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this blue-painted tin tabernacle building dating back to 1895. The piece de résistance is the lofty living area with the original wood floors, an oversized woodburning stove and funky seating including stylish Egg chairs. Two double mezzanine bedrooms float above the living area while a "Sunday School" wing has two further bedrooms — one with bunk beds, the other with twin/king-size bed — and a second bathroom. A restored 1950s English Rose kitchen is at the rear.

Details Three nights for eight costs from £510, a week from £805 (01285 750713, oneoffplaces.co.uk)

20 The Water Tower

Rural views abound from the picture windows of this converted water tower in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. On the owners' farm, the house is surrounded by a large garden and fields. Decked out in a country-house style, the ground floor has an open-plan living area with a modern kitchen, wood floors and french doors. Climb spiral stairs to a double room with an ornate four-poster bed and en suite shower room with a small balcony. Stride out along footpaths to Ashdown Forest, home to Pooh Bridge at Hartfield, or visit Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Details Three nights for two costs from £290, a week from £370 (0845 2680785, english-country-cottages.co.uk, reference PFFR)

21 The Raft at Chigborough

Maldon, Essex

All you can hear are the splashes of trout and bird life when you stay at this wooden cabin floating on a lake. Transport your luggage by wheelbarrow from the car park and take a floating ferry platform to this bolt hole hewn from hand-sawn pine and larch. Inside the two-storey cabin, there's a flushing loo, gas-powered shower, solar-powered lights, a gas stove and fridge. Sleep on a double sofa bed or twin double bed



Best for unusual places to stay

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For families

24 New Forest Hideaway Cottage

Damerham, Hampshire

There's no need to bring any of the baby paraphernalia when you stay at this two-bedroom painted timber cottage with everything from sterilisers to changing mats. Its largely white interior is decorated with polka dots, candy-striped curtains and pink floral china and there's a woodburner with a fireguard.

Details Three nights for four costs from £427, a week from £850 (07881 878353, newforest-hideawaycottage.com)

25 Skye Window House

Ile of Skye

Floor-to-ceiling windows offer stunning views of land, sky and sea from this newly built three-bedroom house on the Isle of Skye. Inside it's Scandi chic with a Gaggenau kitchen, designer chairs, a woodburner, oak floors, sheepskins and wool blankets. A cot and highchair are available for younger children. Take a boat trip to spot seals and whales.

Details A week for six costs from £995 (020 3602 0097, stayhouse.co.uk)

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26 Owl,

Fakenham, Norfolk

Former fashion designer Lynne and her lighting consultant husband John have stamped their mark on this cluster of five homely but stylish converted barns near the north Norfolk coast. All on one level, Owl is ideal for crawling babies and toddlers with a light and bright open-plan living area. A king-size room has enough space for a cot or Z-bed while the second twin room is ideal for children. There's also a family bathroom. An indoor heated pool, and outdoor play area plus two tennis courts, means there's plenty to do on-site.

Details Three nights for four costs from £545, a week from £695 (0203 6031160, babyfriendlyboltholes.co.uk)

27 Pye Corner Cottage

Broadway, Cotswolds

Cottages don't get more chocolate-box than this thatched bolt hole on the edge of Broadway. Inside it oozes charm with

original oak beams and exposed stone walls but feels light and fresh, thanks to a smart kitchen, wood floors and modern furnishings. There are three bedrooms, one king-size, a twin and single, which share a family bathroom. Outside is a large garden with fruit trees and a pond (so not suitable for young children). Blenheim Palace is near by.

Details Three nights for five costs from £350, a week from £570 (ownersdirect.co.uk, reference E14329)

28 Capel Ty Ddewi

St Davids, Pembrokeshire

The interior of this converted chapel wouldn't look out of place in a stylish loft apartment with its double-height ceiling, L-shaped sofa and woodburner. Restored using local materials such as Welsh slate and natural paints, the house has a modern kitchen with a Smeg fridge/freezer and dishwasher and an Aga-style oven. An oak and glass-fronted mezzanine has a master en suite bedroom while a second bedroom has a double and twin beds.

Details Three nights for six costs from £311, a week from £609 (underthethatch.co.uk/ddewi)

29 Butterfield House

Beccles, Suffolk

This 16th-century riverside property is in the medieval town of Beccles. Ideal for two families sharing, it has everything from snooker to a dart board and table football in the games room, plus a trampolene, swings, and climbing wall in the garden. Grown-ups will appreciate the wood-pannelled sitting room, inglenook fireplace and beamed ceilings in the four bedrooms. There's a hot tub in the garden, and a mooring with a rowing boat for your use.

Details Three nights for eight costs from £825, a week from £1,100 (01502 722717, suffolk-secrets.co.uk)

30 Fisherman's Lodge

Fonthill Gifford, Wiltshire

Ideal for active families, this two-bedroom cottage occupies an idyllic setting at the end of a country track overlooking a lake on the Fonthill Estate. A loft-style open-plan living space with a woodburner and stylish sofas is flooded with light from four sets of double doors opening on to a large paved terrace. A simply furnished double and twin room with sloping ceilings are accessed by staircases. There are superb walks round the lake or across the fields to the nearby village of Tisbury and cyclists can store their bikes securely. A country pub serving great food is a short walk.

Details Three nights for four costs from £323, a week from £462 (01747 828170, www.hideaways.co.uk)

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