Showered with good wishes

A PERSHORE COMPANY IS CELEBRATING ITS 20TH YEAR GROWING REAL FLOWER PETAL CONFETTI FOR BRIDES AND GROOMS ACROSS THE GLOBE

Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall are among the notable newlyweds to have been showered with delicate petals from the stunning Wick village confetti fields over the last 20 years, writes Natalie Prior.

The Real Flower Petal Confetti Company, based on the Wyke Manor estate, is the UK's original wedding petal grower and Charles Hudson and his team have been leading the way in producing beautiful, natural, biodegradable confetti since 1997. It was on a late spring afternoon more than two decades ago when Charles, whose family have farmed land around Wick for more than 250 years, had his 'eureka' moment. He was looking for ways to diversify the farming on the family estate when he stumbled upon the idea of flower petal confetti.

Charles happened to pause outside the village churchyard on his way home. Strewn around the lychgate were tiny wet pieces of coloured confetti paper, from an earlier wedding, which had turned the church entrance into an eyesore.

When he arrived home and some petals fell from the flower bouquet Charles was carrying for his wife, he had a lightbulb moment – and The Real Flower Petal Confetti Company was born. Charles experimented with many flowers and carefully developed his own delicate process of drying petals – using just sunshine and fresh air. Delphiniums were finally chosen for their ability to retain their shape and beautiful colour when dried.

Now a huge field of flowers blooms on the farm each summer and the petals are all picked by hand – more than 20,000 pints of them.

Despite its growth, Charles says the business hasn't changed very much at all in the last 20 years. "All our processes and procedures – harvesting the petals by hand and drying them naturally in the fresh air – remain the same," he said.

"But the advent of online shopping was a great boost for the business – 20 years ago it was all done over the phone and by sending out brochures in the post. "The wedding industry has also changed a lot over the years – we've seen many trends come and go and now the rise of social media is having a big impact on what people want." The traditional simplicity and beauty of throwing real flower petals along with the fact that they biodegrade as naturally as blossom is key to the company's success. Customers can choose their own bespoke mixes of confetti to suit their wedding theme and the orders are sent out to weddings all over the world.

Well-known clients have included actors Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas, singers Katie Melua and Madonna, model Poppy Delevingne and Olympian Jessica Ennis-Hill, as well as TV and film production companies and music video makers. Their real flower petal confetti was even used on Take That's Progress Tour in 2011 and in Dr Watson's wedding in the 2011 movie Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows, directed by Guy Ritchie.

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Rose petals, wildflowers, hydrangeas and lavender have been added to the range and handmade confetti cones, bridesmaid baskets, petal bags, beautiful paper envelopes and handmade horseshoes are also available. The confetti is sold by the pint which is equivalent to 10 throwing handfuls.

The most popular mixes are rainbow delphiniums; blushing pink, baby pink and cream small natural rose petals; and pale pink, ivory and azure blue delphinium petals.

Charles said: "I am thrilled that we have come so far and that our petal confetti has played a part in so many wedding days. "Real flower confetti is now such a popular idea – it's funny to think it all started with a bouquet of flowers I was taking to my wife 20 years ago!"

To mark their 20th anniversary, the firm has again grown an enormous Union Jack flag made entirely from delphiniums and the spectacle will be open for public viewing from June 30 until July 9.

Their largest ever flower field was more than 25 acres and their 2004 Union Jack field design made it into The Guinness Book of Records as the world's largest decorative carpet of flowers. Last year's open event saw 4,000 visitors flock to see the stunning confetti fields for themselves and Charles says he expects this year's event to be even more popular. He said: "The return of the Union Jack flower flag is sure to be popular – people have been asking when we would be doing it again for many years!

It's a spectacular site – so unusual." Charles and his team are continually exploring new ways to keep their customers happy. He said: "We're hoping to launch a new confetti website, which is a big project we are working on. And we also have a few ideas in the pipeline to improve the visitor experience in the flower field – we get lots of suggestions from visitors that we're considering."

W: confettidirect.co.uk.