



Easy access
(left, far left)
Breedon Hall;
(below, below
left) Daventry
Court Hotel



Breedon Hall, Derby

Located near the Derbyshire-Leicestershire border, the five-bed, 18th-century manor house launched its corporate offering in January. The venue can hold up to 18 for small meetings or 50 for a drinks reception in its elegant drawing room. A garden marquee is also available. Delegates can enjoy wine tasting and canapé evenings, cookery courses or historical tours and incentive activities can also be arranged with local suppliers. "The venue is in a fantastic location in a wonderful setting," says Debbie Goward, global head of financial and professional services at DHL Express, which held a wine-tasting networking event in March. "The staff hosted a great evening and were very hospitable."

24-hour delegate rates from £25

www.breedonhall.co.uk

Daventry Court Hotel, Nottingham

The 155-room hotel underwent a major refurbishment programme in March to further establish itself as one of the largest purpose-built conference venues in the local area. James Turner, commercial director at Calder – World of Travel, describes the venue as "an easily accessible location" because of its proximity to the M40 and M1 and says it features "a range of meeting rooms, state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment and staff providing exceptional customer-focused service". Its 15 meeting spaces includes the Danetree Suite, which holds up to 600 theatre-style or converts into three meeting rooms. Delegates can enjoy the hotel's four-star facilities such as the health club and swimming pool.

Daily delegate rates from £30

www.pumahotels.co.uk

6 of the best new C&I options

A manor house, heritage motor centre and Shakespeare's house add to the area's winning hand. By *Annie Makoff*

Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery

The former Victorian music hall, public rooms and medieval stone mansion opened in April as the Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery following a five-year, £100m restoration programme. Located in the centre of Shrewsbury, the venue and its complex of historical buildings boasts a selection of incredible spaces for corporate hire, such as the barrel-vaulted Vaughan's Mansion Suite (for up to 50 people), the Walker Suite (for up to 35), or the balcony, which overlooks the main gallery and is suitable for larger meetings.

Delegate rates available on request

www.shrewsburymuseum.org.uk



Historic collection Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery

MIDLANDS

King Richard III Centre, Leicester

Firmly establishing Leicester with a strong Richard III connection, the £4m King Richard III visitor centre at the site of former Leicester Grammar school in St Martin's Place, will be a draw for tourists and history enthusiasts alike. The venue, set to open in July, has state-of-the-art displays designed to guide visitors through the story of the Plantagenet king. It also features a function room with theatre-style capacity for 130 or 150 for drink receptions. The café space and enclosed courtyard are also available for small outdoor events.

Delegate rates available on request
www.kingrichardiiivisitorcentre.com

Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon

Home to the world's largest collection of British cars, the museum with Art Deco-inspired conference facilities for up to 600 delegates is set to open a brand new Heritage Lottery-funded centre in 2015 to display more than 200 vintage cars. The new two-storey building, complete with a viewing gallery, workshop facilities and education area with capacity for 30 guests, will be ideal for small corporate groups who want private tours of the collection and to learn about vehicle restoration and conservation. The main museum has also launched a new exhibition, 21 Years, 21 Icons, in celebration of the Trust's 21st birthday.

HMC is offering 21% off day delegate rates of £52.95 for 2014

www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk

In celebratory mood Shakespeare's House; vintage cars show at the Heritage Motor Centre

Famous Beyond Words, Stratford-upon-Avon

To celebrate the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, the Famous Beyond Words exhibition, a contemporary look at his life and legacy, opened in April at Shakespeare's birthplace and is expected to welcome more than one million visitors over three years. Featuring digital projections, audio-digital footage and artefacts from The Bard's life and family, 20 delegates at a time can enjoy private tours of the house and exhibition featuring costumed actors. Drinks and canapés can be provided for up to 80 in the venue's garden.

After-hours tours of the house from £29.95 to £39.95
www.shakespeare.org.uk



CASE STUDY QAD



Pre-event planning QAD, a global provider of software solutions to the manufacturing industry, holds its EMEA conference annually where clients, partners and employees come together for hands-on training, discussions and workshops. For its 2013 conference, QAD wanted something a bit different.

"Our previous conferences have been very traditional. We've usually opted for a big conference hotel in a big city. This time we wanted something a little bit more unique," says regional marketing manager Mark Feathers.

QAD carried out an evaluation of potential venues and, after compiling a shortlist and following a series of visits, selected Weston Park, a 17th-century stately home situated on the borders of Staffordshire and Shropshire.

"The combination of an English country house location, excellent

service, great food and conference facilities was hard to beat," Feathers explains.

Challenges Minor logistical issues arose such as ensuring QAD's VIPs were where they should be at a given time, as well as ensuring that visiting European clients were shuttled to and from nearby Birmingham airport to the venue in a timely manner, but QAD didn't experience any major challenges in arranging the event.

FACTFILE

COMPANY	QAD
EVENT	EMEA Conference
GROUP SIZE	170
AGENCY	In-house
DATE	8-9 October 2013
VENUE	Weston Park, Staffordshire

Winning combination

Weston Park's country house location offered an 'exceptional venue'

Solution In the evening prior to the start of the conference, 18 delegates in managerial roles attended an executive dinner with QAD's president in the venue's historic dining room.

Day two involved a series of meetings, training workshops and informal discussions as well as networking opportunities for clients, stakeholders and employees. The venue's elegant Victorian Orangery, Dining and Music Rooms served as meeting spaces for the majority of meetings, while senior-level meetings were held in the Castle Bromwich executive boardroom.

Post-event analysis The event was a success with delegates, and with QAD's president, who requested they return to Weston Park for the company's 2014 European Conference.

"The events team made a complex process very simple," says Feathers. "And the venue was exceptional."

