

Meet beside the seaside



BIC

Moss Murray, ITCM's chief correspondent, jogs from one resort to the other

Busier Bournemouth

Bournemouth boasts the largest capacity venue on the south coast at the International Centre that underwent a £22m make-over two years ago. There are four large halls with the Windsor suite having accommodation for 4,200 delegates. And when combined with other facilities it can cope with more than 6,500 visitors. Ideal for product launches is the Tregonwell Hall, seating 1,100, but divisible into three separate floor areas. It has direct links with the Windsor Hall. The Purbeck Hall with its timber-framed domed roof has room for 1,700, while the Solent Hall offers 1,500 sqm of pillar-free space. A 2-minute walk links everything with the Pavilion Theatre and ballroom.

Last year Bournemouth had its busiest year ever. Major conferences included the Royal College of Nursing as well as NHS Alliance and the Tory Party.

Two 4-star hotels, the Highcliff Marriott and the De Vere Royal Bath, play a major role in the town's success. At the Marriott there are 17 meeting rooms for from 30 to 350 as well as exhibi-



tion space, whilst at the Royal Bath the De Vere suite can seat 400 and the Disraeli just 50. The East Cliff Court Hotel, a 4-star property with a prime position on the East Cliff, has a Garden Suite for 160 delegates.

To some people Bournemouth has a reputation for being sedate. More and more, however, it is justifying a claim to be the south's Capital of Cool once work ends for the day.

Brighter Brighton

Brighton has a reputation for being businesslike in its determination to give clients what they want. Its hotels are among the most sought-after in this part of England. The refurbished Hilton Brighton Metropole boasts 28 function rooms and more than 8,000 sqm of event space, which is why its client list includes international names such as T-Mobile,



Royal Pavilions

RBS and Sony Playstation. It offers two restaurants and a spa with seven treatment rooms. The largest meeting room can seat 1,300.

At the Dome there is a trio of meeting rooms that combine history with modernity, while the Pavilion can accommodate 232 delegates and the Corn Exchange 570. Coming soon is the Brighton 1-360 Tower, a new 180-ft high seafront observation tower. And no one can visit the city without gazing in awe at the 'Taj Mahal of the south coast', the Royal Pavilion, once the playground of George VI and now able to host 90 for dinner in the Banqueting Room... guarded by dragons.

Last February more than 500 television broadcasters, producers and schedulers met at the Brighton Centre for a 3-day meeting. As one delegate put it: 'Corporate and association organisers need to see what Brighton offers today, not what they might recall from the days of their youth'

Thousands choose Eastbourne

Eastbourne today is a place to party, much to the surprise of many. The double AA Rosette Mirabelle restaurant at the 5-star Grand Hotel is probably the best place to dine if you want gourmet

cuisine. The hotel also has 17 meeting rooms, the largest able to seat 300 with near-West End standard stage facilities. Nearby, the 4-star Cavendish with 111 rooms has 12 conference rooms, seating up to 300 in the Marine suite.

The larger convention organisers mostly head for either the Congress Theatre or the Floral Hall, a listed venue within the historic Winter Gardens. There is seating for 1,000 on the raked floor of the Congress Theatre with a further 700 in the circle and even more if there is seating on stage. In the Floral Hall there is accommodation for 1,100, or 540 classroom style.

Floral Hall



Alternatively, more than 1,000 can dance the night away or 800 sit down to a banquet.

New ports of call at Portsmouth

Portsmouth's latest facility, opened last year, is the Aspex Gallery with a capacity of 150 for receptions, or 80 at a meeting. It is located in a former naval warehouse at Gunwharf Quays. Also new is 8 Kings Road that, following a £1m rebirth, has transformed from a one-time banking hall into a fine restaurant with seating for 120. Below stairs in what were the bank's vaults there is a high security wine cellar with a stellar collection of vintage wines.

Corporate clients are increasingly hosting dinners for up to 180 aboard HMS Warrior, one of the prize attractions in the Historic Dockyard alongside HMS Victory and Mary Rose. Guests dine at mess tables beside broadside guns while listening to songs from the Shanty Singers.

On top of these attraction is The Spinnaker Tower which can be used for presentations for up to 70, receptions for as many as 120, plus evening buffets for 70 and formal dinners for 60 guests. At the other end of the size scale is the impressive Portsmouth

Spinnaker Tower Portsmouth



Guild Hall where the main hall can seat 2,200 and six smaller rooms can accommodate meetings and presentations for up to 200.

Associations head for Torquay

Torquay is where association business is booming with bookings already confirmed for 2008, 2009 and 2010 after a bumper first six months in 2007 at the Riviera International Centre. According to Barry Cole, the Managing Director, the RIC's Silver Award for Green Tourism led to many first time bookings and a considerable number of re-bookings for annual conferences

RIC



Who to ring round if you're organising a meeting...

It can be a real headache, trying to organise a sales meeting or conference – finding a venue and booking the hotels. But it needn't be, if you choose Bournemouth. Because we do it all for you!

Finding the right hotel is a piece of cake too. We'll match your precise requirements to specific venues, check availability and negotiate the best rates. You can even check venue availability 24 hours a day with the venue check service on our website. So visit our website or call us now, it's as easy as BICB.



Bournemouth INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BUREAU
Tel: 01202 456545
bicb@bournemouth.gov.uk

No need to ring round, Visit our website 24/7: www.bicb.co.uk

Quote ref. ITCM07