

Impressions of a Celebrant Registrar's Life

The day starts on a high note when friendly greetings are exchanged as I enter the office with my pen newly filled with registrar's ink and my glasses to hand!

I take a deep breath and try to remember everything we covered during training – it was thorough so I've scanned the notes we were given. I check the registrar's bag, and have the schedule plus a copy so that any alterations can be written on the copy during the pre-ceremony interviews with the couple – then, unless we are working in the office, we are off!

Travelling to venues with a more experienced colleague is a pleasure once you have learned the routes. Only specified rooms are approved for ceremonies – your colleague will know them, and you will soon be familiar with them, too. We ask the person in charge at the venue to direct us to the couple, so that the deputy registrar (usually the Celebrant) can check their details and record any amendments. Then the officiating registrar (your Celebrant colleague) briefly runs through the ceremony – you will learn much by listening, as there will be times when you will take the speaking role! Most couples are interviewed separately – it still seems strange to me to interview in a limousine or in the bride's room if the bride is still getting ready!

At first, it can feel scary – there's a lot to know and it's important to remember to give customers a welcome and reassurance.

During the ceremony, I can concentrate on the couple saying their legal words, as this makes the marriage legal in this county.

When the couple sit down to sign the schedule, this is another opportunity to make sure the information is correct. If any information is incorrect it can still be altered at this point. It's hard to get an excited couple to concentrate, when family and friends are offering congratulations, but our role is to check and keep checking so that information is accurate.

When I return to the office to enter the details of the schedule onto the registration online system (RON), this becomes the legal record. This is one of the most important steps, and I have to check the information on the IT system matches the schedule in front of me, after all the customer will apply for a certificate and they have the information I have entered onto the RON system.

After a while all the tasks become almost second nature and you really enjoy them; after all, every ceremony is unique, no two are the same!

As Celebrant Registrar you will also learn to conduct ceremonies – marriage, civil partnership, baby naming, renewal of vows. We can also be involved in citizenship ceremonies. It can be nerve-racking to stand up in front of a room full of people but you will be trained. Preparation is the key; have a mind-map of the ceremony, then you can concentrate on putting the couple at ease. Deep breath, moderate pace, variety of tone and a smile in your voice make the unique day special. If your mind goes blank, you have a copy of the ceremony to refer to. You may have to deal with an emergency – for example, check that a couple are happy to proceed if unexpected noise arises – but this rarely happens.

It is a most enjoyable job and easy to recommend as we see people on their happiest occasions. What's more, it's a job that really *feels* worthwhile – there is a glow of satisfaction when a ceremony has gone well. We also get to know staff at the venues, so we are warmly welcomed wherever we go.

Written by a newly trained Celebrant Registrar