



**Colour me beautiful:** Barbara Brennan is having a budget Mad Hatter-themed wedding, and has made the bouquet and table centrepieces herself. Photo by Ronan Lang

“Big white wedding? Our big green wedding is a quarter of the price!”

**Bride-to-be Barbara Brennan (29) and fiancé John (33), from Meath, are preparing to exchange vows at a Mad Hatter-inspired tea party later this month. And managing bipolar disorder, the eco-friendly bride is determined to avoid stress.**

“John and I are very environmentally-conscious at home — we do a lot of recycling and try to reduce our energy consumption. So we didn’t want our wedding to leave a big carbon footprint either.

“Traditional weddings generate a huge amount of waste — from driving cross-country looking for a dress to the mass booklets nobody ever reads.

“Aside from the green issue, I’m also bipolar. And since stress can be a trigger, it was important for me to avoid the usual chaos associated with planning a wedding. Instead of waste paper on invites, I put a ‘Save the date’ up on Facebook or rang those who don’t use email.

“We’re getting married at Kippure Estate Adventure Centre in Wicklow with 100 guests on a budget of €5,000 — although so far we’ve only spent about half that.

“I’m quite arty so made as much as possible for the wedding. The Mad Hatter’s Tea Party idea started with my bouquet — I wanted to have something of everybody’s walking down the aisle, so I asked all our guests to send me a button which I stitched onto some felt flowers.

“The centrepieces are teapots decorated with pom poms, beads and mirrors. And instead of wedding favours, I’ve asked everyone to bring a tea cup which will be filled with chocolates and swapped around among the guests.

“For food, we’re having a buffet and rather than a cake, there’ll be a mountain of homemade Rice Krispie buns — no party is complete without them.

“I’m wearing a purple ball gown that cost €260 and driving myself to the venue.

“We could’ve had a traditional wedding with the meringue dress, limo and chair covers — but we would’ve only been able to invite a handful of friends as a result.

“Anyway, who needs a big white wedding when you can have one that’s far more colourful!”

**Coming together:** Élish and Gerry’s wedding celebration lasted three days



“We had three weddings for the price of one!”

**East-meets-West lovebirds Élish Bul-Godley (39) and Gerry Godley (45), from Dublin, said ‘I do’ in 2005. Honouring their heritage, they had a three-day multicultural celebration for the same price most Irish couples**

“On the second day, we had a civil ceremony and Javanese lunch with 50 close family and friends. And on the third day, we had an Indonesian-themed party with trad Irish music for 300 people in Fringe Festival Spiegel tent.