

## **Scottish Wholesale Association Conference**

The Scottish Wholesale Association's (SWA) annual conference was held at Crieff Hydro for the seventh year running in June 2015 and was attended by wholesalers from throughout the UK. These included AG Barr, 3663, Batleys and Booker. 270 adults and 80 children stayed at Crieff Hydro as part of the SWA group, accommodated within the hotel's 215 4\* rooms and 36 5\* self-catering cottages.

### **Preparation and Planning**

Planning for the event began in the previous November, where the SWA team met with the Crieff Hydro core team to discuss and agree themes for the following year's conference. It was very much a partnership effort between the two teams of organisers to get the best theme/set up for the conference. The Crieff Hydro team also provided a range of additional services including creating a bespoke information booklet and sorting out accommodation requirements for delegates and their families. As well as the conference and meeting spaces, the SWA also reserved slots at Action Glen, the on-site activity centre at Crieff Hydro.

### **11 June – Thursday before the event**

Although not officially "a conference day", many delegates and their family arrived on the Thursday for a drinks reception and an evening of fantastic food. The SWA also reserved The Hub to be used as an exhibition space for suppliers to promote their products, while the Melville Hall was set up in classroom style (capacity 200) allowing it to be used for rehearsals.

### **12 June – Friday Events**

From 11am until 4:30pm the Melville Hall was used for business sessions. Meanwhile, the Crieff Hydro team also collected any VIP speakers from Edinburgh Airport/Waverly Station. This year the guest speaker was Lord Karan Bilimoria – Founder of Cobra Beer. Speakers from previous SWA conferences at Crieff Hydro have included Simon Weston OBE and Katherine Grainger.

After the conclusion of the business sessions, the Melville Hall was transformed from classroom set-up to dinner set-up for the Bollywood themed buffet. The dinner was followed by entertainment which included Indian dancers, drummers and henna tattooists. The themed night has become a tradition for SWA conferences at Crieff Hydro, and previous years have seen a Mexican night and an Aussie BBQ theme.

### **13 June – Saturday Events**

The main conference session for 270 delegates was followed by activities for SWA guests after lunch at the on-site 54 acre Action Glen. Activities on the site included golf, quad sessions, woodland combat and segways. The final evening of the conference saw guests piped to Melville Hall for a black tie dinner (three course banquet) with a charity fundraiser and champagne reception also forming part of the event.