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My wedding dress cost me just €50

Dorothy Fletcher will spend a quarter of the amount of the average Irish nuptials for her big day out, writes Celine Naughton

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[Dorothy Fletcher](#) and [Colin Bentley](#) are getting married next March on a budget of just €7,000 -- a quarter of the price of the average Irish wedding.

They're in keeping with the zeitgeist though -- [eBay](#) has reported a 60pc rise in wedding dress listings over the past three months, while [Oxfam](#) is struggling to cope with the demand for its second-hand gowns, proving that not everyone wants to splash the cash on their big day.

Having recently returned from the US where she lived for 14 years, web designer Dorothy from Balbriggan, [Co Dublin](#), is setting up her own business offering personal websites to wedding couples, while Colin works as a computer engineer.

"Money is a huge factor for us, but even if we weren't in a recession, I would still look for a bargain," says Dorothy.

"I bought my dress in Oxfam for €50. It's brand new and absolutely gorgeous! It's a bit long, so I'll take it up, but otherwise it fits perfectly. I've asked Oxfam to look for a veil and I'll wear a pair of silver sandals I already own. I plan to buy the bridesmaids' dresses in either Oxfam or [TK Maxx](#).

"I made my own invitations and stationery and I'll buy flowers in the supermarket rather than going to a specialist florist. You can buy a bunch of lilies and roses for €15 in [Supervalu](#), and [Aldi](#) have lovely little bunches of flowers for €2.99 which I'll mix and match for church decorations and bouquets for me and the bridesmaids.

"I will make my own costume jewellery for the day and order the wedding rings direct from suppliers. I have chosen a plain white gold band which costs €150 from the supplier and is double that in the shops. We priced a man's platinum ring at €300 from the supplier which we saw for €900 on Grafton Street.

'Colin is Scottish, so the men will be wearing kilts and as these can cost €200 to rent here, we're looking at renting them from [Scotland](#) for £50 and the best man can bring them over.

"We'll have 40-50 guests and there is no wedding gift list -- we're asking for cash! Some people may consider that rude, but it's very popular in the States and it's better than a load of toasters!



Sticking to a budget: Dorothy Fletcher in the Oxfam Bridal Shop on Georges St, where she found her wedding dress, new, for €50. Picture by Ronan Lang

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"There are some things we cannot compromise on. The church will cost €500 including registration fee, pre-marriage course, donation and music. Also, people are travelling from abroad for this event and I want it to be nice. It is a celebration, after all! We looked at lots of venues for the reception and decided on the [Boyne Valley Hotel](#) in [Drogheda](#). The rate of €30 a head includes a three-course meal with a choice of four main courses and tea or coffee, mulled wine on arrival and table decorations. Unlike other venues which offer a flat rate, they break everything down, so we can pick and choose to suit our budget. So, instead of a champagne reception at €660, we may simply buy everybody a round of drinks and save quite a lot of money.

"It costs anything from €150-€500 to have a cake made, but I'm going to buy one from [Marks and Spencer](#) for a fraction of that price and put a tartan ribbon round it and some of my little Aldi flowers on top.

"I plan to barter for some services. For instance, I will offer to do a website for a transport company in return for wedding cars.

"I have no plans yet for our honeymoon, but as my brother will be coming over from [Australia](#), Colin's family from Scotland and friends travelling from the [USA](#), we'd like to spend time after the wedding with our visitors."

For more information on Dorothy's personal wedding websites, which can be used to post photos, keep updates and even upload a film of the event in real time using Wi-Fi enabled mobile phones, visit [www.ourweddingonline.info](#).

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