# Kids get two free pairs

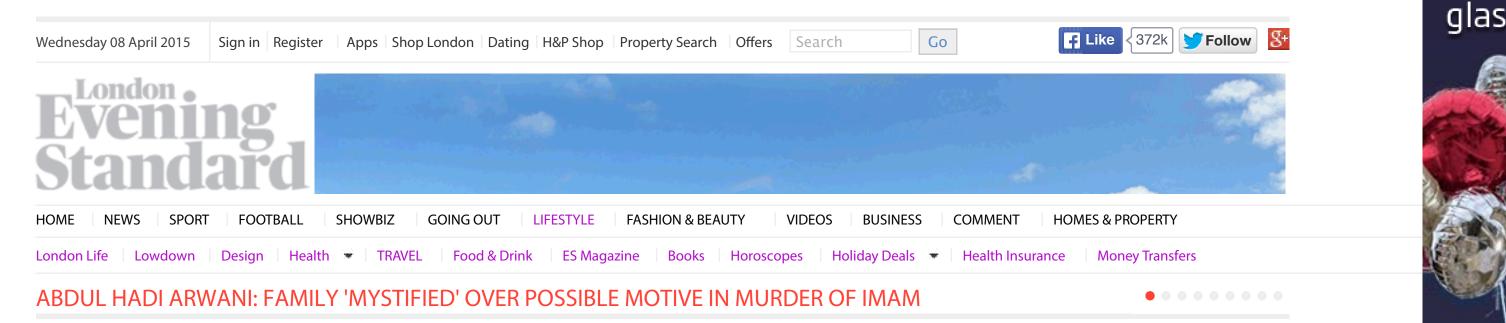
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## Shire delight: exploring the North York Moors from Dale View Barn

Homemade scones... clearly this wasn't just any holiday rental. Hettie Harvey retreats to the North York Moors



Picturesque: The North York Moors near Danby (Picture: Richard Burdon/Alamy)

#### HETTIE HARVEY

Published: 01 April 2015 Updated: 15:37, 01 April 2015

Sheep in the road — a sure sign that you've successfully left the city behind and made it to the countryside proper. In our case, the wild and windswept North York Moors, a surprisingly easy four-and-a-half-hour drive from London, even allowing for an 18-month-old in the back seat. 'Baa baa,' he said as we slowed to let our woolly friends pass. 'Baa baa,' we agreed, for the first of hundreds of times over the days to come.

Having negotiated the livestock, we made it to our home for the week, Dale View Barn at Crag House Farm. The owner, Liz Nightingale, greeted us warmly with instructions about how much longer our homemade scones would need to stay in the oven. Homemade scones... clearly this wasn't just any holiday rental. In fact, Dale View and its sister property Beacon View are award-winning conversions of 18th-century Quaker barns, undertaken with painstaking attention to detail by Liz and her

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husband Danny (a former Olympic modern pentathlon gold medallist). Until recently the barns housed the family's ponies as their four sons were growing up. The conversions include underfloor heating and rainfall showers without overdoing things with lots of chi-chi furnishings, thus allowing the barns' original identities to remain.

While my husband and I revelled in the spectacular views across the rolling contours of Danby Dale, young George was delighted to find a flock of sheep parked on the doorstep, not to mention an out-of-commission tractor and lots of doves. Noticing how enamoured he was with her feathered friends, Liz brought round a pot of bird seed for him to feed them, along with one of the evicted ponies.



Chic decor: the Dale View Barn

Beyond the farm there was plenty to explore and entertain. With George's train obsession in mind, we headed to Goathland station (fans of Heartbeat will be familiar with the village, where much of the series was filmed), a stop on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, where scenes from the first Harry Potter film were shot. George wasn't the only one impressed by the clouds of hissing steam as the train chugged in and out of the platform. We all left wanting to be train drivers.

Whitby, with its picturesque tumbledown abbey, sandy beach and fish and chip shops, provided another happy outing. The author Bram Stoker was so taken with the town when he visited in 1890 that he ended up setting part of his novel Dracula there. We didn't spot any vampires, but tucked into enormous plates of fried haddock and cod and mountains of chips. There's a lot to be said for a proper fish supper by the seaside, eaten while dodging divebombing seagulls and breathing fresh, salty air.



Spectacular view: the Rievaulx Abbe (Picture: Robert Wyatt/Alamy)

Not content with one ruined abbey, we headed south to the pretty market town of Helmsley and the spectacular ruins of the 12th-century Rievaulx Abbey. Hidden in a remote valley, the abbey has survived the centuries in remarkably good condition. Several soaring walls still stand, and where they don't, it's easy to fill in the gaps and imagine the scale and grandeur of the original buildings. Not for nothing did it inspire many a visiting Romantic poet and artist in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The rest of our week was spent exploring Danby Dale, crossing the valley to the little church opposite Dale View to admire the vista from the other side. Liz pointed us in the direction of nearby Danby, with its castle (once home to Catherine Parr, sixth wife of Henry VIII) and the Moors National Park Centre, which advises on woodland walks and child-friendly activities in the glorious Esk Valley.

Reviewing our week around the scrubbed oak kitchen table back

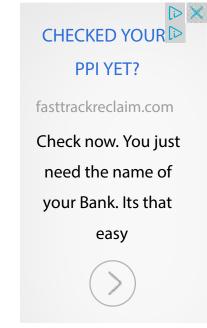
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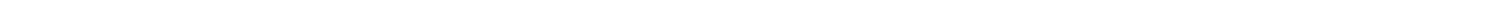
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at Dale View, we agreed that the steam train had been the highlight of our little family holiday. But what about George? 'Choo choo,' he concurred, the sheep a distant memory.

#### **CHECK IN**

A week's stay in Crag House Farm's Dale View Barn for up to six people starts from £800 and a short break from £560. To book, go to premiercottages.co.uk or call the owner on 01287 660 864

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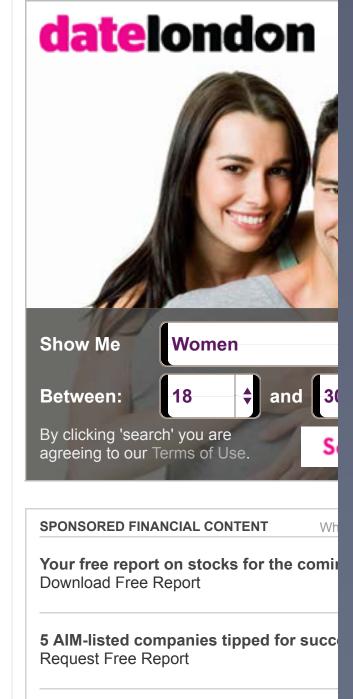
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