

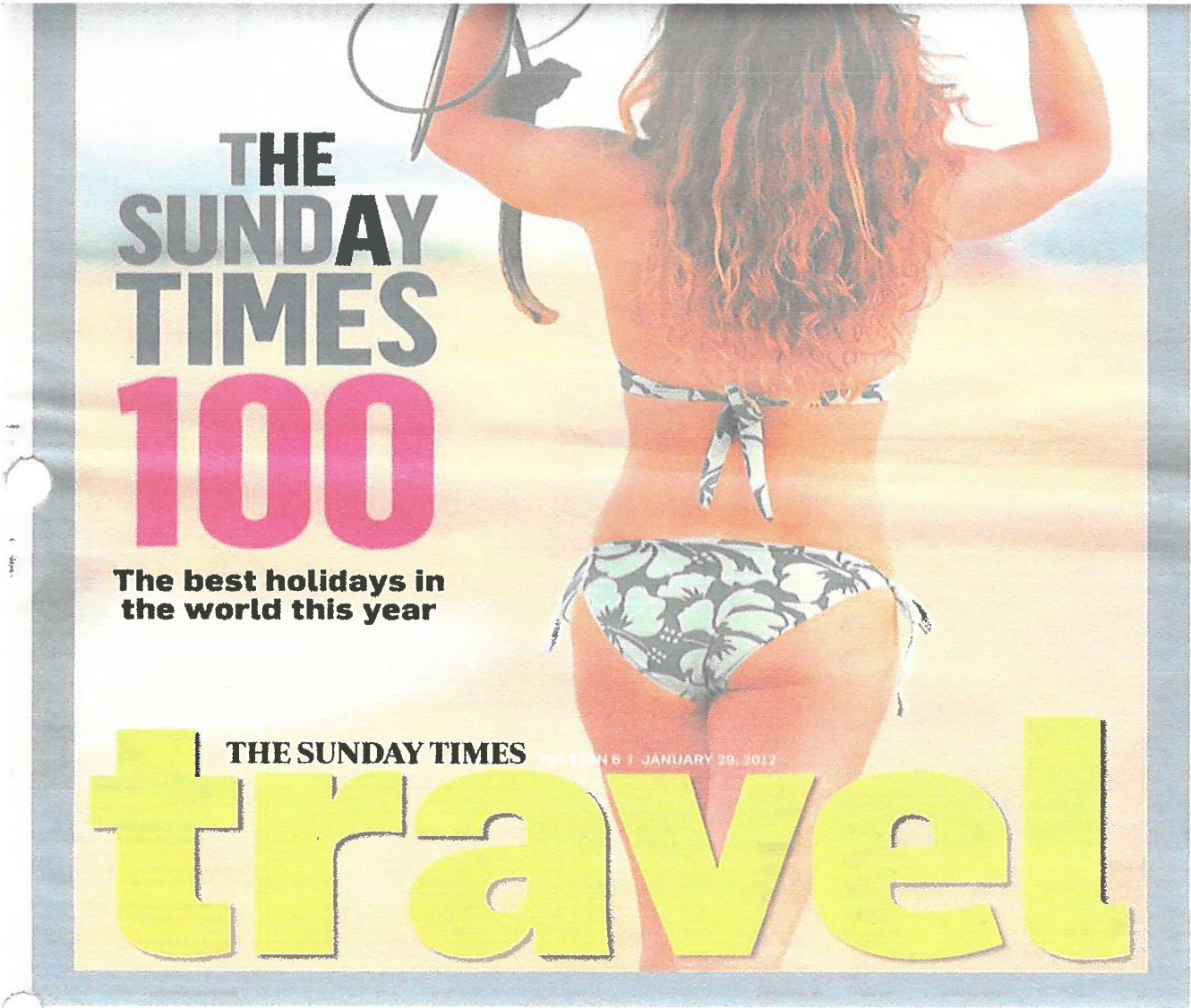


IMAGE DATE 29/01/2012

EVIDENCE BASE No:
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hit our great outdoors

something like Uppergate Farm (01484 681369, premiercottages.co.uk), a collection of cute 18th-century converted farm buildings in the lovely Holme Valley. The five cottages hold gaggles of excited kids each summer, splashing in the indoor pool, helping with the sheep, chickens, horses and pigs, and running wild over the hills all around. Adults can poach in the sauna and walk in the nearby Peak District. A week for a family of five costs £415-£835. They're bound to make pals — be prepared for tears at hometime.

FARMING FOR REAL Cornwall

Times being what they are, it might be a smart idea to learn how to raise your own food, so do it properly on a working holiday with the National Trust (0844 800 3099, nationaltrust.org.uk/workingholidays). On the Penrose estate, in Cornwall, you'll join the tenant farmer and the trust's rangers to get hands-on experience of cattle, pigs, sheep, chickens and the odd emu, as well as solidly practical skills such as fencing and gate-hanging. It's not for armchair Archers fans — you'll be expected to pull your weight — but if you want a real insight into where your meals come from, this is the one. The price is £145 for the week beginning September 1, including food and bunkhouse

accommodation in a converted granite barn.

59 HAYLING WITHOUT THE KNOBBLY KNEES Hampshire

"Hayling Island? Are you sure? Isn't that where they filmed

CHRIS ADDISON, COMEDIAN

"Touring Britain has reminded me how brilliant our countryside is. A while ago, I discovered Dorset (53) and the Jurassic coast. There are fossils everywhere, if you look, and there are so many lovely little towns, too — Seaton, which has a tramway into the hills, Abbotsbury, with its swannery, and Lyme Regis, which is typical of the west, with its pastel houses, fiercely busy in summer, but still charming."



Hi-de-Hi? Well, yes, it does have more than its share of holiday camps and caravan parks, but trust us, this bit's different. Woods Cottage is set on its own in 50 acres of (you guessed it) woods, just a few yards from the water. And the owners hire out everything from canoes to powerboats, so you can paddle or vroom your way around Chichester harbour and the Solent. It has a log-cabin cinema, a 300 sq ft tent for entertaining and masses of space to run riot. There's not much in the way of a beach — you're on a tidal creek — but it's a stroll with the bucket and spade to Hayling's long strip of sand, a short chug across the water to Southsea, or a slightly longer one over to the Isle of Wight. And not a knobbly-knees competition in sight. It sleeps eight, and a week starts at £840-£1,920, with Premier Cottages (023 9246 1978, premiercottages.co.uk).

60 GET TO THE GAMES London

Psst, want any Olympics tickets? Don't worry if you missed out, we can do you everything from synchronised swimming to the athletics finals, no lotteries and no questions asked. It sounds like the sort of transaction that's normally conducted down a back alley, but no — the official short-break

provider for London 2012, Thomas Cook, still has availability for pretty much every sport. Naturally, there are drawbacks. First, they're going fast. Second, the premier events command premier prices. A two-nighter including the juiciest athletics finals and beach volleyball, staying at a Westminster hotel, costs the little matter of £3,899. Much better, for our money, is two nights in Covent Garden (okay, it's a Travelodge, but you'll still be at the heart of things), including tickets for the volleyball and Boris's favourite, table tennis, for £269pp. Ping pong not you? Check out the breaks on offer at thomascoklondon2012.com.

61 OPEN AIR DRAMA Cornwall

No, not just the sweeping cliffs and epic-landscapes stuff, although that's great too. Cornwall has become the summer home of the most innovative theatre companies in Britain, a crucible of creativity that rivals anything in the West End, and in a much prettier setting. It started with the classically inclined Minack Theatre (01736 810181, www.minack.com), in an unbeatable position over the cliffs at Porthcurno, and now there's a mad chorus of touring companies crisscrossing the

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FAMILY GEAR JONATHAN FUTRELL



Once-a-day sunscreen

One good application of Riemann's P20 before breakfast and you can forget about the kids and sunscreen for up to 10 hours — and that includes them getting in and out of the water. Available at most leading chemists and UK airports
£14.30 for 100ml;
020 7629 7711,
johnlewis.com

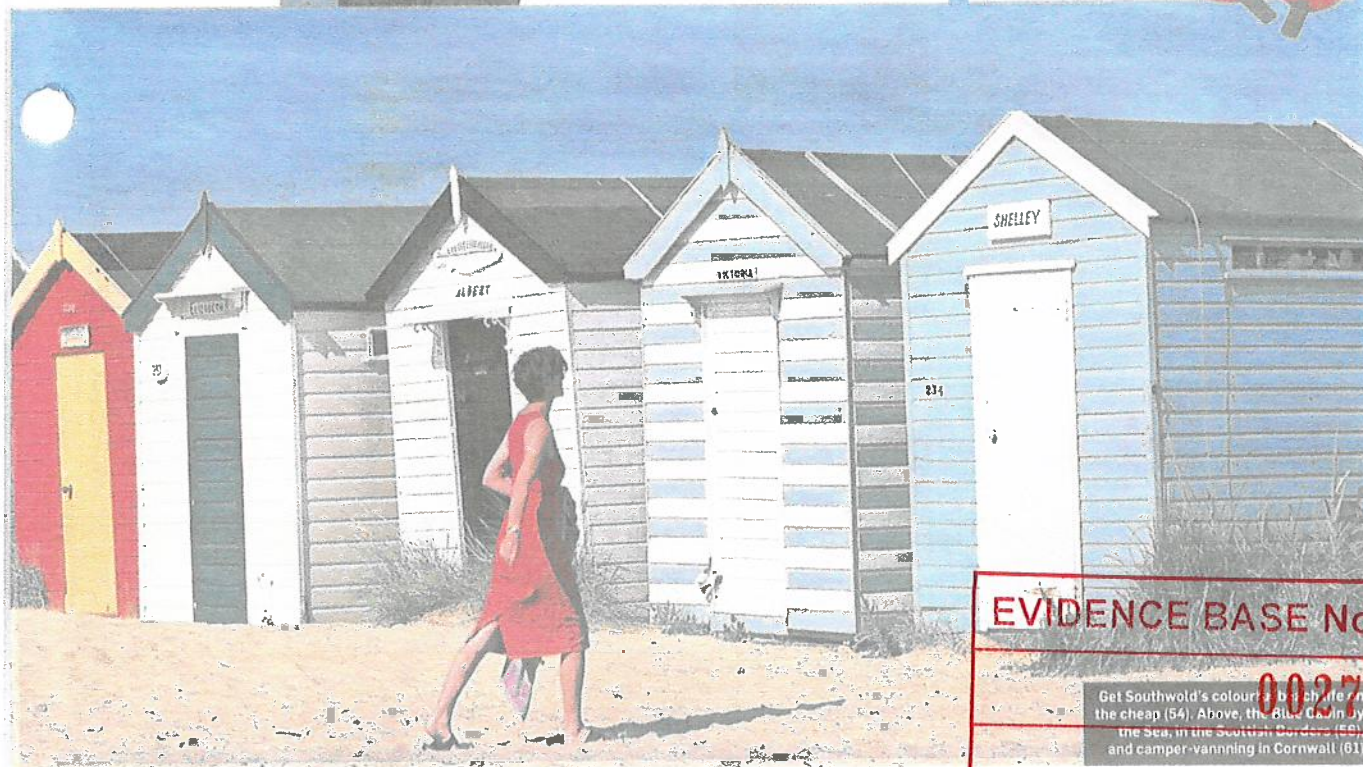
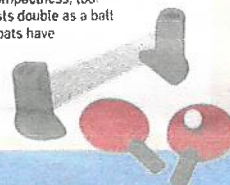
Picnic blanket

Come the balmy weather of late spring, you'll be glad of a Sagaform Happy Blanket. Measuring 51in x 59in, it's fleecy on one side, water-repellent on the other, and rolls up into a nifty carry pack
£22.50; 020 8646 3883, formahouse.co.uk



Portable ping pong

Don't let a rainy day spoil the family holiday. Using any reasonably flat surface, Pongo's Portable Table Tennis will put a smile on everybody's face. It's a miracle of compactness, too: retractable net posts double as a ball store and the two bats have flip-out handles
£40; 0800 044 5010,
firebox.com



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Get Southwold's colourful beach huts on the cheap (54). Above, the Blue Cabin by the Sea, in the Southwold Borders (56), and camper-vanning in Cornwall (61)