



This was a memorable wedding that nearly ended in disaster when the venue caught alight. Experts could not believe the custom made fire place could generate temperatures high enough to travel down a supporting chain and ignite the thatch. The immediate response, powerful water tanker and special knowledge of thatch roofs saved the venue. Oakfield Farm has replaced the monster fire place with two smaller units not enclosed in glass.

By Laurin Harding
Laurin and Gareth Harding, Saturday 25th August 2007



Photographs by Patric Furter



We obviously understood that there are always likely to be glitches at our wedding and decided that we would go with the flow and enjoy the day. Easy words!

After a perfect wedding ceremony and photo shoot we arrived in the carriage, delighted to find all 180 guests on the lawn outside the venue waiting to meet us. Or so we thought. But no, the venue had been evacuated. With smoke billowing from the roof Matthew, the owner, and his staff, drenched in water, were frantically ripping out thatch.

We watched in absolute disbelief! Panic struck as we realized we might have 180 guests with nowhere to go! However once we saw how the staff were managing the crisis, the feeling of panic and helplessness subsided. We decided that the outcome was not in our control—what would be would be.

Miraculously the fire was extinguished and the very wet and sooty lounge area was mopped up cordoned off. The kitchen staff were rescheduled and dry clothes found for Duane, our guest who did not hesitate to save the day.



There is no doubt that the fire affected the wedding. There was a delay which gave us less time to spend with our guests and losing the lounge part of the venue was disruptive. We had planned for our elderly guests to spend time together here. But the fire could not spoil our day. New friends were made as guests waited outside together and contemplated the outcome. If ever we wanted a memorable day then this was it. Our wedding has been and will be talked about at family gatherings for many years to come, with Oakfield's professionalism hugely admired.

Oakfield's generous refund was an unexpected wedding present. We treated ourselves to a dishwasher, washing machine & tumble dryer!

