. The borrowed signifies the indestructible friendship of her friends. The blue stands for loyalty and purity. The bride was

supposed to incorporate these in her wedding outfit on the big day. Something old is generally a piece of her mother's or grandmother's jewellery. Something new is of course usually the wedding dress. Something borrowed is often a piece of jewellery from her best friend and something blue a garter or a blossom in the bridal bouquet.

The bridal kiss

Everyone knows the custom of kissing the bride. After exchanging rings, the bride and groom are permitted to kiss. In earlier times, this kiss was not only (generally) the first kiss shared by the newlywed couple, it also had its roots in a church tradition. During the mass, the bridegroom received the so-called "kiss of peace" from the priest and passed it on to his wife.

The date for the wedding

In days gone by, the wedding date had a deeper significance, for which reason the day of the wedding was chosen with the utmost care. Under no circumstances would a wedding be celebrated during the fasting periods leading up to the major Christian festivals. Instead, they would take place in the months and weeks when the farmers had time. From Epiphany to Ash Wednesday, from White Sunday to harvest time and again after the harvest from St Catherine's Day (25.11.) until Advent.

According to our ancestors, the wedding would be blessed if it was held in growing daylight, that is to say in the morning. In addition, weddings were only held when the moon was waxing so that the family's wealth would multiply.

When it came to the day of the week, Friday had always been considered to be a lucky day in our latitudes. The couple could then expect to be blessed with many children.

In the 14th century, Christian weddings took place in public in front of the church door. Afterwards, the couple entered the church and attended mass.

The wedding cake

It is thought that the modern wedding cake is derived directly from a type of cake that formed an important part of the wedding ceremony among the Romans. This ceremony was called Confarreatio in ancient Rome. Literally translated it means: cake eating. During the wedding festivities, a simple cake was divided in the middle. The bride and groom ate several portions of it. What remained was broken into very small pieces over the bride's head. The guests gathered the crumbs and ate from them. This ritual served to beg the gods to bless the young couple with children.

In the course of time, the simple cake became a fine gateau. In England it has developed into the custom of the rich wedding cake. This splendid, Anglo-Saxon, multi-tier wedding cake in bridal snow-white icing is popularly decorated with marzipan symbols of love, hearts

and roses, doves or sugared almonds and sometimes crowned with a miniature bridal couple in marzipan (or plastic) or with cupids. Even in olden days, the wedding cake was baked in three layers and took three months to taste its best, whereby the number 3 not only demonstrated the wealth of the family but also alluded to the Holy Trinity. The first and top level consisted of white icing, the symbol of love and very sweet. The second layer consisted of marzipan with sweet and bitter almonds as a symbol for the engagement. The third layer was a raisin cake (plum cake), sweet, nutritious and sometimes hard to digest as a symbol for marriage.

Today one often encounters five-tier wedding cakes. The five tiers are supposed to symbolise the life cycle: birth, youth, wedding, children and death.

Depending on the area or custom, the bridegroom or bride has to cut the cake and distribute it to the guests.

An old superstition has it that the bride and groom should feed each other with a piece of wedding cake at the reception. Continued wedded bliss is then assured

The bridesmaids

Evil spirits were ever-present in our predecessors' daily life. In order to confuse them, the bridesmaids were always dressed similarly to the bride. In addition, they carried small floral bouquets that were also very similar to the bridal bouquet. This meant that the spirits were unable to tell which of the almost identically dressed persons was the bride. This confused them and they went away.

Often, a fake bride was placed in a wedding dress and stood up in the house of the real bride while the wedding ceremony went on in the church. This procedure was also intended to confuse the evil spirits.

The flower children

Flower children have been part of the wedding ceremony since time immemorial. In ancient Roman times, boys and girls accompanied the wedding procession. They carried torches and usually ran ahead of the procession. As they did so, they scattered rose petals along the route of the bridal couple to the altar. This custom has been taken up again in modern times. Hardly a single church wedding is not accompanied by children with wreaths and baskets of flowers that they scatter in front of the bridal couple as they make their way to the altar. Flowers and children are synonymous with happiness and offspring. According to heathen custom, flowers have the ability to attract the goddess of fertility.

The wedding dance / waltz

Almost everywhere in the world, the bridal couple open the dancing. They are followed by the parents, grandparents, siblings and witnesses. The ring or circle also plays a role in the dance. In many areas, the wedding party form a circle around the dancing bridal couple. The enclosed circle symbolises protection and security, and prevents evil spirits coming near the bridal couple.

The best known wedding dance is of course the wedding waltz. At the beginning of the 19th century, the dance first inspired the Vienna Congress and then began its triumphal progress throughout the world.

A few wedding rites

Guard of honour

A guard of honour symbolises the many stumbling blocks and obstructions that a young couple might encounter on their path to wedded bliss. Friends, colleagues and relatives stand before the church or registry office and form a kind of tunnel with brooms, flower arches etc. The bridal couple must first cut a satin ribbon and then make their way through the tunnel.

Throwing rice

Rice thrown by the guests over the bridal couple after the wedding is supposed to bless them with many children. Although this custom actually comes from Asia, it has become established here, too. On the island of Bali for example, the same word means both “rice” and life”. In Asia, the rice plant is compared with the life of a woman who grows up, becomes fertile and bears children. Rice grains are therefore seen as a symbol of fertility.

Kidnapping the bride

Kidnapping the bride is an old tradition that not only serves to provide a little amusement, but also has a real historical background. In societies where there was a surplus of men, naturally only the very best should get a bride. Anyone who allowed himself to be robbed of his newlywed partner after just a few hours was not really deserving of a wedding and often never even got to see his bride again.

In our part of the world, kidnapping the bride luckily no longer has any serious meaning, but simply serves to enliven the wedding celebrations and to amuse the bride and groom.

The wedding-eve party

The stag or hen party is an ancient tradition, thought to be even older than the Christian wedding ceremony itself. By smashing jugs and plates, its aim was to drive away the evil spirits that would deprive the bridal couple of their happiness.

Today, people are less superstitious; the wedding–eve party is simply an opportunity for a high-spirited celebration with as many people as possible and to get rid of some old crockery at the same time.

Different countries, different customs

France At the traditional “skirt-lifting”, the men give a certain donation to encourage the bride to raise her skirt a little. The ladies in the party counter with small sums of money, until the garter is finally exposed. The winner is ceremoniously presented with the garter. In earlier times, the money collected was used to pay the tailor for the wedding gown.

Japan: The wedding ceremony is extremely strenuous and very time-consuming for the Japanese bride. She has to change her clothes and have her hair redone three times. First she wears a traditional wedding gown with a white hood, then a folkloristic kimono in silk brocade and finally a western-style wedding dress with a veil.

Bulgaria: Red is the wedding colour in Bulgaria. The bride wears a red dress and red shoes. The guests wave a red wedding flag and the room where the wedding celebration takes place, is decorated with red garlands. The Bulgarian word for bride is “bulka” and means red poppy.

Moving pictures of royal weddings all over the world

The exhibition features historic films of royal weddings. Beginning in 1937 with the royal wedding of Princess Juliana of the Netherlands and Prince Bernhard zur Lippe-Biesterfeld, it also shows the wedding of King Farouk of Egypt and Farida Safinaz Zulficar in 1938. It would of course be incomplete without the marriage of Prince Rainier III of Monaco and Grace Patricia Kelly in 1956 or the wedding ceremony of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi – the Shah of Persia – and Farah Diba in 1959. The undisputed highlight is the best-known royal wedding between Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, and Lady Diana Spencer on 29 July 1981. The exhibition also features a strip from the roll of fabric used to make the wedding veil of Lady Diana, the Princess of Wales. The Japanese silk tulle comes from the renowned Heathcote factory in Tiverton, Devon. It was woven on a machine dating from 1853 and

is considered to be one of the finest silk tulle with a linear density of 16 to 18 denier. Diana's wedding veil weighed 1.7 kg; it measured 18 yards x 4 yards (16.4592 m x 3.6576 m).

Live wedding in the display window

To mark the opening of the special exhibition "Yes, I do" on 17 April 2010, a couple will exchange vows live in the display window of the Doll's House Museum. The wedding will be performed by a priest in the presence of around 25 guests invited by the bridal couple. It will certainly be an exceptional experience for all involved.

Opening hours

Museum, shop and café: daily from 10.00 – 18.00

Admission

CHF 7.00 / 5.00

Children up to 16 years of age are admitted free of charge and only in the company of adults.

No additional charge for the special exhibition.

The entire building is wheelchair-accessible.

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Wedding anniversaries

A marriage is always in a process of change. There will always be differences of opinion between the husband and wife. That is normal and how it should be, necessary for a relationship to develop; it will become stronger and more mature over the years as a result. The wedding anniversaries reflect this development. What do the names for the individual anniversaries signify?

1 year – cotton anniversary

After the splendour of the big day, practical things are in demand such as cotton bed linen and tea towels etc.

3 years – leather anniversary

Unprocessed leather takes time to become supple and wearable. It is tear-resistant and yet flexible. Like a marriage should be.

5 years – wooden anniversary

Wood is as durable as marriage. A suitable present would be a wooden item or the planting of a tree.

6½ years – tin anniversary

From time to time, the marriage should be buffed up and made to gleam again.

7 years – copper anniversary

Venus, the goddess of love, had a favourite metal – copper. A symbolic gift would be a copper penny to conjure up happiness for the coming years.

8 years – plate anniversary

Marriage can become a habit. After eight years, a little freshening-up will do no harm. The traditional gift is something in plate, such as cake moulds or baking trays.

10 years – bronze anniversary or rose anniversary

The rose signifies that the marriage is still in full blossom. The rose has always been a symbol of love.

12½ years – nickel or parsley anniversary

Nickel is associated with lustre, parsley with spice, both important constituents of a good marriage.

15 years – glass or crystal anniversary or rag anniversary

It refers to the fragility of happiness and the clear understanding between both spouses. The rag anniversary brings to mind the fact that a number of years have passed by and the textiles are also beginning to show signs of aging.

20 years – porcelain anniversary or chrysanthemum anniversary

All porcelain in the kitchen is smashed, making space for new. A breath of fresh air in the marriage as well.

25 years – silver anniversary

A quarter of a century has passed by. At the time of their silver anniversary, some couples also renew their wedding vows.

30 years – pearl anniversary

The pearl symbolises the wife's beauty. The husband traditionally gives his wife a pearl necklace with 30 pearls.

35 years – linen anniversary

Linen is hard-wearing and difficult to tear. After 35 years together, the bond between the spouses has become enormously strong and cannot easily be torn asunder.

37½ years – aluminium anniversary

Enduring love never becomes dull. Aluminium has the same property. Aluminium also stands for durability and adaptability.

40 years – ruby, emerald or garnet anniversary

The ruby is the precious stone of love, passion and fire. This is also the foundation for a 40-year marriage. A small ruby is traditionally added to the wedding ring on this day.

50 years – golden anniversary

Half a century has passed by. No metal is more valuable than gold. Marriage, too, is precious, especially after 50 years. You have spent a large part, almost certainly the largest part of your lives together. No gold in the world can pay for this happiness.

60 years – diamond anniversary

No mineral is harder than diamond. The marriage has also demonstrated its durability and strength.

65 years – iron anniversary

Iron is hard to break

67½ years – stone anniversary

70 years – platinum anniversary

75 years – crown jewels anniversary

80 years – oak anniversary

100 years – heaven anniversary