

Getting away

Take-off: holiday deals

■ **AUSTRIA:** ENJOY the renowned beauty of Austria's Lake Attersee, with this deal from Travelsphere.

Nestled amid The Alps, the clear sapphire waters of this tranquil Austrian lake provide the ideal setting for relaxing amid beautiful scenery.

Featuring optional excursions to Salzburg, and Vienna, pictured, and a Lakeland tour that should not be missed, this trip has something for everyone.

The eight-day trip departs on July 26.

Prices start from £399pp and includes return flights to Munich or Salzburg, seven nights' accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis, services of an air-conditioned coach, excursion to Hallstatt, transfers and the services of a Travelsphere Tour Manager.

For more information, or to book, call 0800 112 3313 or log on to www.travelsphere.co.uk.



■ **SWITZERLAND:** DISCOVER the mountains and lakes of Lucerne and the Swiss Alps on this six-day break.

You will be based in Giswell and have the chance to explore the city of Lucerne, including the spectacular, flower-covered Kappelbrücke, a 14th-century bridge spanning the River Reuss.

As part of the trip you will also visit Engelburg and take a trip on a rotating cable car to the summit of Mount Titlis, the highest peak in central Switzerland.

The trip departs from London Heathrow on July 20.

Prices start from £549pp and includes return flights, half-board accommodation and the services of a tour manager.

For more information, or to book, call Page & Moy on 0800 987 5112 or log on to www.pageandmoy.com



■ **AMERICA:** HEAD to Las Vegas for this Independence Day with a deal from Bon Voyage.

Whether you'd prefer the dulcet tones of Michael Bubl  at MGM Grand Garden Arena or taking the microphone yourself at Karaoke Club at Imperial Palace, pictured, you'll start your Independence Day party in style as you enjoy a free one-way upgrade to premium class.

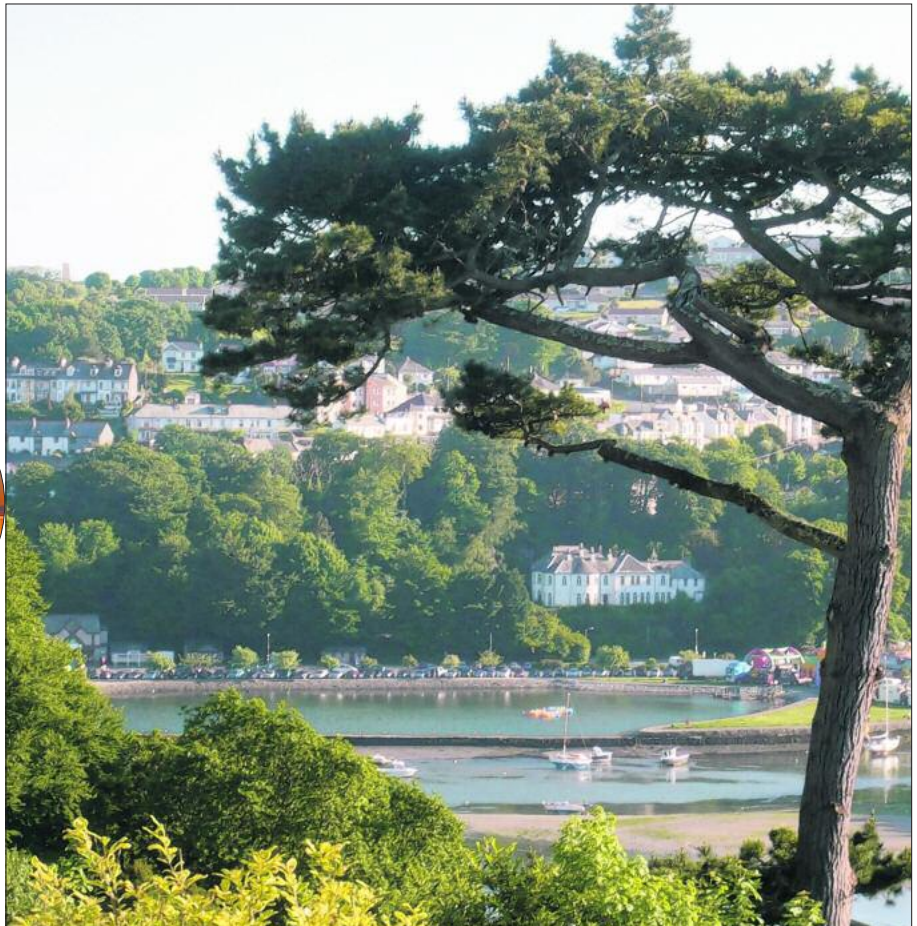
Prices for the seven night break start at £799, if booked before July 3, for travel between July 1 and 15.

The price includes return flights from London Heathrow, a free one-way upgrade to premium class and seven nights' accommodation at Treasure Island Hotel.

To book, call 0800 316 1091 or visit www.bon-voyage.co.uk
For more information on Las Vegas, www.VisitLasVegas.co.uk or call 020 7367 0979.

Living the life in Looe

GILL HARRIS is still dreaming of a blissful weekend in Cornwall



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■ ABOVE: Padstow harbour
 ■ RIGHT: Stephanie enjoying a drink on the terrace
 ■ MAIN IMAGE: View of Looe from Barclay House Hotel



LAST night I dreamt I went to Barclay House again.

It rose, breathtaking, in the hillside overlooking the river at Looe, a jewel of white, dreamy Victorian splendour.

Sadly, I woke up to find I was still in Swindon, but it will be a long time before the memory of a fabulous weekend at Barclay House fades.

The Victorian villa is nestled in six acres of lush countryside high up on a hill just as you approach Looe and its views of the surrounding countryside, river and the historic fishing village are magnificent.

Owners Graham and Gill Brooks pride themselves on giving the 11-bedroom hotel an 'our home is your home' feel and they've certainly succeeded.

From the moment we settled down to soak up the late afternoon sun on the terrace with a G&T, we felt at home.

Little touches, like helping yourself to drinks at the bar and filling in the honesty book or trotting off to have your dessert curled up on the Chesterfield sofa in the lounge rather than remaining at the dining table, make you feel as though this is your own house and you can kick your shoes off and relax.

On our first night, we dined at the AA Rosette winning hotel restaurant, which

uses the freshest of local, seasonal ingredients.

I kicked off with Caesar scallops, served with bacon, croustons and baby gem lettuce. It wasn't until I tasted this dish that I realised all my life I have been eating poor, rubbery excuses for scallops - these ones were so fresh and perfectly cooked, they melted on your tongue. Divine.

My holiday companion, Steph, started with pea and mint soup, which, despite it being a baking hot evening, was light and refreshing and beautifully flavoured.

For mains, we both went for the trio of fish, caught that day in Looe.

The day's offering was plaice, monkfish and turbot, served with spring veg and brown butter with capers. The wonderful, melt in the mouth freshness means I'm going to struggle to buy pre-packaged filets from the supermarket again. This was fish at its finest.

For pudding, Steph had the heavenly white chocolate pancetta and I nibbled away at the cheeseboard of local cheeses served with cauliflower mustard pickle and walnut bread. Again, it was delicious.

Too full to do anything else, we borrowed some videos from reception and retired to our twin room overlooking the river to relax.

The bedrooms are bright and

comfortable with en suites, television and video recorder, and a tea and coffee tray. Ours also had huge bay windows looking out over the breathtaking views.

Breakfast the next day was just as good as dinner with an invitation to eat as much as you want. Tea, coffee, fruit juices - including an excellent local apple juice - cereal, fruit, yoghurt... and this was before you ordered your main breakfast, which included various options such as the full Cornish, smoked salmon and scrambled eggs, the chef's special or pretty much any combination thereof.

Handily, the menu also tells you that day's weather forecast and high tides.

Coffee and fruit juice were replenished throughout breakfast and we were certainly well set up for a day of exploring.

Alternatively, you could just pass a lazy day enjoying the hotel grounds, taking a dip in the outdoor heated pool, visiting the gym or relaxing in the sauna.

The sun terrace is a perfect place to curl up with a good book and a drink.

As well as the hotel, there are eight luxury self-catering cottages with whirlpool baths, a barbecue area and private balconies.

If you feel like a bit of a wander, it takes less than 10 minutes to walk to the bustling fishing village of Looe.

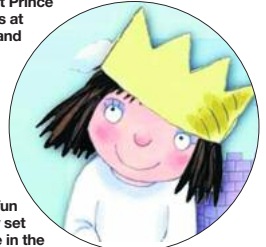
WHAT'S ON THIS WEEKEND

■ **LONGLEAT:** THIS weekend Little Princess, from Five's hit TV show and Tony Ross' best-selling books, will make an VIP appearance for all Very Important Prince and Princess fans at Longleat House and Safari Park.

Families can look forward to meet and greets in and around Longleat's popular main square.

Plus, for your chance to win a fun Greenhouse Play set based on the one in the show, pick up a Little Princess colouring pack on site or log on to www.littleprincesskingdom.com today and enter the colouring competition online. The winner will be announced on the official Little Princess newsletter so don't forget to register to her fantastic new online fan club and enjoy more fun and games to play!

For more information on Longleat, and opening times, log on to www.longleat.co.uk



■ **BISHOPSTONE:** THE Bishopstone and Hinton Parva country garden fete kicks off today at 2pm.

The fete, which is being held in the grounds of the Bishopstone Old Vicarage, will raise funds for the upkeep of St Mary's church, Bishopstone, and St Swithun's, in Hinton Parva.

Among the activities taking place throughout the day is musical entertainment from The Cheese House Band, an archaeological dig in the vicarage gardens, a tap dancing and ballet display, pony rides, a bouncy castle and much more.

The event is due to run until 4.30pm.

■ **OLD TOWN:** GET yourself down to the Town Gardens tomorrow for the last day of the Old Town Festival.

The Family Fun Day kicks off at 10am with Songs Of Praise.

Throughout the day there will be stalls, archery, tennis and community group activities.

The second heat of Swindon Talent 09 will take place in the Bowl at 11.30am and in the afternoon, local bands will take to the stage.

For more information on the festival log on to www.oldtownfestival.co.uk or call 01793 522540.

What to do in and around Looe

HOTEL FACTS...
 PRICES start at £99 per night to include breakfast, depending on the season and the number of nights you are staying.

Cottages range from £299 to £1399 for a week, depending on the size and the season.

Barclay House, St Martins Road, Looe PL13 1LP. Tel: 01503 262929.

Visit www.barclayhouse.co.uk for more information and a range of special offers and events, such as cookery demonstrations.

LOOE ITSELF...
 LOOE is a vibrant, bustling place to wander around, with a good mix of shops from high street regulars to second hand book shops to arts and crafts places. It is also packed with pubs, wine bars and restaurants, so whether you fancy a bit of window shopping or just want to get a bite to eat and relax, there's something for everyone.

Crabbing is a popular activity, particularly for children, or you might prefer to make your way to the stunning beach for a swim.

WHERE TO EAT...
 LOOE caters for all tastes, whether it's fish and chips, Chinese takeaway, pub grub or posh bistro.

We ate at the Smugglers Cott in Middle Market Street. Decked out like an old galleon and built over old smugglers' tunnels, this atmospheric inn is renowned for being one of the best places to eat in Looe. We tried the scallops, lemon sole, and mussels and we weren't disappointed.

Of course, no trip to Cornwall is complete without a pastie, and Looe has plenty on offer. It's hard to say who does the best - it's probably wise to try a few!

Over in Padstow, if you haven't got the budget to eat at Rick Stein's famous Seafood Restaurant, you can do what we did and drop into his patisserie on the main street. For £5 we picked up a cream tea to take away - four scones, a

clot of jam and the obligatory powdered cream. Perfect for a picnic.

WHAT TO DO...
 BARCLAY House is ideally situated for exploring quite a wide area of Cornwall.

We motored across Bodmin Moor to Jamaica Inn where you can have a drink or a meal and explore the smuggling museum, which boasts a wealth of smuggling curiosities. For instance, did you know smugglers used to sneak birds across the border between Belgium and Holland in ladies' stockings having drugged them with alcohol first to keep them from tweeting?

You're spoilt for choice with the beaches in Cornwall. We opted to take a trip along the coast back towards Plymouth and enjoy the views over Finnygook beach and Whitesand Bay.

The bustling harbour town of Padstow is typically beautiful with its colourful harbour and views out to sea.



■ Jazz society members. L-r are Julie Hill, Tony Hill and David Knight

■ **TOWN CENTRE:** FALCONRY displays, fairground rides and motorbike displays are all on the bill for the Armed Forces Day. Today Faringdon Road Park will be full of fun and laughter for the event, which is the centrepiece of a week of celebrations to mark the national day.

Other free events will also be taking place around the town centre.

The celebrations kick off at 11am and will run until 5pm.

For more information of the Armed Forces fun day visit www.inswindon.com



■ Pictured, a European Eagle Owl