

# The coast is clear

Lee Hayhurst rediscovers the joy of family holidays at home with a coast and countryside combo in the north

@leehayhurst

**T**he term staycation was coined after the 2008 financial crash, when holidaymakers reined in their spending as household budgets were squeezed. But with this summer's heatwave seeing the UK clocking up the hottest weather on record, when better to discover parts of the country you've never visited before?

That's what took us – mum, dad and three kids aged 10 to 13 – to Yorkshire this August for a visit that combined some of the most stunning countryside scenery the UK has to offer with some equally amazing coastline.

## ▶ PEAK SALES

On our way to the Yorkshire coast, we took a detour to explore the Peak District in neighbouring Derbyshire. Within minutes of leaving our lodgings in the 'Steel City' of Sheffield, we found ourselves in wild but beautiful upland Peak District countryside.

En route to the village of Castleton, we passed the awesome Ladybower Dam – which holds back an enormous 27 million cubic metres of water in the Y-shaped Ladybower Reservoir – and the village of Bamford, before

turning into the Hope Valley in Derbyshire.

As the name suggests, Castleton is situated in the shadow of the imposing ruins of a Norman castle, today managed by English Heritage. Peveril Castle is accessed through a visitor centre just off a cute village green; entry costs £6.50 for adults, £3.90 for children, and a family ticket for five is £16.90.

The walk up to the castle is short but fairly steep, although the winding path means it is accessible to most visitors, regardless of their physical

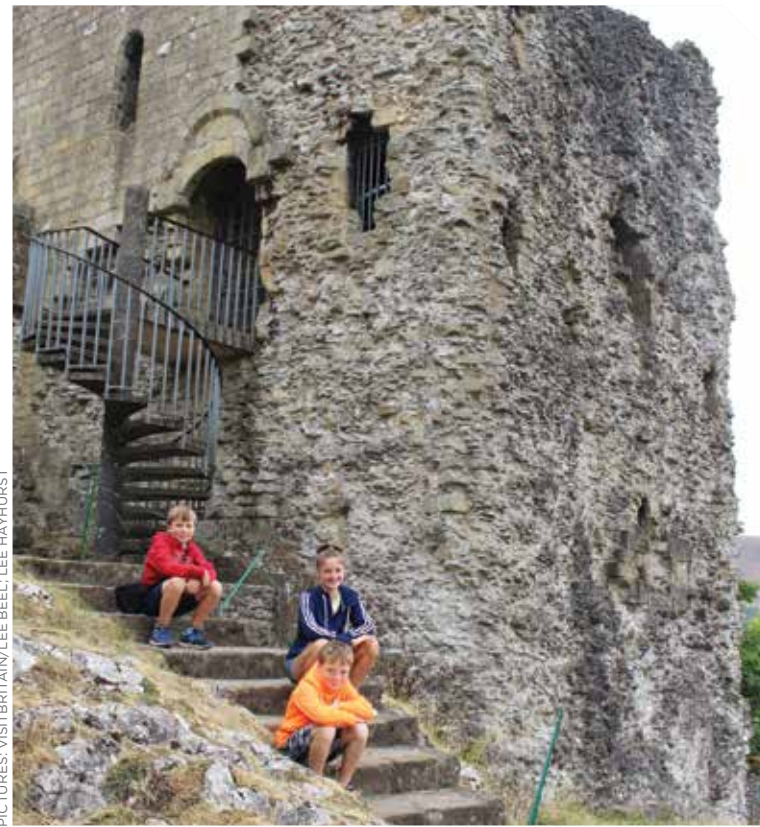
ability. The ruins sit atop a rocky outcrop and, although there's not much left of the castle buildings, the main keep remains largely intact.

As well as learning about the history of one of the UK's earliest Norman fortresses, the castle's position means it is a superb spot to take in the majesty of the surrounding countryside.

To the left, looking back over Castleton, is the imposing 517m-high Mam Tor at the head of Hope Valley, and the ridge of high ground that separates Castleton and Hope Valley from Edale.







PICTURES: VISITBRITAIN/LEE BEEL; LEE HAYHURST

### ➔ ROCKY GROUND

The other main attraction in Castleton is to be found underneath the surrounding moorland, within its ancient limestone and gritstone hills.

As is obvious from the many trinket and gift shops in Castleton, there is a semi-precious stone which can only be found locally. Blue John – the name is said to derive from the French bleu-jeune describing its blue and yellow colouring – is a form of crystalline calcium fluorite.

Visitors can see where it is still mined today in two locations close to Castleton. Blue John Cavern is a short drive away, but we chose Treak Cliff Cavern, where Blue John was first said to have been discovered by a miner looking for lead. This mine is quite easy to navigate, apart from a tight initial section, and linked to a natural underground cave.



**The castle's position makes it a superb spot to take in the majesty of the surrounding countryside**

In this cave, our guide showed us fossils telling the story of how the limestone rocks of this part of Derbyshire were once the bed of a tropical sea teeming with life. The cave also has some amazing stalactites, stalagmites and flowstones formed over thousands of years as rainwater seeped through the porous rock.

Sections of the cave, known as Fairyland, Aladdin's Cave and the Witch's Cave, indicate the magical sights that greet visitors in this chilly underworld.



**LEFT:** Winnats Pass, Peak District

**FAR LEFT:** Lee's family at Peveril Castle

Back at the cavern's visitor centre, we were shown how a 'raw' piece of Blue John is fashioned into jewellery, and my youngest son had a go at polishing a small piece we bought in the gift shop.

Before leaving Castleton, we drove the circuitous route

behind Mam Tor and through Edale, cutting through the limestone cliffs at Winnats Pass. Although not on the scale of Cheddar Gorge or some of the famous mountain passes in the Lake District, it is one of England's great drives – so good, in fact, we did it twice!

### ▶ COASTING ALONG

The next day it was on to the coastal half of our staycation, and our accommodation at Haven's Thornwick Bay Holiday Village.

Thornwick Bay is about halfway between Bridlington and Filey on a windswept stretch of coastline famed for its white limestone cliffs.

The nearest village is Flamborough, which sits on a peninsula jutting out into the North Sea and is a haven for wildlife. Nearby, the RSPB-managed Bempton Cliffs nature reserve offers keen birdwatchers an array of trails and lookouts for spotting all manner of seabirds, including puffins between April and July.

Sadly, the puffins had already departed by the time we arrived, but that did not detract from the enjoyment of spending time discovering the coves and beaches along the coast.

Best of all was North Landing, a sandy beach tucked between two headlands, and a short walk from the caravan park. We arrived at low tide and the kids had great fun rock-pooling and investigating the cliff caves, including one that opened out into an enormous chamber and cut right through the headland.

Visitors with good sea legs can go out on fishing expeditions in one of two traditional wooden vessels kept at the top of the beach and dragged to the water by a rickety old tractor.

Alternatively, the two-mile walk to the nearby New Flamborough Lighthouse goes past a succession of inlets in the sheer cliff face where seagulls and kittiwakes perch precariously.

And if you look carefully at the beaches below, you might just be able to spot a seal or two bobbing around in the water. Take some binoculars. ➔

# NOVASOL

50,000 Holiday homes in Europe

Book online or call today!

**WIN**  
**£50**  
**Treatwell**  
**Voucher**  
Enter today at  
travelweekly.co.uk

PRICES FROM  
**£299**  
per home/week



**Northern Europe**  
Discover over 15,000 holiday homes



**Central Europe**  
Over 8,000 villas, cottages and apartments



**Southern Europe**  
More than 25,000 handpicked homes



**Holiday Homes**

novasol.co.uk  
0333 012 4927

Prices are based on per property, per week, on selected dates in April and May 2019, they are subject to availability and Terms of Rental.



# Santa's Lapland

2019 ON SALE NOW

FLY DIRECT  
FROM 19 UK LOCAL  
AIRPORTS

3 OR 4 DAY BREAKS



Your Own  
Private Meeting  
with Me -  
Guaranteed!



Visit my one and only personal website

**SantasLapland.com**

or Call one of my friendly helpers on

**01483 915 277**







**LEFT:**  
North Landing,  
Yorkshire

Segway rides, and the Nature Rockz programme, in which expert rangers teach kids about bushcraft, animal tracking and local wildlife.

Our premium caravan was easily spacious enough for the five of us, and the large kitchen and living area meant eating in was an option if we didn't want the expense of dining out.

Before we knew it, our brief time in Yorkshire had come to an end and it was time to pack up the car and check out of Thornwick Bay.

Despite being born and brought up just a few hours away, this isn't an area of the UK I had ever visited, or even thought of visiting. Now that I have, I feel ever so slightly embarrassed about that oversight.

It just goes to show what amazing under-the-radar places there are in this country. And while they are all the more glorious when the sun's beating down, the UK reigns supreme when it comes to the natural beauty of its countryside and coast, whatever the weather. **TW**



**Haven** offers three nights at Thornwick Bay, Yorkshire, in a standard two-bedroom caravan sleeping up to four, from £120 per family for a stay commencing March 22, 2019, or from £157 commencing June 3. [bourneleisure.co.uk](http://bourneleisure.co.uk)

## ➔ VILLAGE GREEN

Thornwick Bay Holiday Village was a great base from which to discover this beautiful part of the UK coastline as everything was within walking distance.

We did jump in the car on our first night to get fish and chips from Flamborough, but other than that, everything you need for a great family staycation is on your doorstep.

The park is one of the newest in the Haven portfolio and, while smaller than some, this gives it a more homely, compact atmosphere in keeping with its surroundings.

Guests still get the full Haven experience, including daytime and evening entertainment in the lounge, the pool complex, activities ranging from archery to fencing and



## Family holidays full of magic

We present our new Fantasia brand. A new themed hotel concept, created for families who want to live an unforgettable holiday experience.

Unique places for enjoying very special experiences thanks to a wide variety of activities and entertainment for the whole family. A broad range of five-star services designed for everyone, with themed facilities, Family Concierge service and free WIFI.

Hotels where you will feel the magic of being a child again, surrounded by local culture, legends, and many surprises.

### SPAIN

**Tenerife, Costa San Miguel**

*Fantasia Bahia Principe Tenerife \*\*\*\*\**

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

**Punta Cana,**

*Fantasia Bahia Principe Punta Cana \*\*\*\*\**

