

# eventful 2015

## Welcome to new members for 2015!

Featuring an extensive portfolio of venues and services across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, the Bureau is pleased to give a warm welcome to two new venues to membership for 2015!

## INSIDE

**P2** Go Ape Cannock Chase

**P2-3** Swinfen Hall Hotel

Best Western Plus Stoke-on-Trent Moat House

**P4** Alton Towers

**P5** Keele University

**P6** The National Memorial Arboretum

**P7** Yarnfield Park

**P7** Moddershall Oaks

**P8** CoRE (Centre of Refurbishment Excellence)

**P8** Crewe Hall

**P8** Best Western Plus Manor House Hotel

## Introducing an inspirational and motivational setting

**Lilleshall National Sports and Conferencing Centre** is an elite residential training venue for the country's leading sportsmen and women and also provides an inspirational and motivational setting for corporate clients to use.

With an extensive range of indoor and outdoor spaces available, Lilleshall easily caters for a wide range of event requirements such as meetings, conferences, teambuilding, product launches, conferences, dinners and celebrations.

Working with partners Leeds Beckett Carnegie Great Outdoors, Exotic Zoo and Sports Partners the team are able to deliver a range of on-site outdoor activities from fun away days and corporate fun days to full Institute of Leadership Management accredited programmes. The complete outdoor experience can be offered including tipis, bush survival, I'm an employee get me out of here - face your fears, Bear Grylls style adventure, Frisbee golf, wheelchair basketball and more.

With a selection of traditional, modern and more unusual facilities from the 200 year old stately home to marquees and tipis, Lilleshall can offer the perfect corporate package in a relaxed but professional environment, with accreditations including Quest Excellent and Hospitality Assured Premier Status. There are also a range of accommodation styles available including the 4\* campus style bedrooms and campsite.

The extensive grounds and formal gardens are in a countryside location but with easy access by road and rail with motorway links no further than 10 minutes away and mainline railway station with links to London and the rest of the UK within 15 minutes.

**To find out more about Lilleshall, call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076.**





**NEW  
member**

## Inspire, energise and motivate your team

**Go Ape Cannock Chase**, the No.1 Forest Adventure is the ideal setting to inspire, energise and motivate your tribe. The attraction is situated on Cannock Chase, an area of outstanding natural beauty boasting breathtaking scenery where your team can truly get away from the stresses of the office.

Go Ape is a fantastic alternative to the average teambuilding day and you can rely on the friendly team to guarantee you a day to remember. Take in the vista of tree-top hire wires, crossings and wind-in-your-face zip wires while watching your boss jump off a high platform!

Typical packages on offer include the 'classic' tree top adventure, mountain biking, a Forest BBQ, welcome drinks and much more. Delegates can now even explore the forest by Segway - an epic experience with a down to earth twist.

Go Ape Cannock have recently been awarded Silver in the Best Small Visitor Attraction category in the Enjoy Staffordshire Awards 2014.

**To find out more about packages on offer, call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076.**

# The Good Life at Swinfen Hall Hotel

Helen Wiser, owner of **Swinfen Hall Hotel** chats to us about the challenges and pleasures of running an independent hotel.

### **Can you give us a brief history of this magnificent property?**

Swinfen Hall was built in 1755 for a family of three and fifty-five servants and in its heyday sat amid several thousand acres three miles south of Lichfield. After Lt Col Swinfen Broun died in 1948 the Hall was left empty for over 30 years and gradually fell into disrepair. Rescued in 1987, we have worked hard to restore this magnificent Georgian mansion to its former glory and to establish Swinfen Hall as a successful business.

### **Congratulations on recently being awarded 3 rosettes!**

We are very proud to be the first restaurant to attain 3 AA rosettes in Staffordshire since 2002 which is a testament to Head Chef Paul Proffitt and his kitchen brigade, Pete Haw our Restaurant Manager and of course the service team.

Paul, a Staffordshire lad born and bred, trained at Birmingham College of Food and in France and then worked at Michelin-starred Purnells for two years before joining us as Head Chef in September 2013. This is Paul's first Head Chef role and we are thrilled that his evident culinary skills have won recognition in such a short space of time.

Our Four Seasons restaurant offers fine dining or for something simple you can choose from our Bar and Terrace menu. We have excellent facilities for entertaining with an oak-panelled private dining room (for up to 20 guests) and a Ballroom and adjoining bar for larger parties.

**What has been going on at the hotel and what are your future plans for the estate to stand out from other hotels in the region?**

When an additional 95 acres was acquired in 2003, the team embarked on a DEFRA 10-year countryside stewardship scheme to ensure the land was restored in an environmentally-responsible way. This included planting 600 metres of hedgerows, wild hay meadows, over 50 parkland trees and establishing a 45-acre wild deer park with two stags (Napoleon and Solo) and 12 hinds. Twelve years on, there is a thriving herd of 80+ sika deer and venison is a regular feature on the winter and spring menus.

Inspired by this success, a small flock of rare-breed Manx Loaghtan ewes arrived in December 2014. The breed is listed in the Ark of Taste, an international catalogue of endangered heritage food produced by the Slow Food Movement. Lamb and hogget from Manx Loaghtan is highly-prized both for its distinctive flavour and its healthy properties as the meat is substantially lower in fat and cholesterol than commercial breeds. Manx sheep are slow maturing so unfortunately there will be no estate-reared lamb or hogget on the Swinfen menu until well into 2016.

Elsewhere on the estate, the half-acre Victorian walled garden has also been restored and now produces an abundance of vegetables, herbs and fruit throughout the summer. The grounds staff use no pesticides or chemicals throughout the estate but cultivate compost to put goodness back into the soil. Making compost helps the hotel's recycling programme using raw vegetable waste, grass cuttings, waste paper and cardboard. Our 'green cred' continues with conversion of used cooking oil into red diesel for the tractors and installation of a car-charging station for guests who've joined the electric car revolution.

Although wedding and conference business may be the basis of the hotel's business, it is the flagship 3AA rosette restaurant that drives the show and the wonderful estate that provides the inspiration.

**To find out more about Swinfen Hall Hotel, call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076.**



# Fly your delegates through the treetops at Alton Towers Resort

**Alton Towers** are taking teambuilding to the treetops with the launch of the Enchanted Forest Tree Top Quest - the latest addition to the theme park's portfolio of corporate team building activities.

Launched in May 2015, The Enchanted Forest Tree Top Quest provides an invigorating break from the boardroom and an opportunity to bond with fellow team members from new heights. Set amongst the trees, the course features a series of obstacles and 19 challenging elements including traverse nets, swing tyres, stepping stones, zip wire and tunnel.

Catering for dare devils and acrophobics alike, the new development consists of two courses, one low rope course 5 metres off the ground and a high ropes course, 8 metres high. The adult course takes between 1 hour - 1 hour 20 minutes and the low ropes course approximately one hour. Taking into account its beautiful setting, the whole structure has been sensitively designed to ensure it will not impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape and woodland.

With a wide open space, thrilling rides and park facilities, the Resort lends itself perfectly to teambuilding activities for corporate events. The brand new high ropes course will add to the already diverse and unique teambuilding offering at the theme park, which includes executive ride hire, Wildgoose GPS treasure hunts and Extraordinary golf.

The Enchanted Forest Treetop Quest is now available for corporate bookings. The activity costs £20 per person for the high ropes course and £16 for the low ropes.

**For more information on Alton Towers Resort, call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076.**



## Best Western Plus Stoke-on-Trent Moat House hosts 90th Anniversary Budgerigar Society Convention

The **Best Western Plus Stoke-on-Trent Moat House** recently hosted the Budgerigar Society Convention.

The event - described as 'the Crufts of the budgerigar world' - coincided with the 90th anniversary of the Society and attracted representatives of more than 30 countries from around the globe.

Held once every five years, the 2015 Convention had been two years in the planning. Stoke-on-Trent and the Best Western Plus Stoke-on-Trent Moat House was chosen due to its central location and ease of access for Society members and members of the public attending the event to catch a glimpse of the eye-catching 'Show of Birds' featuring more than 200 budgerigars.

The convention made use of the flexible conference space across the hotel and delegates booked out all 147 bedrooms.

**To find out how the hotel could work for a variety of events, call 01782 232076.**



# Keele first university venue to get healthcare injection to its accreditations

**Keele University** is the first university to pass a nationally-recognised specialist assessment from Compliant Venues Ltd for its facilities and team, opening the door to the specific requirements of meetings and events in the healthcare sector.

Compliant Venues Ltd, an independent consultancy which helps venues to understand and work more effectively with the healthcare sector, carried out a rigorous assessment of the University's facilities and staff to ensure the venue could meet the strict event compliance aims of transparency and appropriateness outlined by regulations across the healthcare sector. These regulations bring the focus of events across the sector away from what have in the past been perceived as lavish meetings, with content often a secondary priority to entertainment, to more streamlined meetings where delivering and sharing scientific content in an appropriate setting is the one and only aim.

To achieve the accreditation, four of the senior Keele University Conferences & Events team were trained to understand the protocol of healthcare events. Emma Woodcock, Senior Business Development Manager; Claire Axon, Business Development Manager; Jo Williams, Keele University Conference & Events Sales Executive; and Sharon Faulke, Senior Internal Conference & Events Sales Executive, all received the specialist training. These four specialist staff will continue to receive tests and training every six and twelve months to keep their expertise up-to-date.

Marcus Wilson continues: "We're in the process of expanding the specialisms of our team, so we aren't stopping just with our Compliant Venues accreditation. The Keele University Conference & Events team has also been working hard in preparation for its Green Business Tourism assessment later this year, something which we hope to be able to add to our offering to organisations."

**To find out more about the varied conference facilities available at Keele University, call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076.**



# Investment & Developments

## National Memorial Arboretum sets date for £15.7m transformation

**The National Memorial Arboretum**, part of The Royal British Legion family of charities, has reached a major milestone in its £15.7m fundraising appeal. Over the past five years, the Arboretum has been pursuing the goal of building new facilities for visitors at its centre for Remembrance in Staffordshire. The fundraising milestone now reached will enable construction work to begin over the summer.

The fundraising campaign, launched by HRH The Duke of Cambridge, has passed £10m, meaning that work on the new facilities which will cater for up to 500,000 visitors per year. The milestone has been reached through the generosity of many individuals and organisations in the past few years, including lead funders Staffordshire County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The building work, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2016, will include a new Remembrance Centre with dedicated education facilities that will enable the Arboretum to expand its visitor engagement.

The NMA can also offer meetings space for corporate hire. The marquee sits within the grounds of the attraction and can accommodate up to 300 delegates, making this the perfect venue for inspirational awards ceremonies, conferences and meetings. The Rose and Poppy Rooms are ideal for smaller events or breakout space.

**To find out more about the NMA for your next event, call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076.**



# Yarnfield Park's £2.75m investment plans underway

**Yarnfield Park**, one of the UK's largest residential training and conference centres, has confirmed that its £2.75m programme of investment will commence during summer 2015. The venue which has seen significant growth in its training and conference business over the last 4 years will be upgrading all areas of its business, from the bar and restaurant through to its accommodation and event space.

The initial phase will see the large bar area completely redeveloped to create 2 complimentary but distinct areas with work commencing in July to finish by the end of August. This will be followed by a rolling programme which will take around 2 years to complete, with bedrooms and meeting spaces upgraded on a gradual basis. This will ensure that work can be undertaken during quieter phases of the calendar, such as August and December, to ensure there is no disruption to the busy programme of events and training programmes.

Richard Smith, head of sales and marketing "We are thrilled to see this multi-million pound investment into Yarnfield Park. Two years ago we invested £0.25m in our superfast internet and Wi-Fi solution and immediately saw the benefits of such a significant project. This latest and much larger investment will see upgrades across all areas of the centre". The venue which specialises in residential conference and training programmes identified the need for investment following a period of consultation with key clients and an analysis of future requirements within the training and conference sectors.

**To find out more about Yarnfield Park Training & Conference Centre, call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076.**



## Moddershall Oaks reveal new outdoor events space

Picture an ambience like no other... peaceful surroundings, soft outdoor lighting, a woodland and stunning views from the water's edge.

In April 2015 **Moddershall Oaks** unveiled an outdoor space that is exclusive to its events space, The Venue with enviable views of the lake on the edge of private woodland. This brand new landscaped space is ideal for taking in the fresh air with wedding or event guests. The space boasts the highest quality features which Moddershall Oaks is renowned for, including Bose outdoor sound system, soft outdoor LED lighting, landscaped gardens & pathways and a custom made solid oak gazebo which is also licensed for outdoor wedding ceremonies.

This new development compliments the existing conference space. The Venue which offers meetings space for corporate events can be hired as an exclusive use option and ideal for impressing corporate clients. Renowned for their best possible service, delicious food and most memorable experience, this option would be perfect for outdoor corporate hospitality.

**To find out more about this fantastic new development, call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076.**

# Awards & Accolades

## CoRE bag multiple awards

The team at **CoRE (Centre of Refurbishment Excellence)** are proud to be celebrating after receiving multiple prestigious awards over the last 12 months for its renovation from derelict pottery works to world-class training and conference centre.

The venue which opened in 2013, is the result of a stunning restoration of an historic pottery works. It combines the best of 130 years of Potteries Heritage with cutting edge technology and design to create an exciting fusion of the old and the new.

CoRE is pleased to shout about the recognition it has received in the following awards. Local Authority Building Control Excellence Award 2014 - Best Change of Use, Royal Institute of British Architects Award Winner - Building of Merit, RIBA Award Winner - Sustainable project of 2014 and Midlands Environmental Business Company Award for Excellence in Sustainability Training in December 2014.

CoRE boasts state-of-the-art facilities, across 1700m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, integrated smart screens, venuewide WIFI and ample parking. Throw in CoRE's accessibility, commitment to customer service and competitive hire rates, the team challenge you to find a box that cannot be ticked for your next training course, event or meeting.

**To find out more about CoRE, call 01782 232076.**

## Venues enter Trip Advisor Hall of Fame!

Two hotels are celebrating after being invited into the Trip Advisor 'Hall of Fame' for receiving high levels of positive reviews.

**Crewe Hall** was added to the Hall of Fame having received the Certificate of Excellence from Trip Advisor 5 years in a row. This highlights the team's dedication to providing consistent excellent service from all types of clients, whatever the occasion. Hotel policy ensures that a member of the Senior Management team responds personally to all feedback on Trip Advisor taking on board feedback from guests and clients. Feedback received is an important tool enabling the hotel to continually improve the levels of service we provide to guests.

The 57-bedroom family-owned **Best Western Plus Manor House Hotel** in Stoke-on-Trent also joins them in the 'Hall of Fame'.

Steve Alty, Sales Manager at the hotel said: "As the award is based entirely on customer feedback over the last 5 years, we're all very proud to receive this recognition. If plans to extend our leisure facilities are approved our customers can look forward to even better stays in the future." He added "We don't take our guest's reviews for granted and therefore respond to every one. The hotel extends from a 17th century farmhouse. All of the bedrooms are recently refurbished and in 2014 a major renovation transformed the hotel's public areas."

**Call the Staffordshire Conference Bureau on 01782 232076 to find out more about Crewe Hall and the Manor House Hotel for your next event.**

**Request a guide**

Request or download our Meetings on a plate Conference Guide where you will find all the information you could possibly need to organise a meeting, incentive experience or many other event types here in Staffordshire.

[www.conferencestaffordshire.co.uk/brochure-download/](http://www.conferencestaffordshire.co.uk/brochure-download/)

Free Venue Finding Hotline **01782 232076**

Email [conference@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:conference@stoke.gov.uk) • [www.conferencestaffordshire.co.uk](http://www.conferencestaffordshire.co.uk)



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