



WELCOME TO WHITTINGTON CASTLE  
"THE ONLY CASTLE IN ENGLAND WHICH IS COMMUNITY RUN"

**A brief history**

Whittington Castle stands on the English side of the Welsh Border in Shropshire but this was not always the case. In the early medieval period Whittington stood in the March of Wales, which stretched down the border area between England and Wales. This was a 'frontier' area and one of the primary roles of the Marcher Lords was the defence of the border against Welsh invaders. This was the situation throughout the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries but after the defeat of the Welsh princes in the 1280s the March became more peaceful.

In 1310 Fulk FitzWarine VI and his young bride Eleanor de Beauchamp acquired the Castle and set about making it a more comfortable home. The great hall was rebuilt, apartments refitted and a pleasure garden created. A Castle more suited to the noble tastes of Lady Eleanor was created during this time of peace.

The Castle still functioned as a manor courthouse until the 19<sup>th</sup> century but from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the long decay of the Castle became irreversible. William Lloyd in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century funded a restoration programme that left the gatehouse as it stands today. Whittington Castle Preservation Trust was formed in 1998, to protect the site in perpetuity, and develop it as a tourist and educational facility. In 2002 a 99-year lease of the Castle was granted by the Lloyd family to the Trust.

The Preservation Trust is a registered charity and Civil Ceremonies, Birthday Parties, private functions are seen as a way forward in order to raise valuable funds for the future sustainability of this extremely important historic Castle.

*On behalf of Whittington Castle Preservation Trust - I extend our thanks for considering holding your Civil Ceremony at the Castle-Castle Manager, Sue Ellis*

Civil Ceremonies at Whittington Castle

The Lady Eleanor Function Room

A fairy tale Castle, ivy clad ruined walls, medieval moat complete with majestic swans and a twin towered gatehouse entrance all await for your perfect day. The ideal backdrop for all of your photographs. Whittington Castle is committed to providing a first class service to all those wishing to book a civil ceremony. With this in mind we will only ever book one ceremony per day in order to give our full attention to all those who book with us.

The Lady Eleanor Function Room is situated in the South Tower and for many centuries this served as the manor courthouse. The room is named after Lady Eleanor who helped to turn the Castle into a more comfortable home in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Luscious hand painted silk velvet; wall hangings adorn the walls, created by Shrewsbury based textile designer, Meg Arrol. The room has silk flower arrangement.

This is in a neutral colour and can be customised using coloured ribbon. If you would like to provide your own fresh flowers please speak to Sue about local florists and the delivery and collection of these. We invite you to make a booking to view this historic room by phoning 01691 662500, our team will be pleased to show off this beautiful room and chat about your special day.

### The Ceremony

The Castle prides itself on its small and friendly approach and can provide a one-to-one service designed for the individual couple in mind. Providing a historic and elegant venue for smaller, more intimate ceremonies. The Castle is available for Civil Weddings and Civil Partnership, Re-affirmation of marriage vows as well as Naming Ceremonies.

Step one is to make an appointment to meet and discuss your plans and to look around the Castle. The team is available to assist and to make sure your arrangements go as smoothly as possible. They are available to answer your questions and to chat through the options available and nothing is too much trouble.

**As soon as provisional arrangements for your ceremony are made you are advised to contact the Superintendent Registrar on 0845 6789016 Without the presence of the Superintendent Registrar and a Registrar there can be no ceremony and any arrangement for the use of the Castle depends entirely on their availability. It is the responsibility of the couple to book the Registrar direct themselves.**

It must be noted that all content for civil ceremonies must be of a non-religious form; this includes all readings, music and entertainment.

### Civil Weddings/Partnerships

The Lady Eleanor Room is licensed to hold ceremonies for 40 people. Four places from this number are reserved for the Superintendent Registrar and Registrar, for a member of the public (who may wish to have access to the ceremony) and for the Castle Duty Officer. This therefore reduces numbers to a maximum **36, to include the couple**. Small children and babies seated on parents' knees are not included in this number and can be extra.

A seating plan will be customized for you with the wedding team, and guests to the ceremony will be welcomed and shown to their seats by the wedding team at the Castle.

Free car parking is permitted with your booking. Please note that the Castle operates on a daily basis as a visitor attraction so the car park gets extremely busy in the peak of the summer and during an event at the Castle. Therefore, it is essential to notify the Castle how many vehicles to expect and they will endeavor using a car park attendant to reserve these spaces for you.

Help and advice is available with selecting music and readings for your ceremony. . The Duty Officer is available on the day to cue and operate the music system and to rehearse this with you. Or live musicians to play music for your ceremony; Harpist, Piper, Saxophonist, Guitarist, String Quartet etc., should be arranged by the couple and must be included in the numbers. You may be planning a medieval themed event

– the Castle can book medieval re-enactors who can provide entertainment etc. Please complete the music/reading/entertainment booking form and tell us what you require.

Whittington Castle does not have the facilities for a formal reception. They can, however, make enquiries about receptions in a Marquee within the grounds of the Castle and costs associated with this. Catering for small buffet-style functions within the castle, can be arranged for 40 or less guests only or tea and cakes for an afternoon tea can be arranged. Outside caterers can be hired by the couple - please ask about details. **Please note the Castle does not allow the couple/family to bring in their own food to serve to guests.**

You have the option of booking a Champagne Toast. Stewards at the Castle will assist you to serve Champagne/wine to your guests after the ceremony. Stewards will serve your guests in the upstairs cottage area, which will be available for your exclusive use away from the Castle visitors. **Please note that by Champagne Toast the Castle means Champagne or Sparkling or still wine plus nonalcoholic drinks – anything extra to this will be charged per bottle – please ask for details.** From May to September you may wish to book our outside Gazebo. You provide the Champagne/wine as the Castle does not have a drinks' license and we will provide the glasses and the stewards to serve and clear up after. The grounds can be explored and used for up to 3 hours.

Prior to the ceremony the couple will be required to attend a brief interview with the Registrar and Superintendent Registrar. This interview will take place in the FitzWarine Room located in the cottage. This room can be booked for the couple's exclusive use (ideal place to freshen up etc). From here the couple can make their way, either together or individually, to the Lady Eleanor Room for the ceremony.

Weather permitting; a red carpet to be laid outside the Lady Eleanor room to provide a dramatic entrance.

After the ceremony you are free to use the Castle grounds for the purpose of taking photographs, videos for up to 2/3 hours. Please note the Castle grounds will be open to the public at all times and that we cannot offer exclusivity of the Castle Grounds. However we can close the Gatehouse doors for you to have the Drawbridge area for your exclusive use. You may also wish to book to use the Inner Bailey Bridge which will be draped and decorated for group photographs (weather permitting)

Whittington Castle is a historic monument and a site of special wildlife interest. It is important that all visitors respect the site, and for this reason we regret that we do not allow rice or confetti to be thrown in the Castle grounds or building. However, as an alternative, you can purchase edible confetti which is safe for the local wildlife. Have produced special bags safe for the ducks and swans. Each bag sold helps Whittington Castle which is as charity. Please ask for details.

#### Contact Details

Whittington Castle 01691 662500

E-mail [info@whittingtoncastle.co.uk](mailto:info@whittingtoncastle.co.uk)