

TRAVEL

CHRISTOPHER BEESLEY takes a Cornish family break, with buckets, spades and bedtime stories included.

THE blood red sunset slowly slipping away under the horizon, reflected in the sea, seemed to take an age to disappear.

Holidaying as a family of five including children aged six, five and one, it was a rare moment of calm and quiet.

For once my little ones were silent and content as they watched a film being shown in the hotel ballroom as part of the nightly children's entertainment at the family-friendly Esplanade Hotel overlooking Newquay's Fistral Beach.

So I had the beach to myself. Fistral Beach, with its golden unspoiled sands, rock pools and surfers, is situated in its own cove.

Although there were plenty of more mature guests on coach trips, the Esplanade is an establishment geared up for young families and the staff were always on hand to make the stay special for the children.

On the first evening of our two-night booking they were treated to a magic show while facilities onsite included a pirate's ship play area and indoor soft play.

There were also nice touches, such as the free use of buckets and spades and a bedtime story posted under the door of our room both evenings.

Cornwall might enjoy some of the UK's best weather but even this part of the world is not immune to the

Buckets full of Cornish charm



■ **Fistral Beach from the Esplanade Hotel and, inset, an aerial view of The Breaks restaurant, Tolcarne Beach**

periodic showers the Great British Summer brings and with rain on our first day, we took the chance to dip our toes in the Esplanade's heated indoor pool.

For mums and dads there is also a whirlpool tub and sauna.

Dining on our first evening was at the hotel's Ocean View restaurant, which offers picturesque panoramas across the waves.

Of more amusement to our eldest two daughters, though, was the sight of paragliders gently drifting down onto the dunes from the skies directly above us.

Ordering from the a la carte menu, I enjoyed the Esplanade

Burger – home-made on focaccia bread with relish – while my wife had the Chicken Kiev, fries and salad. Next day we ventured out for a walk to the town centre.

Famed for being the surfing capital of the UK, Newquay – home of Fat Willy's Surf Shack, an establishment whose garishly coloured logo seemed to appear everywhere on t-shirts and car stickers in the early 1990s – is not as quaint or pretty as most other Cornish resorts. But its size and type of clientele ensure a racier feel than the traditional slow pace of life typical in the West Country.

I'm told that Fistral is capable of producing powerful, hollow waves and holding a good-sized swell but, never having stepped on a surfboard in my life – like The Beach Boys' Brian Wilson – and with no intention of doing so in the future, such details are lost on me.

One new experience I tied, however, was a spa treatment at the neighbouring Fistral Beach Hotel.

I'm a spa novice and Mrs B had

booked me in for the men's purifying facial with scalp and shoulder massage.

Considering I didn't really have a clue what was going on, the staff looked after me for what was a pleasant and relaxing hour before it was my wife's turn, with both of us treated with ESPA skincare products.

The most memorable moment of the session was when my masseuse told me she could still feel a bit of tension in my shoulders. I presume she doesn't have three children.

We dined out on our second evening at The Breaks restaurant, on Tolcarne Beach in the heart of the town. While our children lapped up fish and chips as they had done on the previous night at the hotel, as non-participants in the consumption of fruits de mer, the seafood speciality menu was wasted on my wife and I.

As a fan of turf rather than surf, after starting with home-made tomato soup and freshly baked bread, I dived into the 28 day-aged Brian Etherington sirloin steak and

NEED TO KNOW

■ **CHRISTOPHER BEESLEY** visited the Esplanade Hotel as a guest of Excess Energy. Family rooms are available from £47.50 per night. Click www.newquay-hotels.co.uk

■ For spa treatments see www.fistralbeachhotel.co.uk and for The Breaks it's www.thebreakstolcarnebeach.co.uk

■ Flybe offer daily flights to Newquay from Manchester Airport – see www.flybe.com

rosemary fries. Medium rare as requested, it was delicious.

Mrs B was also impressed by her sautéed mushrooms with tarragon and crumbled blue cheese on toasted flatbread starter, followed by chicken burger and rosemary fries for a main course.

On our final morning we went for a walk across the bay to the Grade II listed Headland Hotel used in the 1990 film adaptation of Roald Dahl's children's novel The Witches.

Here, the girls tucked into tea and cakes in grand surroundings where, over a century earlier, Princes Edward and Albert – the future kings, Edward VIII and his brother George VI – convalesced after contracting measles and mumps at Dartmouth's Royal Naval College.

Our stay was shorter and sweeter. We wish we could have spent longer enjoying Newquay's charms.



■ **Children's fish and chips at The Breaks**

Travel Offers



9 days from
£1199.00

Hollywood, Vegas & the Grand Canyon

Flying from Manchester
Departs Oct 2014, Apr & May, Oct 2015

See some of the most familiar icons of America's wonderful 'Golden West', on this hugely popular, fun- and interest-packed 'holiday-of-a-lifetime'. Travelling by comfortable coach in the company of a friendly professional tour manager, you'll savour a whole host of unforgettable highlights - great works of nature and man-made wonders alike.

Tour highlights and inclusions

- Return flights from Manchester
- Glittering Los Angeles, California's star-spangled city
- Hollywood – world's movie capital
- Nevada Desert drive
- The awesome Grand Canyon
- Extraordinary Las Vegas – the most spectacular desert 'oasis' on Earth
- Seven nights' accommodation at comfortable hotels
- Comfortable coach travel
- The services of a Tour Manager

www.newmarket.travel/lpe15004 0151 559 1590 code LPE

These holidays are organised & operated by Newmarket Air Holidays Ltd. ABTA V7812. ATOL protected 2325. Subject to availability. Single supplements apply. Calls cost 5p per minute.

ESCORTED HOLIDAYS

Newmarket
Holidays

