



40 feel-good films



P41

EXCLUSIVE

UK vaccine doses: private health firms will be banned from queue-jumping

» Government determined to stop priority jabs for well-off



P10

Games & puzzles

Weekend

Number 3.113

SATURDAY & SUNDAY
14-15 NOVEMBER 2020

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR + JOURNALISM YOU CAN TRUST

PM's team torn apart by feud

» Leave means leave: bitter end to life at Downing Street for Dominic Cummings after days of turmoil

» Boris Johnson loses patience with his controversial chief adviser after toxic infighting

» PM's fiancée Carrie Symonds is unfairly portrayed as 'Mata Hari' figure by No 10 rivals, her friends tell



P6

» Tory MPs urge Johnson to tackle chaos as UK battles pandemic second wave - and has seven weeks until Brexit departure

» Some colleagues celebrate exit of Cummings and comms chief Lee Cain after tensions explode

» PM searching for a new team to run the Government

Sir Michael Parkinson

Life at 85 is not so bad

P23



Revealed: plan for solar power station in space

P16

IN 29 PAGES OF CULTURE & COMMENT

Benjamin Zephaniah

Janet Street-Porter

Tom Allen

Magda Eriksson



9 772045 492065 46



66 Those whom the gods would immobilise, they first make mad 99 Simon Calder, p70

All I want for Christmas...

...is an inglenook fireplace, serene views and crisp walks from the doorstep. You'll find all three and more at these festive UK rentals – with flexible rebooking policies, just in case. By Sophie Lam



Fitzhead Inn Private Pub Somerset

If you're missing the pub, this offers an opportunity to play landlord or lady over Christmas. The 17th-century inn, just outside Taunton, is available as a holiday rental. There are five bedrooms in an annexe, and you can celebrate Christmas in the pub where you can pull pints (draught beer is available but you provide other drinks), play darts and pub games, and cook lunch in the professional kitchen. **£2,023 for four nights from 23 December for six. Free cancellation until 24 hours prior to check-in. hostunusual.com**

The Cattle Shed Norfolk

With space for 10 guests (but sleeping up to six during current restrictions), this agricultural barn transformation is ideal for a pre-Christmas, post-lockdown break, with a large, open-plan living, cooking and dining space. It's in the village of Wighton, a short drive from the sweeping sand dunes of Wells-next-the-Sea and Stiffkey. Flint walls are married with polished concrete flooring, a soaring beamed roof and sea-blue wood paneling and it will be

festively decorated throughout December. It is also arranged on one level, with no stairs, making it accessible, and also has a wet room. **£1,402 for three nights from 12 December for six guests (sleeps 10). Bookings can be transferred to 2021 with prices frozen for equivalent dates, a voucher issued, or cancelled and refunded for Covid-related restrictions. originalcottages.co.uk**

Faraway House Powys

What was once an abandoned stone cottage in the Brecon Beacons near Crickhowell is now a cosy retreat brought back to life with patterned fabrics, vintage posters, bright colours and retro furniture. There is an open-plan living and dining area, a log burning stove and soul-stirring walking from the doorstep. **£2,450 for one week from 21 December for six. Bookings can be postponed in the event of a national lockdown. faraway-house.uniquehomestays.com**

Newhall Mains Highlands

Close to the Cromarty Firth stands a handsome conversion of a working farm



From top: Faraway House, Powys; Newhall Mains, Highlands

building, rescued from ruin and now a collection of luxurious holiday rentals surrounding a lavender courtyard. The building is more than 200 years old but the interiors are decadently modern, with velvet sofas, tweed curtains, log burners and high-spec kitchens. **£1,140 for six nights from 21 December for four, with free cancellation before 19 December. newhallmains.com**

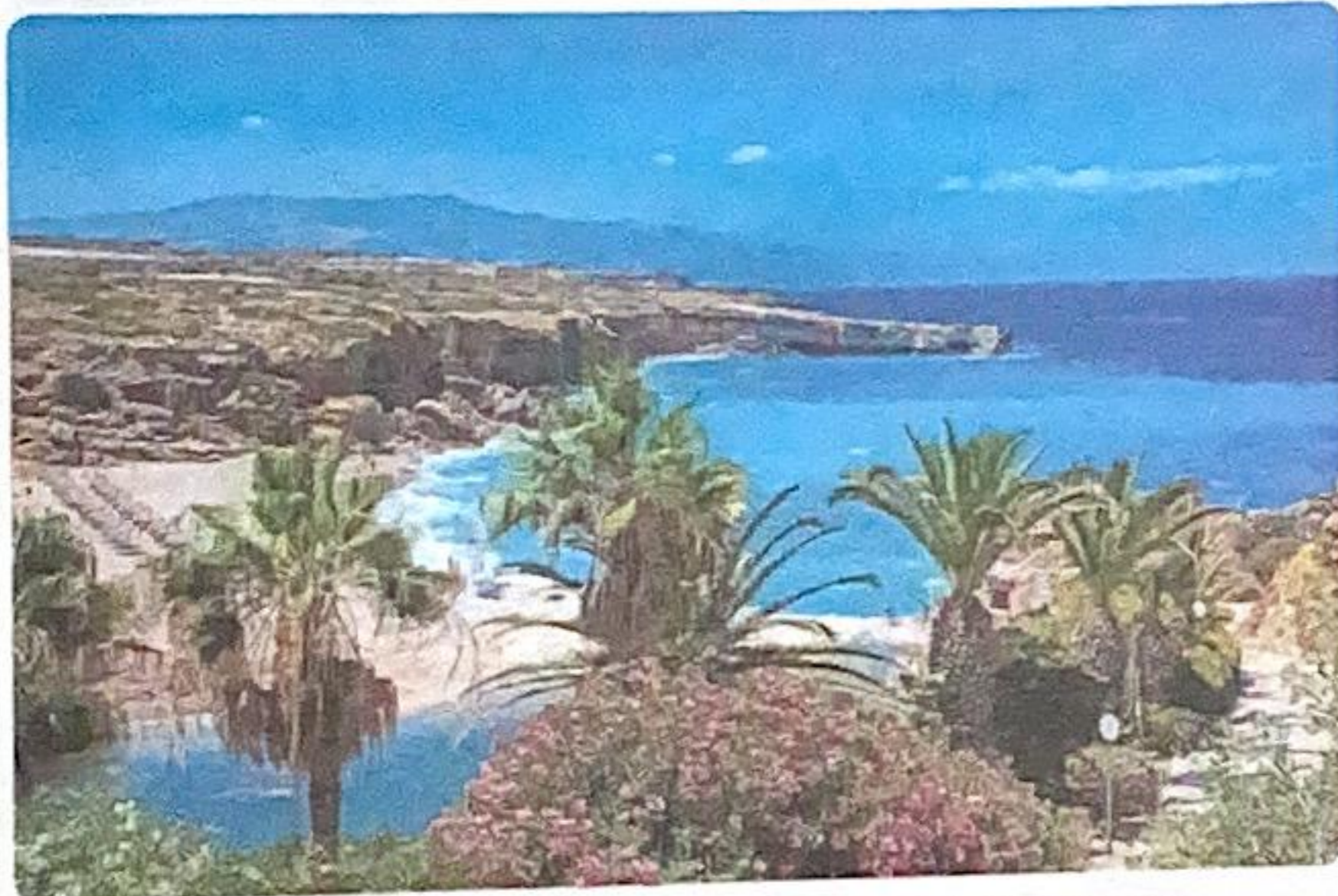
Thatch Close Cottages Herefordshire

If the weather permits, there is plenty of outdoor space for children and pets here. Inside, the cottages will be decorated for Christmas and guests will open the door to a hamper of seasonal treats, as well as goodies for canine companions. The four cottages sleep two to eight guests (with a maximum of six currently allowed), while beamed Bramble's Barn has a spacious living and dining area that makes a good entertaining space. **£965 for one week from 21 December for four. Free cancellation up to 48 hours prior to check-in. premiercottages.co.uk**



SIMON CALDER - THE MAN WHO PAYS HIS WAY

The big questions go on and on



Crete remains 'quarantine-free' but only if you can fly direct GETTY

At the start of the year, travelling to Europe was simplicity itself: every coastline, café and cultural icon was within easy reach. Today, the British holidaymaker must navigate through a coronavirus flow chart of infuriating complexity.

This, fellow travellers, is what 2020 has become. Those whom the gods would immobilise, they first make mad - starting with the travel rules pertaining to the UK nation you live in.

Will my country's law allow me to travel out for fun - or, more importantly, to see loved ones? (For England, that's a "no" until 3 December at the earliest.)

Does the Foreign Office regard the location as "unacceptably high risk", invalidating standard travel insurance? Must I quarantine on return?

Those are just the concerns from the UK perspective. The go/no-go questions continue ...

Will my chosen destination let me in? Increasingly, destinations demand pre-departure testing. But what kind? Will a quick and cheap antigen test suffice, or must it be the slower but more accurate PCR? How long in advance? Is that ahead of departure or arrival?

I can't wait to visit Spain's Canary Islands - now off the UK's "no-go" list - but in these testing times the rules are a-changing. For the coming week, an antigen test will suffice, and visitors staying in private accommodation are exempt. But from 23 November, the government in Madrid has mandated a PCR test, taken in the 72 hours prior to departure.

"I'll go to Greece, then," you might conclude - knowing that Corfu, Crete, Kos, Rhodes and

Zante were singled out to retain quarantine-free status in the latest round of self-isolation bingo. But another key question: can I get to or from my destination without changing planes in a "no-go" location such as Athens? Not for the rest of the winter.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps was only teasing when he suggested you could make a midwinter visit to a gorgeous Greek island without (a) a private jet or (b) self-isolating on return. Those whom ministers would immobilise...

Fortunately, this is precisely the warm-up that British travellers need ahead of the end of the Brexit transition period. Journeys to and from the European



Can you get to or from your Greek island without changing planes in 'no-go' Athens?

Union are about to get much more complicated.

Was your passport issued more than nine years, six months ago? How much will travel insurance cost now that EHC cards are useless? Have you got the right International Driving Permit and insurance "green card"? How long will the queue at Dover and Folkestone be? (The National Audit Office this week warned of waits of two hours in January, much longer in summer.) Plus many more. And unlike coronavirus, fellow travellers, the UK voted for it.

THE INDEPENDENT

@SimonCalder

Continued from p63

Bosham Cottage West Sussex

A pretty thatched, flint cottage that puts you in prime position for coastal strolls. It is in the village of Bosham in Chichester Harbour, and the sandy Witterings are close by. Inside, there are original features aplenty, a stove in the sitting room and dining table that seats five. There is also a roll-top bath to sink into after a bracing walk. **£1,700 for one week from 21 December for four. Bookings can be postponed or cancelled with a refund in the event of lockdown.** cabinsandcastles.co.uk/bosham-cottage

Holt Hideaway Norfolk

Spend Christmas amid the Georgian architecture of Holt. This spacious townhouse apartment sleeps four in the heart of the town, where there are antiques shops to browse, while the North Norfolk coast and its miles of dunes is just a short drive away. The owner, a stylist, has filled the space with items collected on her travels, alongside antique furniture and modern luxuries. Enjoy a Christmas lunch with the beautiful bone china crockery and bone-handled cutlery. **£1,125 for five nights from 22 December for four guests. Bookings can be cancelled or postponed in the event of a lockdown.** kiphideaways.com/hideaways/holt-hideaway

Eden Locke Edinburgh

If you crave a change of scene, consider Eden Locke, which provides 72 apartments within a grand, Georgian building in Edinburgh's New Town. Rather than overplaying the period features, the look is subtly tropical, with plants and cheerful colours. There is a small kitchen and dining table in each, as well as a sofa, and downstairs a lounge serving coffee, pastries and cocktails. **£548 for four nights from 23 December for two, with free cancellation until 24 hours prior to check-in.** lockeliving.com/en

Whitesand Shiel Northumberland

An 18th-century salmon-netting station on the River Tweed, near Berwick, that has had a glossy makeover. It has views of Robert Stephenson's Royal Bridge, as well as wildlife in and around the river. Design features include a headboard made from reclaimed crates and nets. **£1,120 for one week from 21 December for two. Bookings can be postponed, a voucher offered or cancelled with a refund.** crabtreeandcrabtree.com

Rose Castle Cottage Cumbria

Wander lonely as a cloud from this stone cottage near Coniston in the Lake District. There are no neighbours, save the Herdwick sheep, but there are serene views from the stove-warmed sitting room and flagstone-floored dining room of rolling fields and lakes. There is no TV or Wi-Fi, so come armed with board games, books and hiking boots. **£674 for four nights from 23 December for four. Bookings can be postponed for up to 24 months or cancelled and fully refunded.** nationaltrust.org.uk/holidays

Church Cottage Suffolk

Located in the village of Walpole, a short drive inland from coastal Southwold, Church Cottage marries period features such as stone floors and an inglenook fireplace with Mary Quant and Frida Kahlo posters and an extensive book collection. The kitchen has a range cooker and there are plenty of options for walking off indulgences, whether it's down country lanes, along the seashore or on Dunwich Heath. **£950 for one week from 21 December for six. Bookings can be postponed up to the end of 2021, a voucher offered, or cancelled and refunded if unsuitable.** suffolkhideaways.co.uk



Clockwise from above: The Cattle Shed, Norfolk; Winnow Barn, Derbyshire; Woodlanders, Shropshire; Lemons Cottage, Devon; Church Cottage, Suffolk

Lemons Cottage Devon

This luxurious cottage is sandwiched between the North Devon coast, Exmoor and Dartmoor, offering plenty of scope for walks. However, you might not want to leave once settled into its cosiness. Highlights include old oak beams and stone fireplaces, a pink claw-foot bath, 75in cinema TV, underfloor heating and a kitchen complete with marble surfaces and range cooker. **£2,800 for six nights from 21 December for six. Bookings can be cancelled and refunded in the event of a national lockdown or tier three restrictions.** sandandstoneescapes.com



The Linhay Cornwall

A granite barn conversion in Trefreock, near Port Isaac, the Linhay is bright and cheerful, with a modern log burner, colourful prints and deep sofas. The dining table has views of the garden and the rooms are all on one level, making it accessible, as well as child-friendly. **£795 for one week from 21 December for four. Rebooking offered subject to availability or a refund less £35 admin fee due to Covid travel restrictions.** latitude50.co.uk

Timber Cottage Inner Hebrides

The tidal island of Eilean Shona in Loch Moidart was once the summer retreat of JM Barrie, where he wrote a screenplay



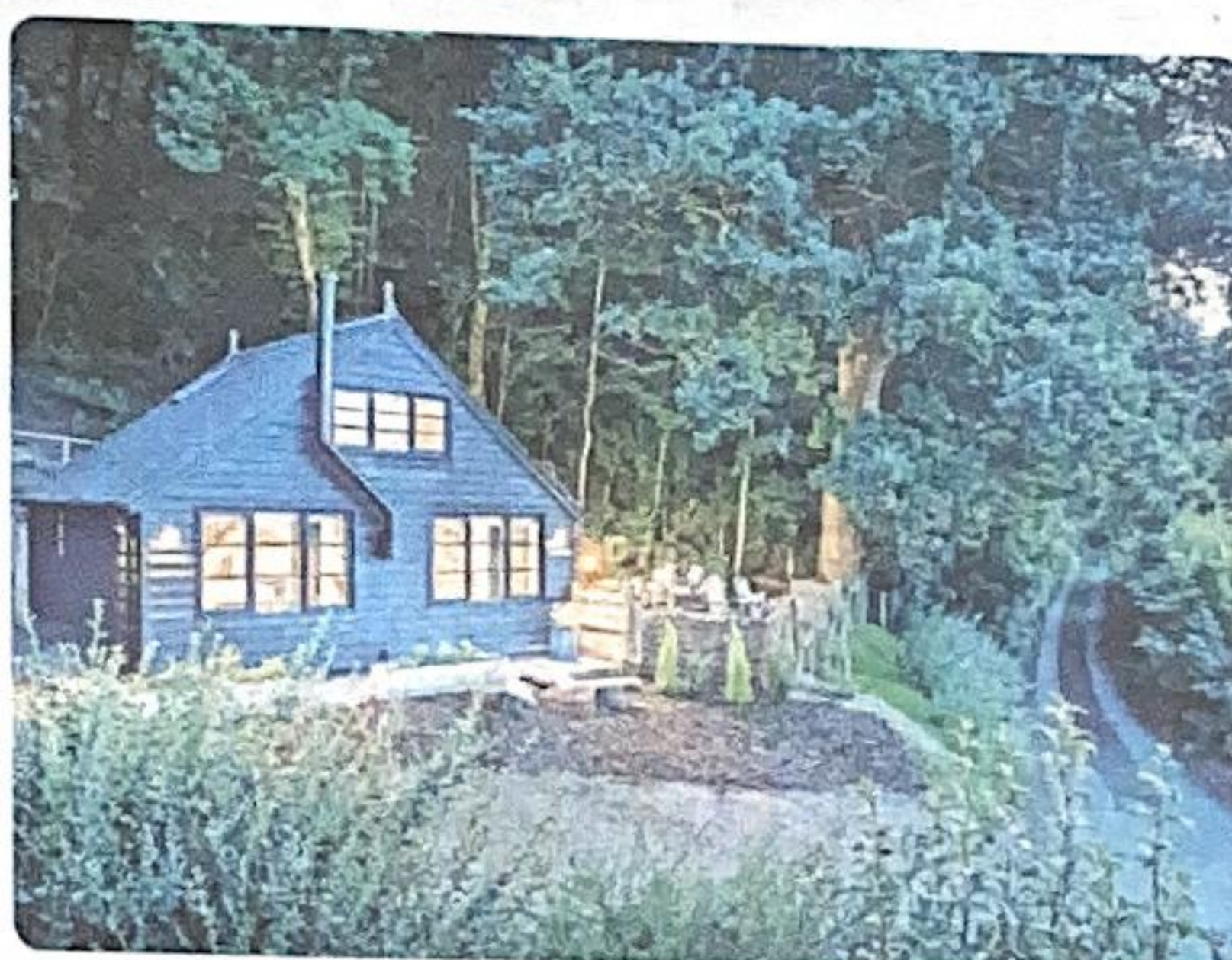
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...a 1920s film of Peter Pan. Its cottages have been elegantly restored as holiday rentals. The newest is Timber Cottage, which is off-grid. It is furnished with rugs and artefacts from around the world, as well as a roll-top bath and fireplace. **£1,500 for one week from 22 December for two. Bookings can be postponed or cancelled with a refund due to Covid travel restrictions.** eileanshona.com

Lower Gill Farmhouse Yorkshire
With six bedrooms, there is space to spread out in this handsome stone cottage in the middle of the Lancashire-North Yorkshire border. There is a games room, swimming pool, tennis court and sitting room with a log burner and farmland views all around. It is situated in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. **£1,835 for one week from 22 December for six (sleeps six). Bookings can be postponed until the end of 2021 with prices frozen for equivalent dates, a voucher offered or cancelled with a refund due to Covid-related legal restrictions.** yorkshireholidaycottages.co.uk

Arley Cottage Cambridgeshire
The three Grade II-listed converted barns of the River Nene Cottages are just outside Peterborough on the river of the same name. Arley Cottage marries feature wallpapers with an open fire, tweed armchairs, a deep



If you live in England (until at least 2 December), or Northern Ireland (until at least 20 November) you should not travel beyond the area in which you live, but outdoor exercise is permitted. In Wales there are no travel restrictions for residents. In Scotland, local protection levels are in force, with restrictions on outdoor activity varying according to level. Self-catering properties remain closed in England until at least 3 December.

sofa and large, polished dining table. Stroll along the river or rural trails, or just around the site's manicured gardens. **£912 for five nights from 22 December for four. Bookings can be cancelled and refunded due to Covid restrictions.** rivernecottages.co.uk

Eastbury Cottage Dorset

This 17th-century cottage opened in the grounds of The Eastbury Hotel near Sherborne this summer. Replete with period features and hotel-quality luxuries, it is a spoiling bolthole. Its kitchen is spacious and dining room suitably grand for a festive meal, though there is also the option of booking in for meals at the hotel. **£2,500 for four nights from 23 December for two. Bookings can be cancelled up to 48 hours prior to check-in with the 25 per cent deposit transferable.** theeastburyhotel.co.uk/eastbury-cottage

Winnow Barn Derbyshire

This barn conversion is all soothing hues inside, with a vaulted ceiling adding space and light. It is in the southern Peak District, with Chatsworth House nearby and there is a log burner, as well as board games to return to after walks. The double-oven range cooker and dining table will have festive meals sorted and there's a microbrewery on site. **£1,950 for one week from 21 December for six (sleeps eight). Bookings can be postponed or cancelled with a refund due Covid restrictions.** sawdays.co.uk/winnowbarn

Torwood Lincolnshire

Guests have direct access to the sweeping sands of Lincolnshire Coastal Park and Anderby Creek's grassy dunes. The dining table is in a light-filled conservatory and retro cocktail recipes adorn the kitchen walls. Elsewhere there is a beachy feel, while one room has bunks, making it a solid family choice. **£1,000 for one week from 21 December for six (sleeps eight). Rebooking or cancellation with a refund offered in the case of Covid restrictions.** lincolnshirecoastalcottages.co.uk

Garden Cottage Ayrshire

Settings don't get much grander than the Blair Estate, where the Garden Cottage sits in the shadow of the Scottish castle. The stone cottage overlooks the estate's walled garden and has a homely feel. The Ayrshire Coastal Path is nearby and there is plenty of wildlife to spot. **£885 for three nights from 23 December for four. Rebooking or cancellation with refund offered in the event of Covid restrictions.** blairestate.com/garden-cottage

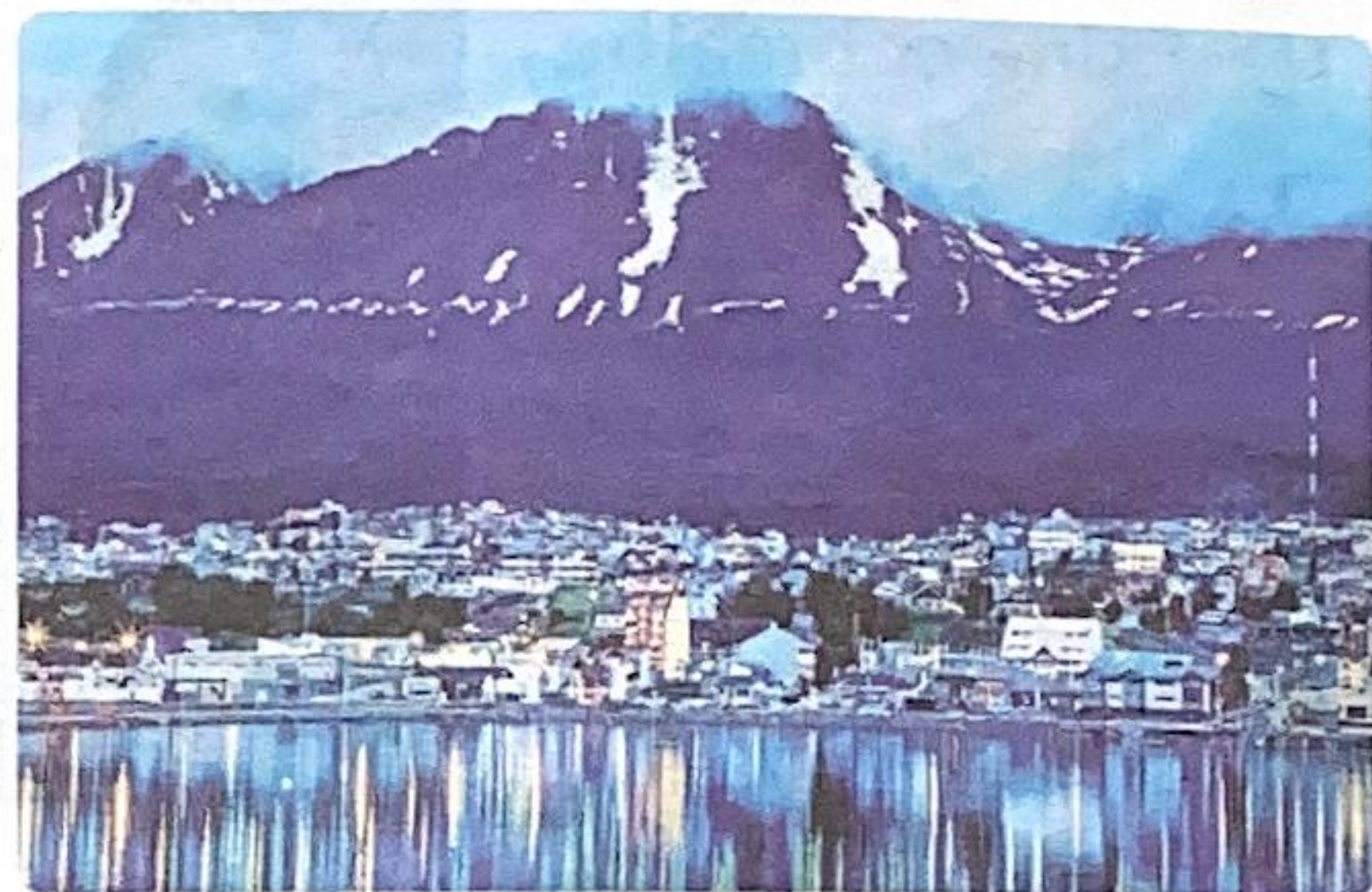
Woodlanders Shropshire

Flee to the south Shropshire Hills, where this romantic wooden cottage for two is hidden among the trees. There is a log burner and slipper bath inside and a wood-fired hot tub outside, as well as outstanding views and Offa's Dyke path nearby, too. **£1,462 for one week for two. Bookings can be transferred to 2021 in the event of Covid restrictions.** boutique-retreats.co.uk



Travel news

Border reopenings, new flight routes and holiday offerings and government advisories. By Travel Editor **Sophie Lam**



Tourism will be boosted by Government's test-to-release programme GETTY

CORRIDOR CHANGES

Although travel is currently restricted for those living in England, the latest "travel corridor" update now allows quarantine-free travel on return from Iceland, Chile, Cambodia, Laos, Turks and Caicos, Bahrain, the UAE and Qatar. Arrivals from much of Greece, apart from a handful of islands, must now self-isolate for 14 days. gov.uk

QUARANTINE REDUCTION

Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps told the Airport Operators Association this week: "We've been making very good progress on a test-to-release programme, to launch once we're out of lockdown. This will consist of a single test for arrivals into the UK provided by the private sector and at a cost to the passenger, allowing a much-reduced period of self-isolation." It is understood that this could be seven days, rather than 14. Shapps also indicated that the kind of swab tests currently being trialled in Liverpool give optimism for non-quarantined air travel. He concluded: "The primary solution to the aviation crisis is getting passengers flying safely again - ultimately through the development of an effective vaccine. But before that, through effective testing."

CARIBBEAN CALLING

Virgin Atlantic is to launch a new route to the Caribbean island of St Vincent, gateway to the Grenadines. The twice-weekly service, which will launch from Heathrow in June 2021, will be the first direct route from Europe to the island nation, offering the chance to discover St Vincent's lush interior and volcanic beaches and the tropical beauty of the 32 islands and cays that comprise the Grenadines (inset above). virginatlantic.com

SPANISH RULES

From 23 November, a negative PCR test result will be required for all arrivals in Spain from countries

deemed high risk by the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, including the UK. While mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands remain on the UK's quarantine list, the move is part of an EU drive to standardise Covid-related border procedures, with regions' risk graded in a traffic-light system. gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain

NEW ROUTES FOR NEWCASTLE

Between 26 December and 3 January, Iberia Express will operate flights from Newcastle to Madrid, Lanzarote and Gran Canaria. No quarantine is required for arrivals from the Canary Islands to the UK, although a negative Covid test is required when checking into hotels. There has been increased interest in the islands after they were added to the DfT's travel corridors list. iberiaexpress.com

GO FLIGHT-FREE

A travel start-up, Byway, aims to "take you to incredible destinations away from the crowds by train, boat or bike". The site allows users to build a customised holiday that avoids aviation, from the Highlands and islands of Scotland to Corsica or eastern France. Itineraries are customisable, and can include day trips with local guides and experts. Dates can be moved if restrictions prevent travel, or a full refund offered. byway.travel

SOUTHERN AFRICA REOPENS

While the African continent remains on the UK's "no-go" list for travel, South Africa and Botswana are reopening their borders to tourists from high-risk countries, including the UK. Visitors to both nations will need to provide a negative PCR test result, taken 72 hours prior to departure. Similar requirements are in place for Namibia. However, travelling against the advice of the Foreign Office would invalidate most travel insurance policies. southafrica.net; botswanaturism.co.bw

