

## Marriage Rates Declining (Feb 2010)

More statistics have been released by the Office for National Statistics which show provisional marriage rates for 2008 which represent the **lowest numbers** since 1862.



Figures show that for every 1000 single men aged 16 or over just 21.8 got married in 2008.

This has dropped from 22.4 in 2007 and 31.1 in 1998.

The number of marriages registered in England and Wales during the year currently stands at 232,990 (although this may increase slightly before official figures are released next year).

The figures have prompted more calls from groups such as 'Resolution' to give unmarried couples more legal rights. Their views echo the rights which would be granted by a new Cohabitation Act (the Bill is currently progressing slowly through the House of Lords) and the proposals for new intestacy laws giving more rights to cohabitants.

They state that 'the majority of people don't understand that living together does not give them any financial protection...which leaves countless people vulnerable to financial hardship'.

The English Will company feel that as any change to legislation is likely to be a long way off, and is yet unclear to how exactly it will look we **strongly recommend** that it is **still vital** that cohabitants make a Will which provides for their partner in the event of their death or, conversely, protects their estate for the beneficiaries they wish to inherit, rather than waiting for the legislation to be changed.