

The great outdoors

C&IT presents a selection of venues that maximise the sunshine and warmth of the summer months. By *Annie Makoff-Clark*



Space and light
(above) Blackburn Wing at Bowcliffe Hall; (top right) Darwin Centre courtyard; (below right) Chateau Rhianfa

Bowcliffe Hall Leeds

Bowcliffe Hall and its 38 acres of lawns and woodlands is an ideal venue for team-building and sport-related activities. Up to 60 delegates can enjoy meetings and corporate events with in-house catering facilities. The Blackburn Wing, a wing-shaped copper structure with floor to ceiling windows, is set to open in the summer and can host up to 140 guests. Its art deco-inspired dining room, the Driver's Club, will open in the spring and has capacity for 65 delegates.

Day delegate rates from £40
www.bowcliffehall.co.uk

Wood Norton Hotel Evesham

The Orangery, a new £1m events venue at the Wood Norton Hotel in Evesham, Worcestershire, opened in February this year. It has a glass frontage providing impressive views over the Malverns. Featuring a private terrace and gardens, The Orangery can accommodate up to 120 delegates seated, or 180 for standing receptions, while the hotel has 50 bedrooms. The hotel was originally built as a hunting lodge for European Royalty in 1897, then bought by the BBC in 1939 and used for filming some of *Dr Who*, before opening in November 2012 after a £4m restoration.

Day delegate rates from £50 or 24 hours £150
www.thewoodnorton.com



The Darwin Centre

Natural History Museum, London

The Darwin Centre features a landscaped outdoor courtyard, ideal for summer events. The space can hold up to 350 delegates and is available for corporate hire after 6pm. Delegates can enjoy a drinks reception in the courtyard before a private viewing of the museum's collections, followed by a sit-down dinner.

Room hire rates from £7,500 (centre and courtyard)
www.nhm.ac.uk

Chateau Rhianfa Isle of Anglesey, Wales

Located in the Isle of Anglesey, the fairytale-like Chateau Rhianfa overlooks the Snowdonian mountains and boasts its own private beach, landscaped gardens, tennis courts and a spa. Delegates can enjoy incentive activities including RIB rides from the venue's private jetty, wine-tasting, or a barbeque on the terrace. The Grade II-listed building features 22 bedrooms and eight function rooms, including the Wine Caves and Banqueting Hall, which can hold up to 120 delegates.

Day delegate rates from £57
www.chateaurhianfa.com





Barsham Barns Norfolk

Situated near to the North Norfolk coast, the five barns provide a comfortable and peaceful retreat for team-building and summer-related activities around the Norfolk countryside, including sailing, seal-spotting trips or falconry. The Great East Barn can hold up to 24 delegates or 45 with additional seating, or alternatively, an outdoor marquee can be used. Each barn, which has been interior-designed to reflect a different country or style, from Moroccan to Scandinavian, includes wireless broadband and widescreen televisions for presentations.

24-hour delegate rates from £75

www.barshambarns.co.uk



Cameron House Loch Lomond, Scotland

Cameron House, with its seven elegantly furnished meeting rooms, prides itself on its unique corporate offering. Its luxurious interiors provide motivational spaces and ample opportunities to take afternoon tea or healthy snacks.

The 132-room hotel and its grounds and facilities include a corporate spa with 17 treatment rooms, a gym, tennis courts, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, beauty bar and several restaurants and bars. Delegates can enjoy a range of outdoor and indoor pursuits including

Country retreat
Barsham Barns near the North Norfolk coast offers a wealth of team-building and incentive activities

mountain biking, whisky tasting or falconry. Sarah Jones, senior meeting planner at CWT Meetings & Events, says: "We've used Cameron House for many events and they have some inspired team-building activities available, including a RIB ride to a private island where delegates can try orienteering and enjoy lunch on the beach."

Day delegate rates start from £45

www.cameronhouse.co.uk

CASE STUDY Protected Travel Services

Pre-event planning

Protected Travel Services (PTS), trade solutions provider to the travel industry, wanted its 2013 annual development meeting to include a health-and-wellness programme to encourage a healthy workforce.

New You Boot Camp, which provides fitness retreats, was the only company to offer PTS the whole package, incorporating a health-and-wellness element into its annual development event, and the Somerset venue was within easy reach of London.

John Attreed, director of client relations at Protected Travel Services, says: "We wanted an exclusive property where our team could concentrate on the business and then themselves. We are a firm believer in health and wellness at work and we wanted to support our team in this."

Challenges

The team's wide age range (20-60 years) initially posed a problem from a fitness-and-



Fitness fun PTS delegates at the annual development event at Sparkford Hall

BRAND WATCH

devoted to the annual development meeting, while the second day included an intense, but fun, fitness regime of military circuits, assault courses and hiking. The afternoon consisted of cookery lessons where delegates picked their own produce from the venue's herb and vegetable garden. On the following day, the team attended a series of healthy lifestyle coaching workshops, run by the on-site senior coach and nutritionist who focused on healthy eating, good sleep, hygiene and stress management.

Post-event analysis

PTS staff were delighted with the choice of venue and the knowledge they took from the sessions. Attreed says: "The team not only concentrates on sales targets to an even greater extent, many of them have also taken on some amazing fitness challenges such as running 10k for the British Heart Foundation. We will definitely be coming back in 2014."

FACTFILE

COMPANY	Protected Travel Services
EVENT	Annual Development Meeting
GROUP SIZE	20
AGENCY	In-house
DATE	3-5 July 2013
VENUE	New You Boot Camp, Sparkford Hall, Somerset
BUDGET	£18,500 approx

exercise perspective, but alternative training plans were worked out and arranged before the event took place.

Solution

Delegates enjoyed several days of training-and-fitness regimes, cookery lessons, nutrition workshops and lifestyle coaching. The first day was