Using Historic House Hotels For Small Meetings

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Using Historic House Hotels for Small Meetings

Historic House Hotels is a small British company which owns four hotels Hartwell House in the Vale of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, Bodysgallen Hall in Llandudno, North Wales, Middlethorpe Hall in York and the Cadogan Hotel in London.

The guiding philosophy for the company, which is owned by conservationist Richard Broyd, has been the acquisition of houses of historic and architectural interest in order to restore them and transform them into first class hotels. Each of the country houses is at least 300 years old and two of the three, Bodysgallen Hall and Middlethorpe Hall were in a very rundown condition when they were acquired by Historic House Hotels. The Cadogan was built in 1887 and was already a wellknown and much loved hotel. The hotels are decorated and furnished in a style which is in keeping with the period of the house and furnished with antiques and hung with fine paintings. The three country houses are surrounded by acres of their own gardens and parkland and are situated in areas which offer plenty of sporting activities for conference delegates. Each of the hotels has facilities for small meetings and in the country houses there are located in buildings separate from the main hotel.

The company was formed in 1980 and the first house to be restored was Bodysgallen Hall near the Victorian seaside town of Llandudno in the Principality of Wales. This is a distinguished mansion in rose coloured sandstone built in the 17th century and had been the home of the Mostyn and Wynn families who played an important role in Welsh history.







Bodysgallen

Bodysgallen is 47 miles from the historic city of Chester which is reached by a fast expressway. Manchester International Airport is 85 miles and London is 227 miles. There is a good train service, from Manchester, Liverpool and London and the nearest railway station is Llandudno Junction.

The house is situated on a hillside with magnificent views of the mountains of Snowdonia. It looks down on the Castle of Conwy once



Bodysgallen Hall, Llandudno North Wales

inhabited by the Kings of England who conquered Wales. The oldest part of the hotel is the 13th century tower once used as a lookout by English soldiers watching for marauding Welsh armies. Now it can be approached by a winding stone staircase for guests to enjoy the spectacular views of the Welsh countryside.



The hotel stands in 200 acres of wooded parkland, with award winning gardens which include a 17th parterre, a beautiful rose garden, a rockery with a cascade, a restored 18th century Ladies Walk and a walled kitchen garden which supplies fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers for the hotel.

The garden has several interesting follies which have been restored and in 1993 a dramatic and imposing 64' obelisk was built on Ffrith Hill at the southern end of the Bodysgallen estate. It can be seen from Conwy Castle, Llandudno and the Conwy Valley. Meetings are held in the Wynn Rooms, the imaginatively restored 18th century stable block which is adjacent to the hotel. This is a split level

> building consisting of the Upper and Lower Wynn Rooms. Each of the Wynn Rooms can hold up to forty people theatre style or twenty six round a board room table. The Upper Wynn Room is ideal for meetings and the Lower room with access to its own kitchen is suitable for receptions, cocktail parties, luncheons or dinners.

> There is also the Tack Room for small board room style meetings and use as a syndicate

There are nineteen spacious, well appointed bedrooms in the house and sixteen cottage suites dotted around the grounds, many with their own private gardens. Guests have a choice of comfortable places around the hotel in which to sit and relax. There is the entrance hall where a log fire welcomes arriving guests, the cosy library and a large drawing room on the first floor.

The hotel has two adjoining

dining rooms serving excellent food prepared by head chef Michael Penny and his brigade, which has been awarded three rosettes by the Automobile Association. The food is prepared from fresh local produce, complemented by fine wines, and the Bill of Fare includes many traditional dishes associated with the great country houses of England and Wales.

room for up to ten people. There are several sitting rooms in the cottage suites which can be used for small private meetings, cocktail parties or as syndicate rooms.

Delegates have unlimited use of the Bodysgallen Spa with its spacious 50' indoor swimming pool,





whirlpool spa bath, steam room and sauna, gymnasium and beauty treatment rooms. There is a Club Room for drinks and light meals and a sun terrace. Mawr, the world gardens at Bodnant and the famous Swallow Falls at Betws-y-coed.

The hotel has its own tennis court and croquet lawn and there are four golf courses within ten minutes drive. The hotel can arrange horse riding and pony trekking through the beautiful Welsh countryside, sea and river fishing and a variety of water sports.

Bodysgallen is situated in an area noted for beautiful scenery and Welsh history. For those with time to spare visits can be arranged to castles such as Caernarfon, Harlech, Conwy and Beaumaris, historic houses like Plas





Bodysgallen Hall has won many national and international awards for the conservation of the house and gardens, as well as for hospitality and service. However, one of its main attraction as a venue for small meetings is the utter peace tranquility and offered by its setting and the general atmosphere of the place which is so conducive to top level decision making.

Twenty four hour delegate rates include single early accommodation. morning tea, cooked breakfast, morning coffee and biscuits, an allowance towards luncheon, afternoon tea and biscuits, an allowance towards dinner, hire of meeting rooms, and use of the health and leisure Spa and service charge. This includes the use of flip





charts, overhead projector -and screen, 35mm projector, video and monitor, direct telephone and fax facilities which are available on site. Other equipment can be obtained on request.

Middlethorpe Hall

The second house to be restored and opened by Historic House Hotels was Middlethorpe Hall which lies on the outskirts of the famous city of York, overlooking York Race Course. It is a Oueen Anne style house built in 1699 for Thomas Barlow. a wealthy Sheffield ironmaster who desired to join the gentry with his elegant country property. The Barlows continued to live at



Middlethorpe throughout the 18th century, and from 1713 to 1715 the house was let to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the famous diarist, traveller and gossip. After she had persuaded her husband that it was not too expensive for the family budget, she agreed to take the house with the comment "Tis a

very pritty place and in every way proper for us."

In the 19th century Middlethorpe was generally let, both to private individuals and for a time, as a school. Early in the 20th century it underwent serious vicissitudes, including being converted into



three flats before becoming "Brummels" Nightclub in 1972. When the house was acquired by Historic House Hotels in 1980 problems the encountered were considerable. Not only was the interior in a deplorable condition and decorated suitably for a nightclub, but essential maintenance had been neglected, leaving the structure to decay. The transformation into the elegant country house hotel was



Barlow family for the entertainment of their friends, and a small sitting room on the first floor.

There are three adjoining dining rooms overlooking the gardens and a grill room on the lower ground floor, allowing flexible arrangements for delegate dining. The hotel is well known for the excellence of its food which has gained three rosettes from the Automobile Association.

Meetings are held in the adjacent purpose built, self-

remarkable and took two years to complete.

Middlethorpe is in a peaceful setting overlooking 26 acres of beautiful gardens and a lake, yet is only ten minutes from the centre of York. York itself can be reached from London by train in one hour forty-five minutes and from Edinburgh in Scotland in two hours. The hotel is 70 miles from Manchester International Airport.

The hotel has thirty bedrooms and suites, some in the main house

and some in the adjacent 18th century courtyard. They are individually designed and well equipped. Reception rooms include the entrance hall, library, large drawing room, once the ballroom used by the contained Barlow Room fifty yards from the main house. It is ideal for small conferences and has its own cloakrooms, bar and kitchen. The Barlow



Room has a dividing wall which gives flexibility to the room which can take up to fortyfive people in comfort. There is a board room in the main house which seats ten, and has its own adjoining sitting room. There are six suites with their own sitting rooms which are easily converted into interview or syndicate rooms.

As well as to the two main restaurants there is the Yellow





Room which overlooks the garden and seats up to fourteen people. Larger parties can be accommodated in the Grill Room which has its own sitting room for pre-dinner drinks. The Marbled Room is an ideal dining room for up to twenty-two delegates.

Delegates visiting Middlethorpe now have the benefit of the new health and leisure Spa which opened in May 1999. This has an indoor swimming pool, whirlpool spa bath, steam room and sauna and beauty salons. An exercise area will open later in the summer of 1999.

The twenty four hour delegate rate includes single accommodation, early morning tea, breakfast, morning coffee and biscuits, two course luncheon, afternoon tea and biscuits, three course dinner with coffee, hire of the meeting room, use of the health Spa and service charge.



outstanding museum, Viking remains at the Jorvik Centre and the world famous York Minster. The surrounding countryside is picturesque and varied, from the dramatic moors and beautiful Yorkshire dales to quaint seaside villages. Stately homes such as Castle Howard (where 'Brideshead Revisited' and 'The Buccaneers' were filmed) Harewood House, home of the Earl of Harewood, and the romantic ruined Abbeys of Fountains, Rievaulx and Jervaulx are all nearby.

York Racecourse, known as the 'Ascot of the North' is next to the hotel and it is within easy reach of several other racecourses. The hotel is close to several golf courses and can also arrange such sports as clay pigeon shooting, fishing, archery and hot air ballooning.

Middlethorpe Hall is in an excellent position to arrange a variety of sporting and sightseeing activities for delegates. The historic city of York is very popular with visitors who can explore the Roman walls, the medieval cobbled streets with their elegant shops, the Castle and its



Hartwell House

The jewel in the crown of Historic House Hotels is Hartwell House in the Vale of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. Situated in rural English countryside, yet only one hour by car from central London or Heathrow Airport, this is a stately home in the truly grand manner. It was built in the 17th and 18th centuries for the Lee family (ancestors of General Robert E. Lee). The Lee family served the British Royal family during the 18th century and Sir George Lee was a close friend and adviser of Frederick Prince of Wales whose statue stands by the entrance of the hotel.

From 1809 until 1814 Hartwell House was the residence in exile of King Louis XVIII of France, his Queen and his Court. It Is said that the King enjoyed his time at Hartwell where he cultivated camelias and grew very fat! It was in the Library at Hartwell that he signed papers restoring





him to the throne of France. Portraits of King Louis and Queen Made Josephine, who died at Hartwell, hang above the main staircase.

It was in that same Library that President Clinton made a Saturday morning broadcast to the United States, when he called at the hotel during his D-Day visit to Britain.

Hartwell House is a Grade 1 Listed building with both Georgian and Jacobean facades. Visiting Hartwell today you enter the Great Hall, an imposing room in English baroque style built by James Gibbs



in 1740. To the left of the Great Hall is an oak panelled room, now the bar where hang pictures of the original early 18th century formal gardens.

The Rococo Morning Room with its magnificently decorated ceiling, the adjacent

Drawing Room and Library are all Georgian and were built around 1760 by the architect Henry Keene.

A dramatic Gothic staircase leads to thirty one bedrooms and suites on three floors. Another sixteen bedrooms and suites are in Hartwell Court, the restored stable block. Bedrooms on the first floor, named after previous occupants, are very large and luxurious and many have four poster beds.

The principal Dining Room has been designed in the style of 19th century architect Sir John Soane, and the adjoining Doric and Octagon rooms are available for private dining. The hotel has three rosettes from the Automobile Association for the excellence of its food.

Hartwell House is surrounded by 90 acres of parkland landscaped by a contemporary of 'Capability' Brown and features a lake stocked with trout spanned by a picturesque stone bridge, a ruined church and many eighteenth century statues and garden buildings. Delegates can play tennis on two all-weather courts, croquet on the lawn and fish for trout in the lake. Other sports such as golf and squash are available nearby and activities such as horse riding, archery, clay pigeon shooting, falconry and hot

air ballooning can be arranged.

The Hartwell Rooms are purpose built airconditioned meeting rooms in the restored 18th century coach houses and indoor riding school situated about 100 yards from the main house, but



close to the bedrooms in Hartwell Court.

The main meeting room is the James Gibbs Room with state of the art conference equipment, which can seat up to forty people for a boardroom, U-shape or classroom style meeting. Theatre style it will accommodate ninety people. The James Wyatt Room is of a similar size to the James Gibbs Room and the two can be used in conjunction for coffee breaks and conference dining. Both rooms have dividing walls to provide greater flexibility.



On the first floor is the Eric Throssell Room, named after the architect who was closely involved with the restoration of Hartwell House. This room has been designed as a distinguished setting for exclusive meetings of up to sixteen people seated

round a mahogany boardroom table. Also on the first floor is the Henry Keene Room which can be used as a dining room in conjunction with the Eric Throssell Room, as a meeting room for up to twelve people, or subdivided into two small meeting or syndicate rooms.

The Hartwell Rooms are regularly used by national and international companies for a variety of conferences, meetings, corporate entertaining and product launches. It is particularly popular with car companies and a number of new models have been launched at Hartwell. The hotel has its own health and leisure Spa adjoining the Hartwell Rooms, with a large indoor swimming pool, whirlpool spa bath, steam room, saunas, gymnasium and beauty salons. The Spa has a bar and Buttery restaurant which is very popular



with conference delegates.

The twenty four hour delegate rate includes accommodation, early morning tea, cooked breakfast, morning coffee and biscuits, luncheon Trust property built in the style of a French chateau set in beautifully landscaped grounds and containing an eclectic collection of antiques and memorabilia and a magnificent display of Sevres porcelain.



Bodysgallen Hall, Middlethorpe Hall and Hartwell House are all members of Relais & Chateaux, the prestigious international hotel consortium. All three hotels have red stars from the AA and Blue Ribbons from the Royal Automobile Club. Hartwell House was selected as Favorite Small Hotel by the Convention Planning and Business Hotel Reporter of USA.

including coffee, afternoon tea and biscuits, three course dinner including coffee, use of the meeting room with a range of equipment, use of the Spa and service charge.

Hartwell House is only 21 miles from Oxford with its magnificent University buildings and museums. Visits can be arranged to Blenheim Palace, home of the Dukes of Marlborough and birthplace of Winston Churchill, Woburn Abbey, home of the Duke of Bedford and other great houses and gardens in the vicinity. Not to be missed is Waddesdon Manor, close to Hartwell House. Owned by the Rothschild family, this is a National



The Codogan

The fourth hotel belonging to the group is the Cadogan in Sloane Street, London. This is a most desirable location, walking distance from Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Peter Jones, all famous department stores. Sloane Street has become a fashion centre for London and many international designers have boutiques there.

Following a six year refurbishment programme the Cadogan has now been restored to its former glory. Its sixty five bedrooms and suites, many of which are airconditioned, have been decorated and furnished a style that is in sympathetic to its late Victorian and Edwardian origins. The facilities that have been added include voice mail, modem and points fax in all bedrooms.



The ground floor, which is fully air-conditioned, includes the drawing room, a favourite place for afternoon tea and the restaurant and bar, all of which have been upgraded to enhance the Edwardian atmosphere of the hotel.

One of the houses which forms the Cadogan Hotel was once the home of Lillie Langtry, celebrated Edwardian actress and friend of King Edward VII. She was a regular visitor to the hotel as was poet and playwright Oscar Wilde and painter James Whistler. It was at the Cadogan Hotel that Oscar Wide was arrested.

The room which was once Lillie Langtry's Drawing Room is now divided into the Langtry Dining room and Langtry Sitting Room and is an ideal setting for small meetings and social events. The two rooms combined can host a reception for eighty people and the Dining Room can accommodate a theatre style meeting for fifty or a boardroom meeting for twenty people. The Sitting Room can accommodate a meeting for eighteen sense of occasion which inspired by the feeling that many important people have conferred in these houses over the past centuries, and no doubt many



important decisions have been reached.

On a more practical level, the historic aspect has not been allowed to detract from the need for efficient and professional service, good food and surroundings which are conducive to calm, reflective thinking in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility.

people or a reception for thirty.

The Cadogan is represented by Prima Hotels who have toll free reservation numbers in the United States.

As will be seen from the foregoing, there are many advantages in holding small meetings in historic hotels, not least of which is the





The International Society of Meeting Planners encourages members to consider holding meeting/ events at an historical hotel site. The hotels welcome enquiries from ISMP members and undertake to show our member groups the level of service to you are accustomed.



Historic House Hotels has its own toll-free fax number in the USA which is 800-260-8338 (please state in your fax message which hotel you are interested in) or contact the individual hotels direct.

BODYSGALLEN HALL, Llandudno, North Wales LL30 1RS Telephone: + 44 1492 584466. Fax: + 44 1492 582519 E-mail: info@bodysgallen.u-net.com

THE CADOGAN, Sloane Street, London SW7X 9SG Telephone + 44 171235 7141 Fax: + 44 171245 0994 E-mail: info@thecadogan.u-net.com

HARTWELL HOUSE, Oxford Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8NL Telephone: + 44 1296 747444 Fax: + 44 1296 747450 E-mail: info@hartwell-house.com

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