

kick back, chill out, indulge yourself



THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

IT'S *Peter Pan Weekend* on *The Tall Ship* on the Clyde (Glasgow harbour, 0141 339 0631). Hunt treasure. Fly about. Kill pirates. Never grow up. Everyone – including adults – should come in costume. And today it's *Dundee*'s turn to play host to the wildly popular *Singing Kettle Silly Circus* (Whitehall Theatre, Belfield Street, 01382 322684), featuring Artie the clown and the pretty but fearless Jane The Human Cannonball. The new movie, *Pokemon 3: Spell of The Unknown*, has been released this weekend anyway, along with *Recess: School's Out*, a full-length cartoon about an evil headmaster and his strangely plausible plan to knock the moon out of its orbit and cause eternal winter, thus ending summer holidays forever. Speaking of movies, *Harry Potter* isn't out until Christmas, but merchandisers are already working themselves up – cuddly replicas of Harry's messenger owl Hedwig and his burly protector Hagrid are now available from Vivid Imaginations Ltd (£11.99/£14.99).

MOST WANTED

Tequila, it makes us happy at the best of times, but this stuff is extra special. *Porfidio Tequila* from down Mexico way is a rich, golden, velvety-smooth, slightly reminiscent of a good malt whisky and works best when sipping rather than shots for that downing-it-but-what-makes-it-extra-special is the cute little cactus inside – well it's better than a worm. Available at Peckham's. Available at Peckham's.



Fiona Gibson

WHY does everyone lie about how long it takes to get anywhere? There's some kind of driving bravado going on. South Lanarkshire to Inverness takes me nearly five hours today, incorporating several thousand stops for loo-breaking up flights attempting to locate source of dreadful odour, etc). Yet a friend blithely announces that she does it in 90 minutes. She rips down to Carlisle in about half an hour and probably zips to London and back in the time it's taken me to find the blasted car keys. Therefore, I should have paid no heed to this doyenne of road travel when she assured me, "Newcastle airport? Allow yourself an hour and a half."

It became apparent that she had either meant a lesser-known Newcastle Airport in Galashiels or had told one gigantic fib. As our fellow holidaymakers glided around duty free, we roared past a Newcastle 95 miles sign, prompting my partner to stamp on the accelerator and start cursing in a most un-child-friendly manner. "Ucking-ell, ucking-ell," chirped four-year-old Dexter as we swung into the long-stay car park.

Your holiday mood is somewhat soured when a pert young airline official sniffs, "I'll have to call the captain to see if he'll let you on the flight and slaps late passenger stickers about your person. You know that not one passenger on that plane is itching to be your friend. Your Ayla Napa crowd might be more forgiving – or too mashed to notice that they are still on the tarmac, awaiting the late arrival of the Idiot Family. However on our Palma-bound plane everyone had at least three pre-school children attached, all braying for juice. You feel many eyes, beaming hatred. There is a rustle of paper and Sellotape

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as someone makes you a dunce hat. Announcement over tannoy: "We apologise for the delay to this flight, due to slots." Everyone – babies included – is aware of an unspoken appendage. "And the duffers in row 8 who were still at home, checking that everything was switched off and making a couple of last-minute holiday tapes."

Messing up might be acceptable if we were talking real, adventurous travel. Pre-kids, I entered countries where someone actually bothered to look at your passport – sometimes even stamped it – and all you got to eat was borscht with a lump of Alsatian lurking at the bottom. Having children has made me bottle out. I cannot venture further than Peebles without a collection of dangling Unijet labels and a nine-year-old rep patiently explaining where I can change my holiday money.

Some people don't require such assistance. They pack their small ones on their backs and set about climbing the Anapurnas; one bonkers friend intends to take her 18-month-old son overland to India, all in the name of fun. A travel journalist told me, "You don't have to do this package thing. I know a writer who has taken his kids to Morocco, Kenya, Slovenia and Medco. They've mistaken chilli sauce for ketchup and fallen into elephant poo." She adds that celebrity parents – those with armies of nannies who can holiday without having to interact with their children at all – are the least adventurous. "Like Posh and Becks," she retorts. "Still off to France, Spain and the States. You're unlikely to find them in Namibia."

At least, if you kick off your holiday with a mad airport dash, you feel like something thrilling is happening. Never mind that you are the 265,000th person to be greeted at Palma by a rep who actually yawns at you. If you ever worry that you are becoming a tiny bit boring – and peeved that your child-free friends are scrambling up Mayan ruins in Mexico – just ask some know-all how long it takes to get to the airport and grab a little nerve-tingling excitement for yourself ♦

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