

HAVEN'T WE BEEN BUSY!

This summer, Spectra delivered the ground services for a 6-week incentive programme for about 2,000 staff and families of an American investment bank. Based at the **Hilton Metropole**, the back-to-back series enjoyed a variety of tours and a medieval banquet at historic **Hatfield House**. A particular challenge was to provide a crèche for babies, a playroom for 3-10s and an entertainer for the teenagers, to keep the large number of children entertained (and in safe hands)! Spectra's expertise was put to the test when UK airports were subjected to a huge security clampdown in the light of terrorist threats: a potentially disastrous "turn-around day" went remarkably well thanks to the hard work of an experienced team; the handful of clients whose flights were cancelled enjoyed an unexpected extra night at the new **Hilton Canary Wharf** before flying home the next day.



HOW TO "MONOPOLISE" YOUR GUESTS

Much fun and silliness was had by an Australian group in London on a Monopoly-style challenge: while managing to include some of the standard sights for first-time visitors to London, such as Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral, they featured as stops on a Monopoly board (Whitehall and Fleet Street). Our "Bankers" practised old-fashioned interrogation techniques on the teams and awarded them "Houses" or "Hotels". On the darker side, there was more bribery and corruption going on here than at a gangsters' convention! One contestant sporting a tee-shirt decorated with Monopoly money caused a minor "incident" on security-sensitive Whitehall which aroused the interest of several Bobbies, who believed she might be organising an anti-capitalist demonstration... But luckily we were able to allay their concerns and no-one "went to jail"! Later on, she was nearly mugged by a team leader in the pub whilst trying to re-possess the "Union Jack underpants" which were, after all, only a prop...

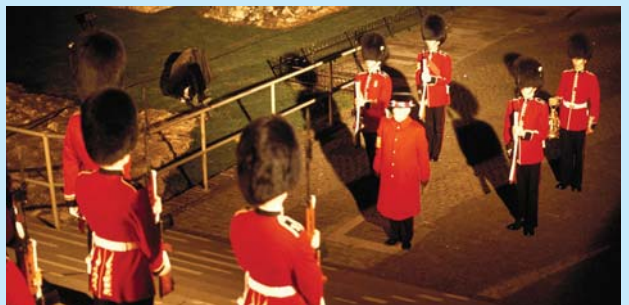


FRENCH WITHOUT TEARS

Working on a major French publishing house's international meeting tested our linguistic skills. Spectra supplied the technical support for their meeting, bi-lingual interpreters and hostesses, and airport transfers. Based near London at 5 star country house hotel, **The Grove**, they enjoyed 2 successful outdoor events - dinner with live jazz in the sunken garden, and a barbecue in the hotel's 18th Century Walled Garden. The garden can be hired exclusively for an informal dinner -the "Potting Shed" with pool table and orchid house can cater for up to 100.

A "FAMILY COMPANY"

The board of a large multi-national company staying at luxurious **Lanesborough Hotel** held their annual awards ceremony at the Tower of London. Following a private



reception amongst the Crown Jewels, they enjoyed dinner in the prestigious Officers' Mess of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, where a Yeoman Warder ("Beefeater") helped with proceedings, before - at precisely 21.53 - escorting guests to the ancient "Ceremony of the Keys" to round off their very special private event.

HOTEL NEWS

Marriott will open a 245-bed **Renaissance Hotel** in 2009 at St. Pancras Station beside the new Eurostar rail terminal, which moves from Waterloo in Autumn 2007. Formerly the Midland Hotel, it was built 130 years ago in grand Gothic style, and Marriott will retain many of its original features. The British Library is next door and world famous British Museum is 10 minutes walk away. Living up to their mantra of "location, location, location", **Hilton** this year launched properties close to the iconic Tower Bridge in London and in Manchester's Deansgate. Meanwhile **Fairmont** has announced that The Savoy is likely to close in 2008 for major improvement works (exact dates to be confirmed). Finally, we welcome back into service the re-named **InterContinental London Park Lane** which has been totally gutted and rebuilt over the past 12 months: London's newest 5-star hotel, with décor and furnishings chosen to reflect London's pre-eminence in the world of fashion, art and design, will be unveiled this autumn.



NEW LONDON VENUES



Set within the 300 acres of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, recently designated a World Heritage Site, **Kew Palace**, the most intimate of Royal Palaces, has been closed for the past 10 years to allow an amazing transformation to take place: restored to its former glory and containing a priceless collection of contemporary furniture from Her Majesty the Queen's private collection, the story of King George III is brought miraculously to life within its modest walls. It was here that the Royal Family retreated during the years of the King's so-called "madness", and private functions can now be held in the King's Dining Room.



The Ritz, the only hotel in London with a Royal Warrant, has recently acquired neighbouring **William Kent House**. This splendid 18th century mansion overlooking Green Park has 6 classically proportioned meeting rooms with fine stucco, gilded detailing and elaborate chandeliers.

EAT YOUR HEART OUT!

Although a city's culinary riches can't be measured in Michelin stars alone, many of London's restaurants, with their world-class chefs, offer the opportunity to dine at the **Chef's Table**, giving the discerning gourmet direct contact with the "grand masters". For example, lunch at **Gordon Ramsay** at **Claridge's**, already a treat, becomes something quite special when it's lunch at the Chef's Table! At **The Connaught**, **Angela Hartnett** and her team will create an Italian-inspired menu in the heart of her dynamic new kitchens. Chef's Table for **Marcus Wareing** at the **Savoy Grill** is in a private room overlooking the main kitchen, while **Pétrus** provides the perfect stage for **Marcus Wareing's** theatrical cuisine. **Jason Atherton's** French cuisine with Asian influences can be sampled at a new addition, **MAZE** by **Gordon Ramsay**.



A HEAD FOR HEIGHTS?

From the top of the **London Eye**, it's clear that London's skyline is rising: once upon a time, high-rise buildings were rare in our city, but there will soon be several with 70+ floors.



Londoners are already nick-naming Renzo Piano's planned building at London Bridge "The Shard of Glass". Here rooms for **Shangri-La Hotels** will be on the 34th-52nd floors with an infinity pool on the 50th. **Spectra** is looking upwards for dining options in the architecturally stunning **Swiss Re-Insurance** building (or **Tower 42**) and we love the peerless views across Hyde Park and Buckingham Palace from the 28th floor of the **London Hilton** on Park Lane, where **Galvin at Windows** recently opened with a glamorous new interior evoking the golden age of the 1930s.

FAM TRIPS FROM ACROSS THE POND AND DOWN UNDER

Spectra welcomed key incentive clients from Australia and New Zealand to London before they attended IMEX. During a hectic few days, the group enjoyed the hospitality of **The Langham**, an opportunity to enjoy first hand key London sights and a night at the theatre. We were also delighted to lend our support to the recent **Starwood Showcase** featuring the **Sheraton Grand** in Edinburgh, **Westin Turnberry** and **Sheraton Park Tower**, London.



SPOTLIGHT ON HAMPSHIRE

Think of rolling green hills, village duck-ponds, flower-decked country pubs and historic churches and you could be thinking of Hampshire, a county of glorious scenery, superb coastline, combined with vibrant cities like Portsmouth and Southampton.

Luxury 5-star Hampshire properties include **Chewton Glen** on the edge of the New Forest, and the **Four Seasons Hampshire**, an 18th-century Georgian manor house; both exude the atmosphere of a country hideaway.



This excellent walking and cycling country is great for outdoor pursuits. Golfers have access to some of the best courses in England with Wentworth, the very pinnacle of the sport, close by. For sightseeing, the cathedral towns of Winchester and Salisbury are steeped in history, or the harbour town of Portsmouth provides a canvas of British naval history. Stately homes of famous aristocrats, such as the late Lord Mountbatten's **Broadlands**, or **Somerley**, residence of the Normanton family for almost 200 years, make sumptuous venues for the ultimate private event.

Just off the Hampshire coast, but in a world of its own, lies the **Isle of Wight**. Over half the island is designated an "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" and a distinct 1950's time-warp abounds amidst the thatched cottages and winding roads. Peaceful and relaxing... except for one crazy week each midsummer, when it becomes the centre of the universe for yachtsmen the world over, during **Cowes Week**. A small group of Kiwis recently enjoyed a Treasure Hunt on the island, deciphering clues and finding souvenirs during their stay at Chewton Glen - the day proved a mix of fierce competition and gales of laughter and was voted the highlight of their trip.



THEATRE NEWS



Some old favourites return to London this autumn: **Cabaret**, set in pre-war Berlin of 1931, has won 8 Oscars, 7 BAFTAs and 13 Tony Awards in its time! Gershwin's **Porgy & Bess** features famous songs such as 'Summertime', 'I Got Plenty o' Nothin' and 'It Ain't Necessarily So'. Andrew Lloyd Webber's production of **The Sound of Music** at the London Palladium, is using a reality TV show to discover the new "Maria", in the hopes that a TV tie-in will encourage a much wider audience. Finally, new to London, the award winning hit Broadway musical **Wicked** is inspired by The Wizard of Oz, transporting audiences to a fantasy land of wizardry, witchcraft, sorcery and spells.

SPORTING VENUES



In June, the splendid new grandstand at **Royal Ascot** was in full swing after its year-long closure. The racecourse is close to London (not far from Heathrow and Windsor) and, when not in use, the extensive facilities may be used for activity days, gala events and private meetings. In preparation for 2012, many sporting venues are being upgraded: **Dorney Lake** near Windsor will be the Olympic rowing venue, but also has a stylish boathouse suitable for private events. On a larger scale, **Wembley Stadium** will (eventually!) open next year with conference and banqueting spaces for 1000+ people.

BATH-TIME ROMAN STYLE

The City of Bath is a World Heritage City and, as befits its international status, it can now offer visitors a chance to enjoy the famous hot springs, just as the Romans did 2000 years ago. The new open-air rooftop pool at **Thermae Bath Spa** is close to the Roman Baths and has lovely views to Bath Abbey and the surrounding hills. With a wide variety of treatments on offer, the brand new **Royal Bath** is definitely a place to linger.





SCOTTISH NEWS

Business booming in Scotland

It's also been a busy year for Spectra "North of the Border": We kicked off in March with 2 back-to-back (400-each) programmes at the **Sheraton Grand** in Edinburgh. In May, a prestigious North American client staying at the Balmoral enjoyed Highland Games at **Winton House** in the Borders, and dinner on board the **Royal Yacht Britannia**, where guests were regaled with stories of life on board from Rear Admiral Sir Robert Woodard, who served with Her Majesty the Queen. June saw us move up to **Gleneagles** for another back-to-back programme, where guests enjoyed a mix of modern and old - a surprise



performance by a Beatles tribute band, a Scottish folk/rock band and a spectacular dinner at **Stirling Castle**, complete with Clan Warriors!

Cultural Scotland

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum re-opened in July following a £28 million refurbishment to one of Glasgow's most lavish Victorian buildings. The gallery, which prominently features Glasgow's favourite son, Art Nouveau designer and architect **Charles Rennie Mackintosh**, is available for private dinners for up to 500. Elsewhere, the National Trust for Scotland has redeveloped **Culloden Battlefield**, the iconic and emotive site of the last pitched battle to be fought on British soil: visitors can enjoy a moving interpretation of the events leading up to it, the drama of the battle and its aftermath.

Och Aye the Moo

This year the well-travelled Cow Parade visited Scotland and lots of fibreglass cows were seen grazing throughout the streets, parks and historic locations of Edinburgh. Ranging from "Braveheart Moo" to "The Three Grazers", it offered a challenging and unusual canvas to many artists who showcased their work to locals and visitors alike. At the end of the exhibition the cows will be auctioned for charity. It was a mooving experience and who knows where they will mooove to next!



Scottish hotel news

The **Macdonald Holyrood Hotel** in Edinburgh is offering its guests the chance to drive a £90,000 yellow Lamborghini! For "only" £600 per person, guests will enjoy "royal" treatment, with a butler to unpack their bags, complimentary 24-hour champagne - seems like just the thing to go with a 196 mph car! Even though Edinburgh is not best known for its high-fashion culture, Italian fashion house **Missoni** is moving into the hotel business with its first ever hotel, a 130-roomed property with typically "graceful" Italian style and cuisine. The 4* Grade II listed **George Hotel** in the heart of the city has just emerged from a £12 million major refurbishment. **Fairmont** has contracted to manage the 209-room **St. Andrews Bay Hotel** for new owners Apollo, who are planning a £10 million refurbishment programme.

BTRC NEWS

Fundraising events for our adopted charity have ranged from the resourceful to the wacky

BTRC - Scottish fire-fighter **Alan Geddes** undertook a 12-hour, 42-mile "walkathon" in a summer heatwave, raising £3,000+. He completed the last lap wearing his kilt and accompanied by a bagpiper - the whole community helped out by collecting money or walking a lap or two with him (even Wendy and Helen!). Other activities have included a "Fun Fight" in a countryside pub, a children's "Mufti Day" at school and a sponsored walk across Salisbury Plain - but watch out for news about the lady who swam around the shark-infested seas of the Scilly Isles, or the mother-and-daughter duo following the Footsteps of the Maasai Trek in Tanzania next summer!



**STOP PRESS:
THE AMBER BALL 2007
WILL TAKE PLACE ON
FRIDAY, MARCH 23RD.
SAVE THE DATE!**

SPECTRA STAFF NEWS

In April **Lucy Mellor** joined the team as Sales Co-ordinator. Lucy brings with her a range of experience, having worked on both client and venue sides, starting her career at the cosmetic firm **Estée Lauder** and more recently at "roomseleven" in Belgravia.

