

### Case Studies

**Five Star is not just a quality standard.  
To the team at Stoke Park, it's a healthy obsession.**



## A long and illustrious history

Stoke Park Estate's recorded history dates back over 1,000 years to before the 1086 Domesday Book with its ownership in a direct line of descent for 515 years from 1066 until 1581. But it wasn't until 1775 that the parkland began to take on its present form when John Penn, a soldier, scholar and poet whose family were the founders of Pennsylvania, inherited Stoke Park with its Manor House.

Penn commissioned James Wyatt, the architect to King George III, to design the Palladian Mansion and monuments in the grounds which were completed in 1795. It is reputed that the project was largely funded by the £130,000 the new United States Government paid for his family's 26 million acre (110,000 km<sup>2</sup>) plot in Pennsylvania in 1775.

The grounds of the estate were shaped by two icons of Eighteenth Century landscape architecture, "Capability" Brown and Humphry Repton, who designed the landscape that can be seen today.

While much of the estate has evolved and further developed over time, part of the original Manor House still stands on the east side of the north drive leading to the Mansion today.

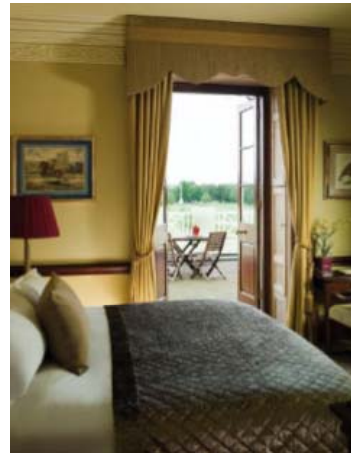
Ideally situated close to Heathrow Airport and a 40 minute drive from central London, Stoke Park was more recently owned and operated by South Buckinghamshire District Council from 1958 to 1993 when it housed offices and was home to Stoke Poges Golf Club.

## Stoke Park today



In 1988 International Hospitals Group Ltd (IHS), a family company under the leadership of Roger King, acquired a 250-year lease on the entire 350 acre (1.4 km<sup>2</sup>) estate and through Stoke Park Limited, commenced a £40 million programme of improvements to restore the buildings and grounds to their former glory.

The result of the investment can be seen in the elegant five star country house hotel with 21 traditional luxurious bedrooms in the mansion and a further 28 more contemporary chic rooms in The Pavilion. Stoke Park's facilities include a



luxury private members club with spa, salon, indoor pool, gymnasium, steam rooms, indoor and championship standard hard and grass tennis courts, three restaurants and a 27 hole golf course first created in 1908 by eminent golf architect Harry Shapland Colt.

**"... we simply want to create an extraordinary yet personal guest experience"**

Chester King is Managing Director of Stoke Park and spoke of his approach to maintaining and building on the ethos of the hotel and club:



"This is one of the oldest clubs in England, and you don't have to wear a jacket and tie; we aim to provide five star service and amenities but without a snooty, uptight atmosphere. From your arrival, throughout a stay to departure, we simply want to create an extraordinary yet personal guest experience; in fact, it's fair to say the team here are obsessive in their attention to the smallest detail and desire to make members and guests feel welcome and special".

Part of this attitude to delivering a seamless customer service throughout the many different departments and disciplines is seen in their commissioning of a two-way radio system to provide an instant communications link between management and their staff. Stoke Park have been using a Kenwood analogue radio system for some time and it has proven its worth in enhancing daily operations and in managing the many outdoor events hosted at the hotel and club.

## Stoke Park upgrades to NEXEDGE® digital

In November 2011, as part of ongoing improvements, Stoke Park commissioned a trunked Kenwood NEXEDGE® digital two way radio system to provide extended range across the estate and provide the ability to expand the network and further improve their guests services through increased user groups, data and location features.

The Kenwood NEXEDGE® system installed at Stoke Park consists of both NX-220E (Display and full keypad) and NX-220E2 (Display no keypad) hand portable radios operating in a trunked network with three traffic channels and one control channel. The system employs a Procom hybrid combiner working with a single antenna.

The system is configured so that each department has its own dedicated channel, so that even after channel hopping to talk to other departments, the radios always reset to their home channel ensuring calls are never missed. Equally important in a Five Star environment is that the trunked system eliminates waiting to access a channel and noise from cross chat within departments.

### "The new NEXEDGE® system allows front of house to manage and coordinate all guest services efficiently and discreetly".

Priscilla Keller, Stoke Park's Resident Manager



for the past two years is an advocate of the new radio system and commented: "Stoke Park is a large and multi-faceted hotel and club with around 4,000 members, spread over two main buildings. But what makes Stoke

Park different is that it is family owned and managed which reflects in the approach the 250 strong team take to making a good impression with both guests and members. We all see ourselves as ambassadors of Stoke Park and delivering service excellence is something we take personally.

The new NEXEDGE® system allows front of house in both hotel buildings to manage and coordinate all guest services efficiently and discreetly, whether it's portage, housekeeping or maintenance and to liaise with other guest and member services on site such as the restaurants, banqueting, Spa, gymnasium, golf

teams and security; this means we can respond more efficiently to guest requests and react quickly to problems should they arise and of course, the radio system is also key in ensuring we know immediately when a guest room is prepared and ready for sale - this enhances our occupancy rate and guest experience".



*Priscilla Keller, Resident Manager*

In addition to being a thriving hotel and members club, Stoke Park also plays host to numerous weddings, conferences, exhibitions, private functions, parties and golf tournaments. Priscilla continues:

"While the radio system provides our day to day interdepartmental communications conduit, it really comes into its own when we host large outdoor events in the grounds. Our annual Bonfire Night fireworks display, for example, is attended by over five hundred guests and requires a good deal of marshalling and traffic management to get cars parked and everyone safely in place in time to watch the spectacle. Just as important, is the need to manage the orderly exit from the grounds. It used to take up to an hour to clear the car park at the end of the display, but now with the Kenwood radio system, we've cut this down to twenty minutes - and fewer grumbles from people queuing to leave."



The biggest annual event to be hosted at Stoke Park is The Boodles, a prestigious Wimbledon preparation event. The list of past competitors reads like a who's and includes Andy Murray, David

Ferrer, Gael Monfils, David Nalbandian, Pete Sampras, Andy Roddick, Novak Djokovic, Goran Ivanišević, Maria Sharapova and Andre Agassi.

Priscilla tells us more about the event: "Staged over five days in June, The Boodles attracts the world's top players, VIPs, sponsors, between 1,500 - 2,000 visitors each day and of course, increased security.

Stoke Park doesn't simply provide the courts and grounds, we are very much embedded in the event on many different levels from guest hospitality to food and beverage - every spare buggy from the golf team is commandeered during the event to ensure our team is able to offer the levels of care and attention the organisers and guests expect...it's a real logistics challenge, but the radio system plays an invaluable part in making it run smoothly".

**So far as smooth running is concerned, and in spite of the investment in the estate and its buildings, it's no easy feat keeping a 200 year old Palladian mansion in shape, a task charged to Kevin O'Leary, Maintenance Manager and his team.**

In addition to his maintenance role, Kevin is also the person responsible for specifying the new NEXEDGE® system. He said: "When the decision was made to upgrade our existing set-up to NEXEDGE® digital, I was given the opportunity to work with the other Heads of Department to understand how they used radio communications, their needs and the improvements they sought.

One of the first areas we identified was a requirement for dedicated channels or user groups so that teams within a department could communicate more efficiently without having to listen in on talk from other personnel. We also wanted to ensure there was no queuing for talk time - it's really important in a five star environment that communications are both clear and immediate and of course the handsets have to be rugged, they get a hard time in a maintenance environment. We didn't specify increased range in our specification; with a site that covers 350 acres, we thought that would be pushing it".

Kevin talked through his brief with Kenwood and the multi-channel, trunked system was designed to meet the current needs of Stoke Park and provide the scope for system expansion in the future.



*Kevin O'Leary, Maintenance Manager*

Once installed, Kevin and the team put the new NEXEDGE® system through its paces and it certainly appears to have exceeded expectations. Kevin reports:

**"I am amazed by the performance of the NEXEDGE® system. The clarity in speech, the long battery life and incredible range".**

Kevin and his team are often spread out across the estate's properties and the radios certainly earn their keep on a daily basis. Kevin concludes: "I don't give a second thought to calling a colleague anywhere on the estate whether they are out in open space or deep inside a building - I can even get reception in the depths of the mansion's cellars in the boiler room - now that's amazing!"

The other areas at Stoke Park where the NEXEDGE® system has been deployed include the Golf Club and Pavilion complex where the radios are put to very different uses.



**"Everything we do at Stoke Park is centred around excellence and giving guests and members an exceptional experience and it's no different here at the golf club".**



Tim Harris, Retail Manager & Head Assistant PGA Professional at Stoke Park's Golf Club takes up the story: "Everything we do at Stoke Park is centred around excellence and giving guests and members an exceptional

experience and it's no different here at the golf club. We have members and guests of different playing abilities across a wide age range, it's our job to ensure that whatever their level of skill they enjoy their round".

Stoke Park's 27 hole Championship golf course, is undisputedly one of the finest parkland courses in the country and has been the inspiration for many of the world's most famous holes, including Augusta's infamous 16th at the centre of Amen Corner.

The course itself has seen many impressive rounds in its history, including the first PGA Matchplay tournament in 1910 and James Bond's epic golfing duel in the 1964 classic 007 movie 'Goldfinger'.



*'Monty' Tees-off at the inaugural Golf Live event*

In 2006, Golf World selected Stoke Park as one of the Top 100 Courses in the World, while in 2010 it played host to the inaugural Golf Live event.

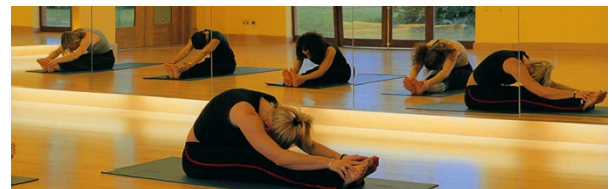
Tim underlines the relaxed atmosphere and discrete yet attentive service which distinguishes Stoke Park with this observation: "We use our NEXEDGE® radios to keep the golf operation running smoothly but unobtrusively, for example during tournaments, our registration team

communicate with starters and course marshals and officials while on a day to basis, we use the radios to coordinate our teaching professionals and support team to make sure people and equipment are always ready, in the right place at the right time..it's this attention to detail that makes a real difference and allows players to concentrate on their game".

### **The Stoke Park Pavilion - a temple to health and fitness**



The Pavilion at Stoke Park houses an award-winning Spa, treatment rooms, 13 multi-surface tennis courts, a state-of-the-art gymnasium, restaurant, a hair and beauty salon, Crèche and 28 contemporary bedrooms and suites. Recognised as one of the 'ten best spas in the UK' by Tatler, The Independent and The Daily Telegraph, The Stoke Park Spa prides itself on offering effective treatments in tranquil, luxurious surroundings.





Anna Williamson, Spa Operations Manager at Stoke Park primarily uses her NEXEDGE® radio to liaise with the hotel's two front of house teams and to ensure the treatment rooms are fully stocked and equipment is maintained to the highest standards. Anna believes

the radios are really useful in keeping informed on guest transfers to and from the Mansion with the minimum of fuss: "The default to department channel feature is especially useful as it allows us to talk to any department directly and saves us from having to remember to switch back to our home channel".

### Star quality

Stoke Park has played host to the most memorable game of golf in cinema history, when James Bond defeated Auric Goldfinger on the 18th green in Goldfinger. It's other film credits include Bride & Prejudice, Bridget Jones Diary, Dead of Night, Goldfinger, Layer Cake, RocknRolla, Tomorrow Never Dies and Wimbledon.



*Sean Connery, the original 007 at Stoke Park*



*Daniel Craig, before he became the new 'Bond' at Stoke Park, starring in Layer Cake*

### Discretion and security assured

When you're dealing with discerning guests, members and high profile personalities, it's essential that their privacy is protected from unwarranted attention while at Stoke Park.

Tul Gurung, is a former Gurkha and Head of Security at Stoke Park. He is conscious of his contribution to preserving the sense of calm which pervades.

"Security should be visible but not heavy handed or intrusive.

I have eyes all around the estate through my colleagues in other departments, who are vigilant in spotting and reporting unusual sightings - vehicles parked in restricted areas, people with cameras and telephoto lenses or unscheduled deliveries. My



NEXEDGE® hand-portable radio is constantly to hand and while my colleagues are my eyes, my radio has become my ears".

**" It's fair to say the team here are obsessive in their attention to the smallest detail and desire to make members and guests feel welcome and special"**

Chester King, Managing Director of Stoke Park concludes: "When we decided to invest in the sympathetic renovation and development of Stoke Park, we knew it would be a very special place with a unique atmosphere. No corners have been cut in the furnishing, fittings and equipment we have purchased - our guests and members expect the best, so too do our team, and we aim to provide just that. **Our new Kenwood NEXEDGE® radio system is no exception".**



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