

# **Brilliantly British: 5 ultimate getaways**

**Stressed out with life? Bored of holidays abroad?  
Feel like you should visit more places in the UK?  
Yes, yes and yes? We take a look at a handful of  
hidden gems this incredible island has to offer  
and explore what makes each of them  
so wonderfully unique...**



# Explore the home of the kipper

Set amongst the unspoilt Northumberland coastline, Craster is a quaint fishing village steeped in history.

The atmospheric waves of the North Sea provide a perfect backdrop to the stunning harbour, which plays an essential role in Craster's famed kipper industry.

Craster, along with Seahouses further north along the coast, was the kipper capital of England at the beginning of the last century. Over 25,000 fish a day would be smoked in four herring yards in the village.

Today, only one smokehouse remains but the legacy of the 'Craster kipper' is still firmly intact, thanks to L. Robson and Sons. Neil Robson, 64, is the fourth generation in the family to be in charge of the business. He says it's important to retain the traditions of producing kippers.

"It was originally started in 1906 by my great-grandfather and we're still using the smokehouses that he used in those days."

The process itself involves splitting the herring, placing them in a brine solution and finally hanging them on tenterhooks for up to 16 hours whilst a fire smoulders underneath, with the smoke giving the kippers their distinctive flavour.

"The only difference in the process is that



L. Robson and Sons in Craster

we use a machine for splitting but in his time they will have done it by hand. It's a niche market now because there's not many people doing it this way. It's a lot more skilful and it makes them more unique – you never get two exactly the same."

Neil says the future of the Craster kipper is in safe hands.

"The reputation is something you have to earn. It gets handed down – I've got two daughters and they take as much pride in it as I do. There's not many businesses that go on for five generations, let alone four."

## Northumberland?

Northumberland is in North East England. Craster is close to the A1 so it's easily accessible from Scotland and South England. The nearest train station is Alnmouth.

## Put your feet up and relax:

There are a number of idyllic self-catered cottages in Craster and the nearby hamlet of Dunstan, a short walk away. The vast majority are no more than £200 pp. even in the peak summer months. For more, visit <http://www.yournorthumberland.co.uk/accommodation/craster>.

## Don't miss out on...

The magnificent ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle can be seen northwards along the coastline and Craster is the ideal access point, offering a beautiful coastal walk about a mile long from the village. The castle itself was built around 700 years ago and is the largest by area in the whole of Northumberland. It has a rich, intriguing history and offers much to learn for both children and adults.



Kippers are smoked for 15 hours in the smokehouse





# A cinema experience with a difference

The Kinema in the Woods



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**W**oodhall Spa lies in the heart of sleepy rural Lincolnshire. It has a traditional charm about it and has several fascinating talking points, from its Victorian heritage to its unique cinema.

The Kinema in the Woods opened in 1922 after being converted from a sports pavilion. Because of the low roof, conventional projec-

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## In the middle of nowhere?

Woodhall Spa is in the centre of rural Lincolnshire in the East Midlands. Which means it's (sort of) close wherever you are in the UK.

*Glamorous or not, the choice is yours:*

There are a number of hotels in the village offering a luxurious stay. For a cheaper option, there are lots of guest houses and camping/caravan sites too. For more, see <http://www.woodhallspa.org/wp/31-2/business-services/accommodation>.

## Don't miss out on...

The Cottage Museum is packed with displays and artefacts celebrating Woodhall Spa's history. The story of its accidental creation in the early 19th century is of particular interest. The water in an abandoned coal mine shaft was found to be curative for the symptoms of rheumatism, gout, scurvy and other skin diseases. The spa baths were built and the village grew around it, with visitors flocking from across the country thanks to the ever-improving railway network. ►



Kinema in the Woods Screen One

tion would not work so to this day the Kinema is the only cinema in the UK that uses a rear projection.

The cinema has fought hard to retain its unique appeal, as current General Manager Philip Jones, 31, reveals:

"Whilst the technology behind the scenes is ever changing, the fabric of the building and the decor remains very similar to the 1920s."

"A visit to The Kinema offers a traditional



Organist Alan Underwood



# Discover Britain's sealife secret

## *Dolphins in Cardigan Bay*

**N**ot to be confused with its better-known Cornish namesake, **New Quay** is a secluded seaside resort in Cardigan Bay, Wales.

The village is picturesque and has a wide range of colourful houses, pubs and restaurants that cling to the surrounding hills.

The real showpiece lies in the water though; New Quay and its well-sheltered bay regularly have visitors from the biggest pod of bottle-nosed dolphins in the UK.

**“People associate dolphins with tropical places but that’s really not the case!”**

Katrin Lohrengel, 33, works for the Sea Watch Foundation and is in charge of the Cardigan Bay Monitoring Project.

“We go out and we study the animals. We give estimations of numbers and also look at behaviour. Our highest estimate is 300 animals, though our current estimate is closer to 200.

“Apart from wanting to observe dolphins for the intrinsic value, they’re also a good indicator of the health of an ecosystem. If they start disappearing, something is wrong.”

There are a number of different dolphin-spotting boat trips that set out from New Quay’s harbour. However, during the summer months, you often don’t even have to leave land to get a look.

“Dolphins often come in and feed right next

to the pier and some of them bring their calves. Sometimes you’ll just catch a glimpse but other days you’ll get a full-on display where they’re leaping, jumping, chasing fish through the air... recently we’ve had a few bouts of ‘jellyfish football’ where the younger dolphins find it amusing to whack the jellyfish and hit them through the air.”

Katrin says that dolphin-watching off the British coast is a hidden treasure: “People are not very aware of it. They associate dolphins with tropical places and having to go far away but that’s really not the case!

“People are exhilarated to see the dolphins, some even cry because they’re able to witness wildlife so close. It’s definitely an exciting experience.” There are daily dolphin-spotting boat trips between April and October.

*There’s a Newquay outside Cornwall?*

Yes. New Quay (note the two words) is in

Ceredigion on the west coast of central Wales. The nearest train station is Aberystwyth further north along the coast, which has regular trains from across the UK. There are buses along the coast from Aberystwyth.

## *Park with a view:*

There are a couple of holiday parks overlooking the beautiful bay and numerous quaint cottages and B&B’s in the village.

## *Don’t miss out on...*

The largest bee farm in Wales lies just outside the village. New Quay Honey Farm is currently running a ‘Bees Behind Glass’ exhibition until October where you can see inside the hives, watch the queen lay her eggs and find out more about beekeeping. There’s also a Meadery on the site where you can see how mead is made using the traditional method of fermenting honey and try as many different flavours as you like.

*A dolphin-spotting boat trip from New Quay harbour (Photo by: Whales in Wales)*





**C**romford is often overlooked in favour of its more notable Peak District neighbours such as Bakewell and Matlock. However, the village has a lot to offer and is packed with history.

Inspired by Richard Arkwright in 1771, Cromford is home to the first ever water-powered cotton spinning mill.

Cromford Canal was part of the everyday life of the mill in the turn of the nineteenth century as John Baylis, 76, chairman of the Friends of the Cromford Canal, explains:

“The water feed for the canal is taken from Monsal Brook inside the mill, which runs by underground culvert in to the canal. Sir Richard Arkwright was involved with the construction of the canal in the late 1790s and he used it to bring in cotton up to the mill. But the railways came soon after and he moved on to that.”

The canal gradually fell in to disrepair but John and his team have made significant progress over recent years.

“The heritage at the Cromford end needs preserving. We’ve much improved the environment and we’ve got plans for putting the canal back through the old Smotherfly Open-cast site which would improve the water habitat right up the valley and provide a more user-friendly walking route.”

Today, the group run their own trip boat,



Birdswood, from Easter to October which is horse drawn along the tow path on peak days.

“It’s travelling as they used to do a hundred odd years ago. You can see the plants, the flowers, the birds and people enjoy it. It’s popular during the summer – we’ve carried over 20,000 people in three years.”

*So it's in the Peak District?*

Cromford is south east of the Peak District National Park. There are regular trains from Derby and Nottingham and it is easily accessible from all areas of the country.

*The boat is horse-drawn on peak days  
Live like they used to:*

There are a lot of cottages in the village converted from old mill worker’s houses.

*Don't miss out on...*

The Cromford Mills themselves claim to be the birthplace of the modern factory system. There are guided tours about how the mills used to work and why it became so successful. You can also visit the impressive Willersley Castle overlooking the River Derwent, a mansion which was owned by Sir Richard Arkwright himself. ►

*Birdswood boat trip*

# Travel along the ancient canal



# Solve the mystery of the holy well

**S**ituated about three miles south west along the coast from boisterous Newquay, Holywell provides a relaxing alternative for those wanting to appreciate the Cornish coast in all its glory.

The stunningly dramatic Gull Rocks have provided a backdrop for multiple films and television shows and at low tide you can visit the cave where some believe the 'holy well' derives from.

However, that illustrious honour may alternatively belong to St. Cuthbert's well, which is currently on land owned by Holywell Bay Leisure Park.

Newquay Old Cornwall Society, which gathers information on Cornish history to share with the public, has maintained St. Cuthbert's well since 1936. Len Sheppard, 59, is the society's chairman.

"Like many holy wells in Cornwall, they were originally pagan sites within the local area where worship of the water would have happened and offerings would have been made."

It remains a mystery as to which well

gives the village its name.

"Neither is definite, but St. Cuthbert's is set further away from the village inland and the one on the beach is far more well-known and popular.

"If you want a really quiet, scenic holiday away from people then Holywell Bay is the place to go to."

*Will it take me forever to get to?*

Cornwall is a long way for most of us but there are strong train links from London to Newquay. Alternatively, it's often cheaper to fly! Newquay is the nearest airport.

*Spoilt for choice:*

There are three holiday parks in Holywell, offering bungalows, caravans and camping at low prices and ranging on luxury. Alternatively, there are a limited number of apartments closer to the sea front.

*Don't miss out on...*

To fully appreciate Holywell beach, make sure to stay until the sun sets on the horizon, offering stunning views. The dramatic Gull Rocks about 500 metres off the coastline have provided a backdrop for multiple film and television shows, most notably the James Bond film *Die Another Day* and BBC's *Poldark*. It's not hard to see why – the ever-looming presence of the rocks make for an atmosphere unlike most beaches. ■