



# Weddings

## An invitation to lunch with the First Lady of manners

SHE is the First Lady of Etiquette, a party planner to the royal rich and famous and is best known as the manners and etiquette specialist in the Ladette to Lady TV series. In her book, Liz Brewer's Ultimate Guide to Party Planning and Etiquette, Liz considers some of the main issues connected with planning a wedding, from the invitations to the thank-you letters.

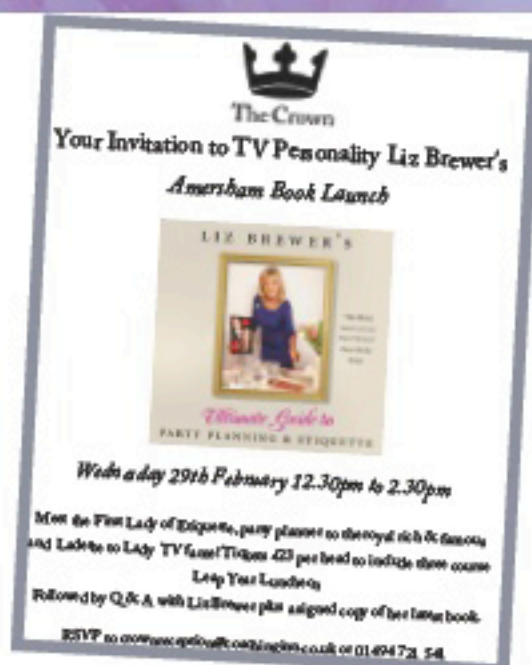
One of the more thorny issues in most weddings is money. In the past, the bride's parents would pay for the wedding, but, in an exclusive interview with The Villager, Liz said: "The rules have changed, who pays for what depends on the distribution of wealth on both sides. The banking crisis has had its impact, though the landed gentry still tend to stick to tradition." And it is not just the financing of a wedding that has changed. With programmes like My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding there seems to be a sense of weddings becoming more eccentric, but Liz said: "While the gypsy weddings appear wacky, it is all about the bonding of two families. Marriages don't seem to last too long now. In the past people would have a long engagement, that was the when you got to know each other, and had the right to break up at any time. It was a rehearsal where you could get used to being a couple and the idea of being married. And Liz should know, she was engaged six times before she made her debut trip down the aisle. Liz said: "One of the problems we have now is that everything is speeding up because of technology. At one time you would pick up a phone or write a letter,

which would take a day to write and post and it would be three or four days before you got a reply. There was time for thought and contemplation, not having to make instant decisions as we do now. Also, now, you never have to leave your computer. Social networking can be brilliant, I use it to tell people about charity events, but you need to be disciplined.

And after the wedding, when the presents have been put away, Liz recommends an old-fashioned hand-written thank you note. She said: "People find it hard to believe but we were taught handwriting. Even now I write so much by hand, and when I am signing books, and this can be up to 100 at a time, people often comment on my neat handwriting."

On February 29, The Crown Inn in Amersham is hosting a three course literary lunch with Liz Brewer, when she will distil her 30 years of party planning for some of the world's biggest stars into a luncheon and Q&A. In 2007 she organised Dame Shirley Bassey's 70th with one of the most spectacular parties of the century at Cliveden House. The event was filmed by CNBC, The Luxury Channel, and has been transmitted into 200 million homes. The film crew followed Liz through every step of the planning process. She said: "I thoroughly enjoyed doing this, but the film crew were aware of every hiccup and everything that went on. It was very revealing."

Liz Brewer's book: Ultimate Guide to Party Planning, fuses ideas with anecdotes from the author's own experiences on



the celebrity circuit. Liz suggests party entertainment ideas for dances, reels, games even such ones as 'Sardines' or 'Murder in the Dark' to help keep guests amused and assist in cutting the ice. In the party planning section she outlines what cutlery and table linen to use and expands on party etiquette, including, how to choose the right guests and deal with drunken guests and gatecrashers. The author cites a case from her own experiences on the A-list party circuit. The book is richly illustrated with hitherto unpublished photographs from some of Liz's most memorable events and partying celebrities. As well as being featured in five series' of ITV's Ladette to Lady, Liz is regarded as the UK's etiquette expert on Radio and TV. The Leap Year Luncheon is on Wednesday, February 29, from 12.30pm to 2.30pm at The Crown Inn, Amersham. Tickets at £23 include the three courses followed by a Q & A session with Liz Brewer plus a signed copy of her book. RSVP to crownreception@coachinginn.co.uk or call: 01494 721 541

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