

Ken & Bernice



Were Married in Clanard Court, Co. Kildare



Photographer John Burke
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We met on a blind date in June, 2008 set up by Ken's sister-in-law, Kate. After gentle persuasion, we both decided to meet. It was the most nerve-racking experience of our lives but we still talk about it with very fond memories. Ken proposed at his dad's 70th birthday party in December 2013. It kind of took the focus from his poor dad but everyone was there and it was a great surprise. We decided shortly after to set a date for July 2015.

We wanted to get married abroad on the beach or a beach-side venue but definitely outdoors and, if possible, in front of the sea. We travelled to Spain to meet with a wedding coordinator. Everything was amazing and, of course, the weather was the main factor. But we realised the cost that would have to be incurred by both family and friends, so we decided to look closer to home.

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Before visiting the Clanard Court, we visited a few hotels again proposing a civil ceremony in the hotel's gardens. As expected, we received a lot of negative comments regarding the weather and the number of dry days that would be needed before the wedding in order to have it out doors.

We noticed the Clanard were having their Wedding Fair so we decided to pop down. From the moment we walked out into the garden, we were sold; it was perfect, perfectly manicured, colourful - the perfect setting for our wedding. It reminded me of a scene from the 'Secret Garden'. We sat with Mary, one of the owners, and found her to be one of the nicest people we have ever dealt with, nothing was a problem; Mary made us feel like the most important people in that room. We discussed in detail having the wedding outdoors, the challenges we would face if it was raining on the day etc. Mary told us that we could decide on the night before the wedding or even the morning itself where we would hold the ceremony in the event that the weather was bad. Nothing would be compromised either way.

We loved the hotel itself. As we have two children ourselves and a number of nieces and nephews, it was very important that the children had space to play. The garden was





there for the children once the weather was fine, and we also had another large room where we had a kids' entertainer for an hour or two.

We had one more hotel to visit but, on the way to that hotel, we just looked at each other and said, 'No, let's go back now and book. Nothing can beat what we have just seen'. It was the best decision we ever made.

As soon as I walked out with my parents to be married, the sun shone, it was perfect.

My Excel spreadsheet became my life for the next few months. I kept a note of everything that needed to be done and, bit by bit, we started checking most items off. My wedding dress was by Mori Lee and Ken and the guys got fitted out by 'Love Suits'. One of the most important factors of our wedding, apart from the venue, was the band. We danced the night away to 'House Party'.

We had around 120 invited to the wedding. The morning of the wedding came, the weather was not looking great. I had told Ken at that stage to decide where we would get married. If I walked down the stairs and was directed to the main room then so be it. The hotel and Ken literally decided about an hour before the ceremony was due to start to go ahead and have it outdoors.

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and the fact that we were at home in Ireland.

The day was fantastic, the setting for the pictures was like being in the tropics and the weather held off until around dinner time. The hotel staff were amazing, especially with the kids, nothing was an issue. We had a BBQ the following day with close family and friends, the sun came out again and the food was gorgeous. It was the perfect ending to a very special weekend.

Bridesmaid & Best Man

We had two bridesmaids, our daughter, Amy, and my youngest sister, Lorraine. Ken chose his brother-in-law, Joe, as his best man. He knew Joe would have his back (and a small pink stool for him to stand on during the speeches) and they're very good friends. Charlie, our son, who is five, was page boy and our god daughter Isabelle (four) was flower girl.

We honeymooned in Lanzarote. It actually rained a couple of days which made us reminisce more on the beautiful day we had at the Clanard Court Hotel in Kildare.

