

THE STORY OF MERRYDALE MANOR



BARNES WALKER - Our mission is simple; to create inspirational landscapes and provide a service that is second to none.

We work on the highest quality landscape projects offering a complete landscape design and construction service from inquiry through to timely completion.

Our expertise encompasses all elements of landscape design and construction and our service aims to ensure that each completed project meets, and exceeds, our clients' expectations.

We work with a team of specialists including arboriculturalists, ecologists, and experts in irrigation, lighting and water features.

Our excellent knowledge of suppliers ensure that the correct products and services are being sourced and we pride ourselves on making the process of designing and building your garden as stress-free as possible.

BARNES WALKER

Unit 6,
Longley Lane,
Northenden,
Manchester,
M22 4WT

0161 946 0808

www.barneswalker.co.uk



NICK WALKER
MANAGING DIRECTOR



RACHAEL WILSON
PLANTING DESIGN



TOM BIDDLE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT



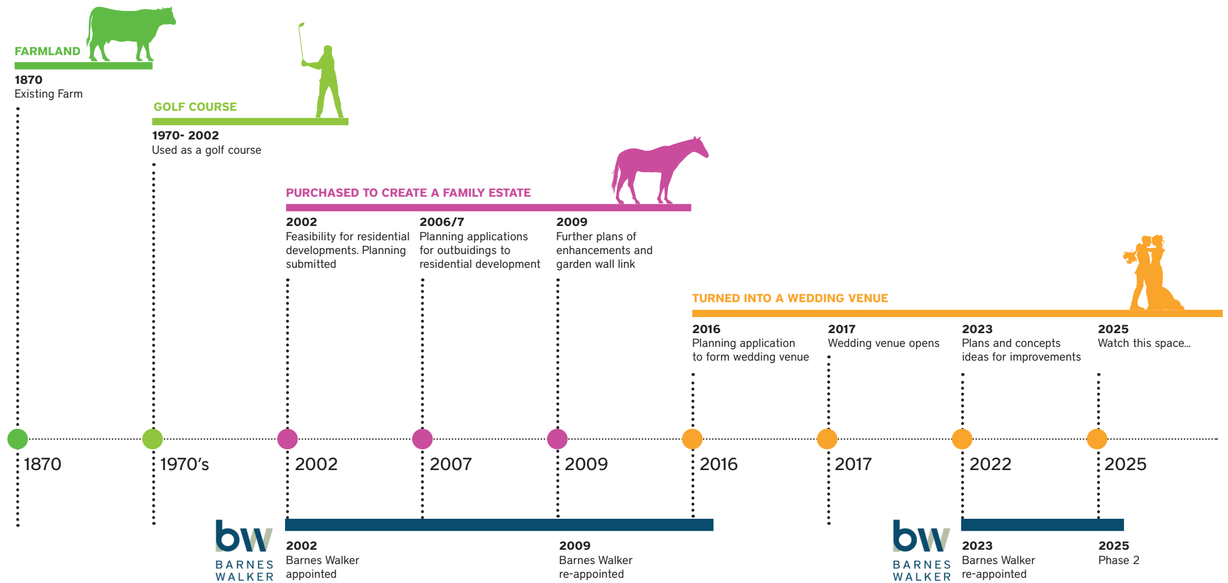
RUTH COURTNELL
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

THE STORY OF MERRYDALE MANOR

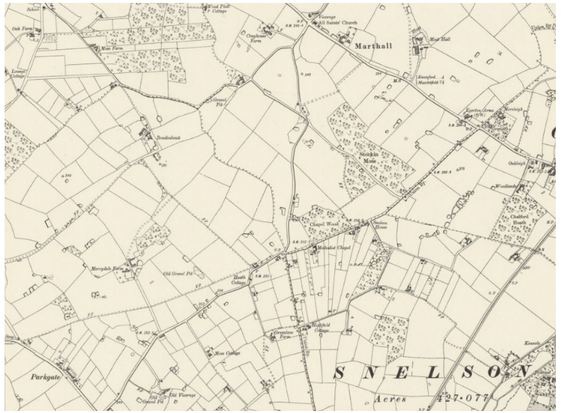
A

Merrydale Manor is a luxurious and exclusive wedding venue located in the heart of Cheshire's golden triangle, set within acres of beautiful countryside and rolling parkland. It is well positioned, located in Over Peover; just outside of Knutsford and within easy reach of neighbouring Cheshire villages, Manchester, Chester and Liverpool. Established in 2017, the venue is a perfect setting for couples to tie the knot, hold private parties and for corporate events.

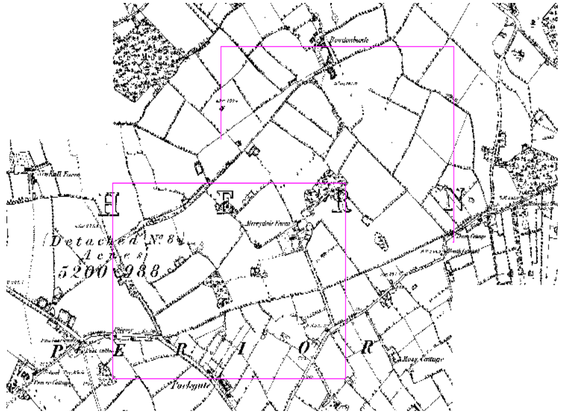
This document reveals the story of Merrydale Manor, the establishment of the estate and it's history. An estate which has evolved and established over many years and continues to develop as one of the country's leading wedding venues.



The Evolution of Merrydale Manor



1870's Old Map



1882's Old Map

A Farmstead

The old maps reveal that Merrydale first appears as Merrydale Farm, one of thousands of dairy farms across Cheshire. Maps from the 1870's show evidence of a farmhouse supported by a U-shaped collection of barns, surrounded by fields within the village of Over Peover. The fields were scattered with field ponds, gravel pits, small areas of woodland and copses, footpaths and bridleways.



2022 Golf Course Aerial Map

A Golf Course

During the 1970's the farm evolved and was converted into an 18 hole golf course by previous owners. The pastoral fields were partitioned into fairways, bunkers were added and field ponds became water hazards. A large plantation of trees was sited in the southwest corner of the property ready for transplanting around the fairways. The farmhouse became the club house, and the brick courtyard of outbuildings was supplemented with agricultural sheds for estate management.



Creating a Family Estate - The Brief

In 2002 the property was purchased by Suzanne and Michael Irlam, a family long-associated with the area with many relatives living locally. Barnes Walker were approached with a view to form a team with Hayes & Partners Architects to prepare a planning application which would convert the commercial property into a residential site. Plans were developed to explore the feasibility of creating three or four significant properties across the site each, with their own private gardens and access, situated within a parkland setting. The planning process refined the proposals and in 2003 the extension of the farmhouse into a single dwelling with gardens and surrounding parkland was approved. Works were completed and the Irlam family moved in and enjoyed family life in an amazing setting.

Back in 2002, when Barnes Walker first became involved, the key challenge was to establish a new garden for the dwelling and access through the future parkland. The farmhouse had areas of farmyard and a small garden but not necessarily where a garden was needed. With much discussion, debate and measuring with the LPA a new garden curtilage was agreed and the plans were developed.

The estate masterplan encompassed an impressive driveway through the parkland, leading to a main arrival space at the front of the house. Access to the garages and estate management buildings wrapped around the garden to the east. A ha-ha was built to work around the magnificent mature trees and allow unobstructed views over the grazed pasture. Non-native tree planting including many conifers associated with the golf course were removed and the delineation of fairways reverted to open parkland. The parkland was managed and improved, a new generation of parkland trees and arboretum trees were planted. The gardens encompassed family lawns, patios, shrub borders, a tennis court, orangery, pleached trees topiary and hedges.

Over time, the landscape established and was maintained immaculately. Barnes Walker reviewed the progress and made further enhancements over the years.

MERRYDALE MANOR
A FAMILY ESTATE

First Impressions









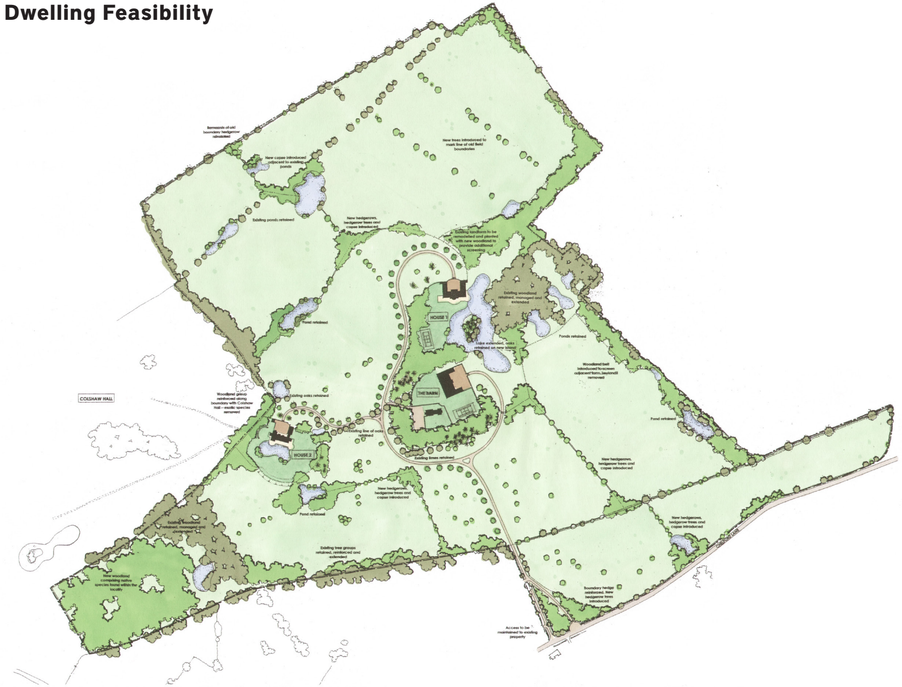


Photos taken in 2002

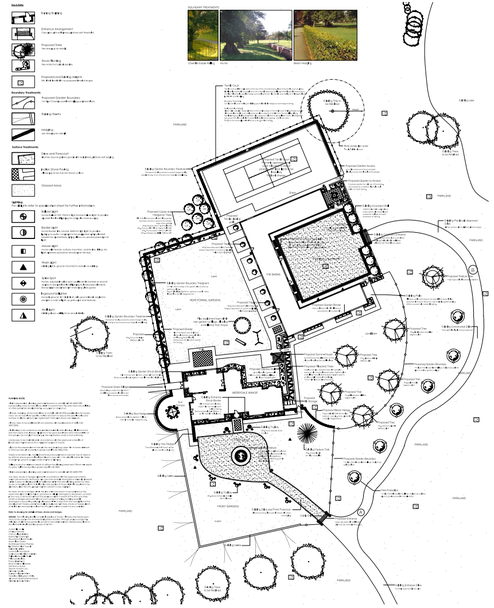
Residential Dwelling Feasibility



Residential Dwelling Feasibility



Family Dwelling Option





Developing The Family Home & Gardens








Photos taken in 2007

Developing The Family Home & Gardens








Photos taken in 2007

Developing The Family Home & Gardens













Photos taken in 2016

Merrydale Manor - A Family Estate



Photo taken in 2016

A

A Wedding and Events Venue

In 2016, the neighbouring property, Colshaw Hall, owned by Michael Irlam's brother David, was already operating as a successful wedding venue. An opportunity arose for Merrydale to also host a wedding and the idea proved highly successful. The decision was made, plans were drawn up to convert the property into a fully functioning wedding venue and the family moved out. Plans were developed to provide the facilities required for the change of use planning application. The family tennis court was converted into parking, the courtyard of barns was infilled to accommodate a function suite and guest rooms, the manor house would host the bridal couple. The gardens were enhanced to become the recognisable backdrop to thousands of wedding photographs.

As the gardens were now fully established, the venue had an instantly beautiful setting and the buildings easily adapted to become the commercial facility. Steeped in luxury and elegance, the country estate property offers an exclusive and very popular facility. The landscape design was key to the instant impact of the venue as the garden infrastructure had matured and the private parkland, grazed by sheep was available for exclusive use to the wedding party.

Barnes Walker were asked to provide uplifts and enhancements to the gardens over the years in-keeping with the country estate character. Barnes Walker have been fortunate to have been a vital team member in steering the process of change and establishment for the past 22 years and counting. The venue seeks to stay fresh and move with the times and landscape is a key part in creating this special venue.

MERRYDALE MANOR
A WEDDING AND EVENTS VENUE

2022 Wedding Venue Improvements

Moving forward to 2022, the wedding venue had established itself as one of the countries finest and most loved wedding venues. The facilities had expanded to include a lakeside lodge, eco-glamping pods, ceremony room, catering facilities, polo pitch, mature parkland, meadows, groom's man cave, bridal suite, breakfast areas, stunning gardens, impressive driveway and a lake with fountain and jetty. In December 2022, Michael Irlam contacted Barnes Walker with a vision to further enhance the venue.

The Brief

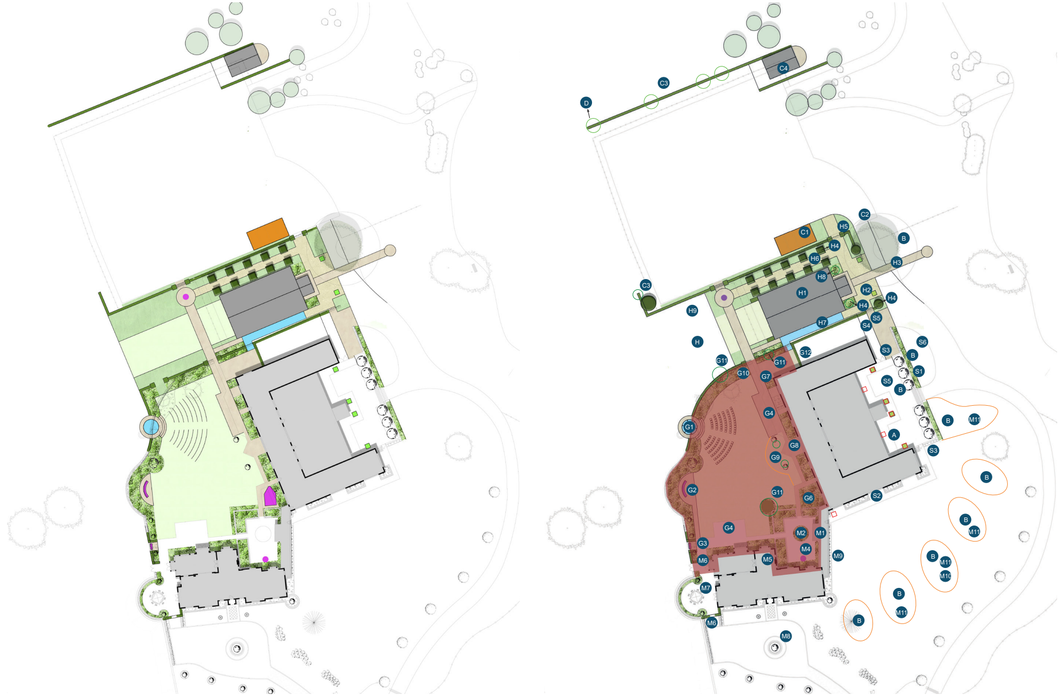
The facilities had expanded and evolved organically, an overarching masterplan was required to optimise the service and offering to clients from a landscape perspective. We were to ensure the appearance and logistics of the landscape setting were meticulously thought through and placed Merrydale Manor 'ahead of the game'.

Over a number of site visits and experience of working on other wedding venues, Barnes Walker created a series of exciting concepts to enhance the existing components and add new design features which helped the flow on a wedding day, made the most of the stunning parkland setting and provided new backdrops to the wedding day and photograph opportunities. Barnes Walker are fortunate in having a Landscape Architect who also works as a photographer with a specialism in wedding photography. This inside knowledge was key in understanding the efficiency that must happen during a wedding throughout the day from the perspective of all the parties:

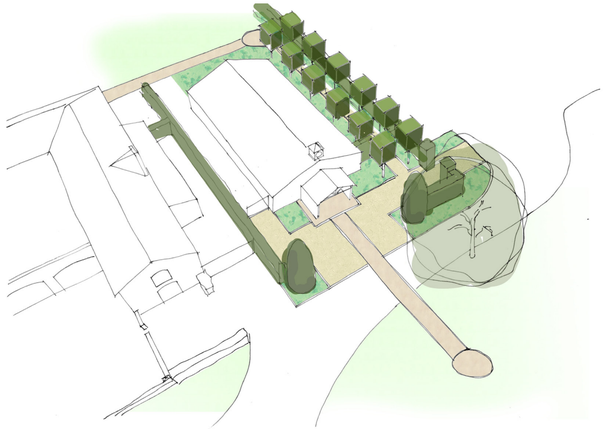
- the owners
- catering facilities
- deliveries
- bar access and deliveries,
- guest access and exit
- the bridal experience
- grooms experience
- photographers route and backdrops
- accommodation
- outdoor weddings etc

The plans and visuals explored all the pedestrian routes, vehicular routes and what was working well already as well as where there was room for improvement. A number of our design suggestions have already been successfully implemented. Logistically, this was quite a complex undertaking as works could not conflict with existing wedding bookings and a clean site needed to be maintained.

Key to the planting was the year-round booking calendar, the gardens need to look good all year in every weather. For this reason a high proportion of evergreen species were selected. Formal, clipped topiary looks good in every season and particularly special with Christmas lights, frost and snow. Weddings may often be colour themed so the planting colour palette was kept streamlined to an elegant palette.



Landscape Plans - 2023



B

Landscape Led Improvements

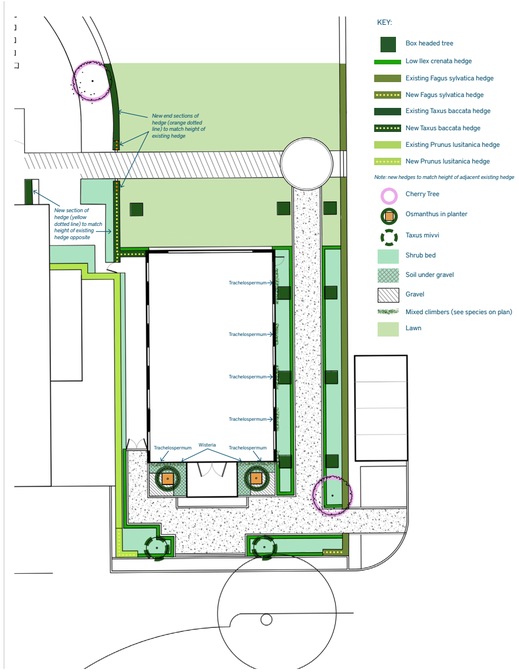
The following design improvements were suggested by Barnes Walker....

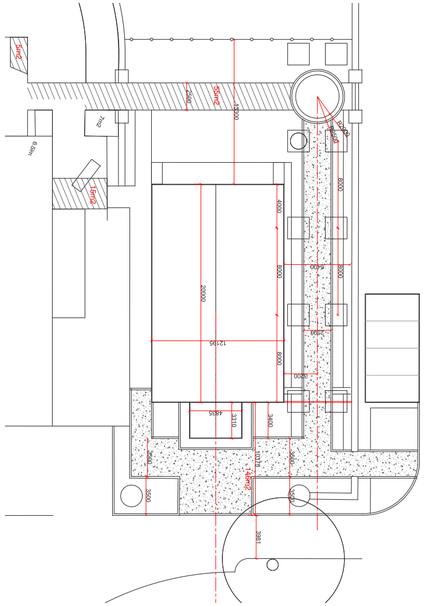
Arrival Space...

- The arrival area outside the wedding ceremony hall was uplifted with new planted borders and a gravel forecourt. This location features in many wedding photos as the arrival space, confetti throw and group shots setting. It is also a gathering point for arriving guests.

Glazing to Ceremony Room...

- The wedding ceremony room itself was already a beautiful space but it didn't take full advantage of the spectacular setting. There are very few venues which have a backdrop of mature, private parkland. A complete wall of glass provides natural light and the most amazing, pastoral outlook.







C



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After





Before



After

Movement...

- The Wedding party route: adjacent to the wedding ceremony room was the groom and groomsmen's 'cave', a venue for arrival drinks and photo shoot. This was situated too close to the ceremony room and left a narrow path between the kitchens and ceremony room for access to the gardens and function suite. The suggestion to move 'The Cave' away to it's own setting allowed a new route to be created. A processional pathway for guests to enter the venue by and for the bride and groom to lead their guests out, into the gardens and onwards to the function suite was formed. Dressed with new borders comprising low, evergreen hedges and box-head Yew trees the gravel path takes in the parkland setting and directs guests to the gardens. The planting looks superb in all weathers, day and night, external lighting highlights the landscape features.

Grooms Buildings...

- Moving the groom's building allowed additional glazing down the side elevations of the ceremony room bring in both natural light, crucial for wedding photographs, and views of the surroundings.















Planting...

- All of the borders in the gardens have been replanted and invigorated to achieve a fresh and sophisticated palette. Working with the mature topiary, hedges and pleached trees as a landscape structure, plants have been selected to create a calm, harmonious effect that continues to flower throughout the year. External lighting has been positioned to enhance the nightscape.

Further Revenue streams...

- Garden spaces are a luxury feature which allow optional extras to be included to personalise the wedding and form a revenue stream for the operator. Garden games, swing seats, garden bars, outdoor ceremonies, ice cream carts, firework displays are among the options available in the grounds of Merrydale Manor.















Photo Opportunities...

- Photo opportunity locations are crucial to a wedding venue. Photos form memory keepsakes for the whole bridal party but they are also vital as marketing material. Venues need to be distinct and recognisable particularly through the medium of social media. Merrydale has a high calibre of photographic locations all within easy reach of each other, this is critical in assisting the photographer to achieve a wide range of photos in as short a time as possible. The bridal party can then re-join their guests as quickly as possible, allowing the efficient timetable to progress without delay.

























































Amongst the beauty of the gardens there is a fundamental system of functionality and practicality features which go intentionally unnoticed, for example:

- External light fittings have been chosen for their effect and discreet design
- Sound systems are placed inconspicuously around the gardens
- Irrigation ensures as little time is spent on watering as possible and the gardens stay alive
- Soil and drainage has been improved to ensure the planting stays healthy
- Routes around the garden and hedge locations allow refuse areas to be unseen, staff to move unobtrusively around the site. Guests arriving do not conflict with guests leaving, the bride can remain unseen until intended. The venue is a well-oiled machine and runs like clockwork. Every wedding is special and unique.
- On-site parking and accommodation is easy to get to but does not impact on the venue itself.











D Sustainability

- The landscape improvements made by Barnes Walker are always designed with an consciousness of sustainability. Barnes Walker is proud to be a Carbon Neutral Certified company. We comply with the rigorous regulations required by the UNFCCC – United nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Carbon Neutral International Standard.
- All site visits are made using the company owned electric cars.
- All trees and plants were purchased from a nursery 10 miles away from the site.
- As much of the existing planting was retained and formed the backbone of the design.
- Over the years, Barnes Walker have planted many metres of native hedgerows, trees and meadow at Merrydale Manor.
- The intensive maintenance requirements of the former golf course have been streamlined significantly. Golf courses require enormous amounts of water and similar quantities of water extraction, in the order of 300,000 gallons of water is required each day during the summer months. Merrydale's parkland is predominantly sheep grazed.
- Typically golf courses employ pesticides and high levels of fertiliser, a parkland landscape requires minimal interventions.
- Natural stone has been used for paths and patios
- Bound gravel paths and tarmac are permeable

MERRYDALE MANOR TESTIMONIES

Reviews from couples who have booked Merrydale Manor since the transformation

"It was a fantastic day in all ways, the venue was beautiful, the staff were helpful and efficient, the food was delicious, the weather glorious, guests and the bridal party thoroughly enjoyed themselves, the Manor House was a joy to get ready in and stay overnight."

Mr & Mrs Lewin, September 2024

"Stunning venue, every single attention to detail is thought of at Merrydale Manor! ...everyone is still in awe at the beauty and grounds. I am so lucky to have had my wedding here, forever memories made with my closest family and friends. I cannot thank Merrydale enough for everything!"

Mr & Mrs Mac, September 2024

"The wedding was incredible, it was everything we could have wished for and more. Merrydale Manor, you truly are the best in the business and deserve the up-most success."

Mr & Mrs Oliver, August 2024

"They found the venue, Merrydale Manor, just after the New Year, and despite it being the first place they'd seen, they knew within 10 minutes that it was the one for them"

Vogue Magazine 2024

"We have had our photographs this weekend and are simply obsessed with the grounds and Merrydale all over again! We wish we could do it again. Thank you ten millions times over. The venue is just beautiful and so special, every guest expressed how incredible the grounds were and well kept. We felt like royalty and will never forget our special day."

Mr & Mrs Worth. July 2024

"Our wedding day everything we'd hoped and dreamed of. When we first visited Merrydale Manor around 2 years ago, we knew that we would not find a more perfect venue for our wedding day. For us, the venue was a perfect mix of modern, stylish and elegant – the grounds, the bedrooms, the ceremony room and reception room are just stunning! We have thoroughly enjoyed reliving all the memories while looking through our photos – it was a truly unforgettable day!

Mr & Mrs Lever, February 2024

Photography Credits...

Barnes Walker

Weddings.Tom Biddle

Jonny Draper

Carpé Diem Photography



BARNES
WALKER

Unit 6,
Longley Lane,
Northenden,
Manchester,
M22 4WT

0161 946 0808

www.barneswalker.co.uk