

GREAT BRITISH GETAWAYS



EARNING ITS STRIPES
Happisburgh is home to the oldest working lighthouse in Britain

GETTY IMAGES; WIREIMAGE



after her. You can see how she'd have felt comfortable bumbling around its spacious rooms, although she may not have approved of the swimming pool and hot tub which was installed during the recent restoration, which did a pretty good job of maintaining a sense of history with a classically contemporary flair (they did keep the wooden "throne" that the Queen is said to have, ahem, done her royal business on).

magnificent deer park and just the right mix of rustic and Groucho Club cool. Venison from the deer park and beef from the local herd at Blickling are cooked over a large open fire in the Elk Room and there's a menu of seafood, mussels and Cromer crab caught by local fishermen. You can very easily while away a winter's afternoon here admiring artwork by the likes of Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst, Lucian Freud and Paula Rego, while the children run across the thousand acres of parkland and sculptures by Sol LeWitt, Dan Graham and Phillip King (telegraph.co.uk/the-gunton-arms-hotel).

SO WHERE CAN I FIND THE SEALS?

Drive over to **Horsley Beach**, wander along the beach path and, between November and February, you simply can't miss them. At any other time of year, this is a seemingly endless stretch of sandy beach but during pupping season, as you climb to the top of the dunes you'll be met with black and grey seals piled upon one another as far as the eye can see. The beach itself is cordoned off to protect the seals (and visitors who might make them angry) but great paths mean you'll have no trouble getting great views.



Human settlements dating back more than 800,000 years were found on Happisburgh beach

ANYTHING ELSE WORTH DOING?

Exploring **The Broads**, of course. These navigable rivers and lakes form a network of more than 125 miles of lock-free waterways in the Broads National Park and a trip to Norfolk wouldn't be complete without hopping on a boat to experience them. **Horsley Broad**, close to Happisburgh, is one of the prettiest and has a windmill that you can visit. Boat trips can be booked or hire your own and explore at your own pace (visitnorfolk.co.uk/explore/Broads). Alternatively, take a river trip at **The Museum of the Broads** (01692 581681; museumofthebroads.org.uk) aboard the steam boat Falcon. Landlubbers, too, will have plenty to keep them occupied inside at the only waterside museum of Broadland life. There could hardly be a more tranquil and picturesque location than Stalham Staithe to discover the boats of the Broads and see how people's working lives shaped the landscape.

Claire Irvin

#18: HAPPISBURGH

If you're happy and you know it go to Norfolk

fleece and walking boots and head off for a blustery UK break, it's now.

SO WHERE DO I FIND MY OWN MANSION?

August House (or Happisburgh Manor, as it's known locally) is one of the few so-called "butterfly houses" in the UK, an 18th-century Arts and Crafts mansion that everyone should visit – and stay in – at least once in their lives. It has one of the biggest thatches in the UK, which has been maintained by four generations of the same family. It can't be seen from the road and offers panoramic views of the sea and its grounds. If you're afraid of getting cold, you'll be pleased to learn it has a total of three multi-fuel burners to snuggle up in front of, too. No wonder it has the royal seal of approval (from £3,950 for a short break in low season for up to 20 guests; 01637 881183; uniquehomestays.com).



Ellie Goulding shot her music video *The Writer* on Happisburgh's cliff tops

OH, THAT OLD CHESTNUT....

No, seriously. The house has played host to several royals including the Queen Mother (it was owned for years by her brother, Michael Bowes Lyon) and one of its 12 bedrooms is named

WHY? TO LIVE LIFE ON THE EDGE?

Yep. If you've ever wondered what it might be like to be part of a community that is gradually crumbling into the sea, then you need to visit Happisburgh – and quite soon, too. This village and its famous lighthouse are falling into sea.

NORFOLK? IN AUTUMN? ISN'T IT A BIT COLD?

If you don't like hunkering down in

your own seaside mansion after a blustery coastal walk, then yes. But if you don't go in the autumn, you will be missing out on so much...

From November, some of the best seal-watching in the world can be found here. Colonies gather at nearby **Horsley Beach** for breeding season, so it's the best time to see pups.

There are also beautiful displays of autumn colour. If ever there was a time to pack your

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

TO THE LIGHTHOUSE Happisburgh's lighthouse was painted in 1990 by Annika Rice in her *Challenge Annika* show.

GHOUL WATCH A 16th-century legend has it that Happisburgh is haunted by the ghost of a murdered smuggler.



LOCAL HISTORY The typeface Porson was based on the handwriting of local resident Richard Porson (above). In 1866 the first lifeboat house was built on cliffs above Old Cart Gap, near treacherous Haisborough Sands.

◆ All profits from August House go to the owners' charity Health Amplifier (healthamplifier.org) and directly benefit children in Kikavu, north Tanzania.

ID:163140
size:15.146 by479.62
House Ads-Travel

ID:160654
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Tel Direct Travel Comms