

# Packer gives his girl wedding in a million

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FOR a man who is said to have fluttered £7 million at a blackjack table in one evening, £1 million for a daughter's wedding probably seems thrifty.

But by West Sussex standards the wedding of the Australian media tycoon Kerry Packer's daughter Gretel, 25, was extraordinary. Preparations had gone on for three weeks, and at Fyning Hill, Mr Packer's residence near Rogate, the procession of lorries continued yesterday with equipment for 250,000 sq ft of marquee space.

In Easebourne, where the wedding itself took place, about 150 villagers had assembled by mid-afternoon "to see the fashion parade" at St Mary's Church.

Mrs Pamela Youens, who lives close to Mr Packer's polo farm at Stedham, had brought her two shih tzus, Scrummy and Tatty, and a bowl of water for them which she put on a flat gravestone. "I'm hoping the royals are going to come along here," she said.

She was to be disappointed. No royals came, and despite the silver mini-buses which surreptitiously disgorged guests into a back entrance, few others of any note either. Rupert Murdoch was snapped up as a substitute, surrounded by the clicking throng. Asked whether he thought that journalists could ever be too intrusive, he replied: "Never."

Otherwise there were various Australian celebrities, among them Neville Rand, ex-premier of New South Wales, and Rene Rivkin, a former stockbroker famed for playing with solid-gold worry beads, who arrived alone in an extraordinary piece of machinery that seemed to be a stretch Rolls-Royce.

The bride wore a stunning white silk dress and arrived two minutes late with her father, much to the relief of the crowd at the front gate who until then had not



Wedding march: Nicholas Barham (left) and his best man

recognised anyone at all, let alone royals.

Many were disappointed by the black tie and evening dresses sported by most guests. "It must be an Australian custom," pronounced Mrs Youens. "I've certainly never seen anyone English at a wedding in evening dress!"

But everyone approved of the groom, Nicholas Barham, a 31-year-old Old Etonian financier, as he arrived with his best man, Adrian de Ferranti. Mrs Brenda Histed, an Easebourne resident, declared him "terribly handsome", but was more interested in the ladies' fashions.

"Oh, that's lovely! I like that!" she cried as another £30,000 worth of *couture* teetered past on implausibly high heels. "I haven't

seen anything from Marks & Spencer," she declared approvingly.

When the bride's mother, Rosalind, arrived she whispered: "You look fantastic." Her day was made when Mrs Packer turned and said: "Thanks."

"She recognised me!" cried Mrs Histed. "I was chatting with her yesterday in church you know. She's lovely. So gentle."

The real celebrities cruised into the reception at Fyning Hill in their darkened limos, well away from prying eyes.

Two thousand bottles of Krug at around £50 each were on ice for a reported 1,000 guests. Mustard Catering, the smartest outfit in the trade, prepared a menu with an average food price of £70 per head. Included was lobster and shrimp.