

Edited by LISA MINOT & HEATHER LOWRIE

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OUR Spotlight On column gives you the lowdown on what to see and do in some of the most popular holiday destinations - as well as some unsung areas.

This week we explore **Newport** in Pembrokeshire, a bustling coastal town in the UK's only Coastal National Park.

The Norfolk-based, family-

run firm is the UK's number one escorted solo holiday provider - with no single supplement to pay.

A new long-haul tour for 2026 is 'China with Yangtze River Cruise' - a 17-night journey through China, combining luxury and culture with 14 nights in handpicked 4★ and 5★ hotels and three nights aboard the superior MS Victoria Anna river cruiser through the incredible Three Gorges (right). See onetraveller.co.uk.

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Highlights include guided tours of Beijing and Shanghai, visits to the Great Wall of China and the Terracotta Warriors. You'll also get to see pandas at the Chengdu Research Base.

Departs October 11, with prices from £4,990pp, including scheduled flights, private coach transfers, three high-speed train journeys, one internal flight, three-night Yangtze River cruise and the services of a dedicated One Traveller tour manager throughout.

See onetraveller.co.uk.



NEWPORT

MUST SEE/DO: Known locally as Traeth Mawr, or Big Beach, dune-backed Newport Sands is the largest of the town's beaches offering almost a mile of golden sand. Summer sees a safe swimming zone manned by lifeguards, and a variety of water sports, plus delicious ice cream from independent Caffi Mawr.

Former historic coastal port Parrog beach, on the south side of the estuary, is now a popular spot for recreational boating. The small sandy beach is close to the town's galleries and independent craft shops that the area is renowned for.

History buffs should explore the remains of Iron Age forts and cairns, plus Pentre Ifan, one of the most significant Neolithic monuments in Wales.

HIDDEN GEM: Steeped in history, The Sailors' Safety at Pwllgwaelod Beach on the Pembrokeshire coast is an old smuggler's pub dating back to 1593. The menu highlights the best of local Pembrokeshire seafood with a focus on foraged ingredients from the local shores and hedgerows. Dine in the cosy restaurant or relax with a drink in the bar while soaking up centuries of maritime history.

BEST VIEW: Ancient volcano Carnigli, also known as the Hill of the Angels, rewards walkers for the half-hour climb to the 1,138ft summit with stunning 360-degree views. On a clear day it's possible to see over the Pembrokeshire coastline and even towards the Wicklow Mountains in Ireland.

RATED RESTAURANT: At the heart of Newport, the Golden Lion has been serving drinks to travellers since the 1600s. It is now a cosy pub with an extensive menu making the most of the local fare including Welsh beef and freshly caught local seafood. The historic atmosphere and quality ingredients make it a favourite with both locals and visitors.

BEST BAR: Whether a keen golfer or not, The Cat Rock Café is the place for sundowners and stunning coastal views. Located at 18-hole Newport Links Golf Club, designed by pro golfer and course architect James Braid, it's a three-minute walk from Newport Sands.

COTTAGE PICK: Set on Main Street in the heart of the bustling town, Welford House sleeps six and features a stunning Mediterranean-style paved courtyard. A seven-night stay starts at £680. For something more rural, Ty Top is a delightful two-bedroom end-of-terrace stone cottage set on an ancient track beneath Carnigli mountain. A seven-night stay starts at £535. See coastalcottages.co.uk.



MAWR TO SEE... Newport's big beach

SOLO holiday specialist One Traveller has 16 new tours for 2026 including classic destinations in the UK, Europe and long haul and more off-the-beaten track tours.

The company offers the over-50 traveller the chance to explore a handpicked mix of bucket-list destinations. From cultural highlights to unique experiences away from the crowds.

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...DIVE IN: A week half board with free upgrade to a water villa at the 5★ The Residence Maldives Falhumaafushi in the Maldives, from £2,473pp leaving Glasgow, via Heathrow, on selected dates between November 1-December 15. See destinology.co.uk or call 01204 208304.

...MALT-TEASER: A week B&B at the 4★ Hotel St Julian's, from £329pp leaving Edinburgh on November 30. See loveholidays.co.uk. ...GREY STAY: Week self-catering at Greystead Institute in Bellingham, Northumberland is £845 arriving October 24. See sykescottages.co.uk.

...HIDE OUT: Three nights self-catering at Rowan Retreat in Blencow, Cumbria, is £350 arriving October 17. See glampinghideaways.co.uk.

...SLOPE OFF: A week self-catering at the 4★ Premium Résidence La Ginabelle in Chamomix, Tenerife, is £814 in December. See pierreetvacances.com.

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for two adults and two kids sharing a pool view room, leaving Edinburgh October 25. See springhoteles.com.

...PLAYA-WAY: Week's B&B at the 4★ Hotel Playa Calera in La Gomera from £744pp leaving from Glasgow on October 21. See tui.co.uk.



PULL on your walking boots for a twin-centre stay in two pubs in two of Cheshire's prettiest villages, where your four-legged friend can go too. Your experience begins with dinner and a night's stay at The Swan in Tarporley, followed by a beautiful 13-mile walk along the Sandstone Trail next day, where you'll

settle in at The Lion in Malpas, a warm and characterful inn. You'll get breakfast and dinner in both pubs which brim with charm. It's all about switching off, stretching your legs, and tucking into something delicious at the end of the day. Costs £199pp. See theswantarporley.co.uk or call 01829 733838.

STUNNING DESTINATIONS TO ENJOY ON CRUISE



HOW can you visit Jimmy Perez's cottage in Shetland and the majestic ruins of Stonehenge on the same holiday?

And along the way get up close to seals in the Scilly Isles, Sir Walter Raleigh's back garden and Agatha Christie's mansion?

The answer is by hopping on board Fred Olsen's elegant liner Balmoral for a fabulous voyage around the UK.

As a huge cruise fan, I automatically think of the Canaries or the Caribbean, the Norwegian fjords or Baltic capitals.

I'd never considered sailing around our own shores - until I studied the itinerary for this one.

Orkney, Shetland, the Scillies, Cornwall, Devon... places I've had in mind to see but never got round to.

Here was the chance to experience them all in one go and even better, do it in the class and comfort of a Fred Olsen ship.

The moment you board, the feelgood factor kicks in - the knowledge you'll be treated more like guest than customer.

Actually, rewind because setting off from Rosyth is the first bonus, both for ease of access and the efficient but relaxed boarding process.

Next plus point is that Fred's smaller boats are more intimate and personal so you're more likely to make new friends over a fun quiz or late-night drink.

My spacious cabin was as comfy and well-appointed as you'd find in a good quality hotel and likewise, dinner is like visiting a top restaurant every night.

Our first two days were spent sailing north towards Orkney which suited me fine because a cruise is really two holidays in one with life on board as enjoyable as port stops.

You have to work really hard and rewarding to do on the ship. On a typical day I could learn to make carrot cake, create a watercolour, play putting, curling or bingo, or test the memory in a music quiz.

That's if I wasn't having a sumptuous high tea, walking a mile round the deck, or getting dressed up for cocktails and a live show.

Yep, you can do any of that or you can find a quiet spot by a pool or in a lounge and escape

into a book or boxset.

All of which stokes the anticipation of waking up to a new destination, especially if it's a place you've never been before.

I got a good feeling about Lerwick from the moment I breathed in the fresh sea tang around the busy harbour. It's a modest sized town but as Shetland's capital it's got the air of a bustling hub basking in telly fame.

It took me five minutes to locate the attractive stone cottage jutting out over the sea that is the "home" of Det Insp Perez, largest of the Scilly Isles - posh as a tropical paradise.

Before going ashore, I swapped the Balmoral for a much smaller craft to bounce across the waves

into a seal colony, where the residents lolled on rocks like giant slugs and glared in contempt.

In contrast to the ruggedness of Shetland, St Mary's has the air of a charming Doc Martin village dropped in the sea 30 miles off Land's End.

It's all rustic pubs, tempting seafood restaurants and cobbled lanes leading to dreamy beaches melting into the distance.

I can't be the first tourist to be disappointed the island doesn't have a Ministry of Scilly Walks.

Our first mainland stop, Falmouth, was in party mood for the launch of the annual International Sea Shanty Festival. I soaked up a little of the good-

natured atmosphere before I was properly soaked in a deluge - the one thing Fred Olsen can't control. Luckily, the ship's accommodating excursions team sorted me out a coach tour for a taste of Cornwall's trademark sheltered valleys, pirate-country coves and cream tea villages.

By the time we sailed 100 miles along the coast to Devon, the weather gods were behaving, displaying Dartmouth at its almost impossibly pretty best.

Built around a lush, busy harbour and dominated by an imposing 14th century castle, this is where much of the stuff you heard about in High School history actually happened.

The Crusades, the Spanish Armada, the Pilgrim Fathers, the D-Day Landings... Dartmouth had a starring role in them all. These days it has a more sedate pace as a tourist magnet but exploring the narrow streets with their paint palette buildings was just the prelude to an unforgettable trip.

I proudly maintain Scotland is still owned by his descendants. Another river bend and through the trees a glimpse of Agatha Christie, preserved as it was when she died.

Once the boat docked, I crossed country to the seaside resort of Paignton to catch a beautifully restored steam train back to Dartmouth past spectacular beaches and sublime coves.

Our final cruise stop was Portsmouth and I took the opportunity to visit Stonehenge, via the ancient woodland and wild horses of the New Forest.

Stonehenge gets mixed reviews - one pal dismissed it as a "pile of boulders" - but maybe I'm getting soft in my old age because I found it genuinely impressive and strangely moving. There's a sense of wonder about the physical effort and dedication of people who'd never live to see the final result of their labour - and with none of the technology many of us would fall apart without.

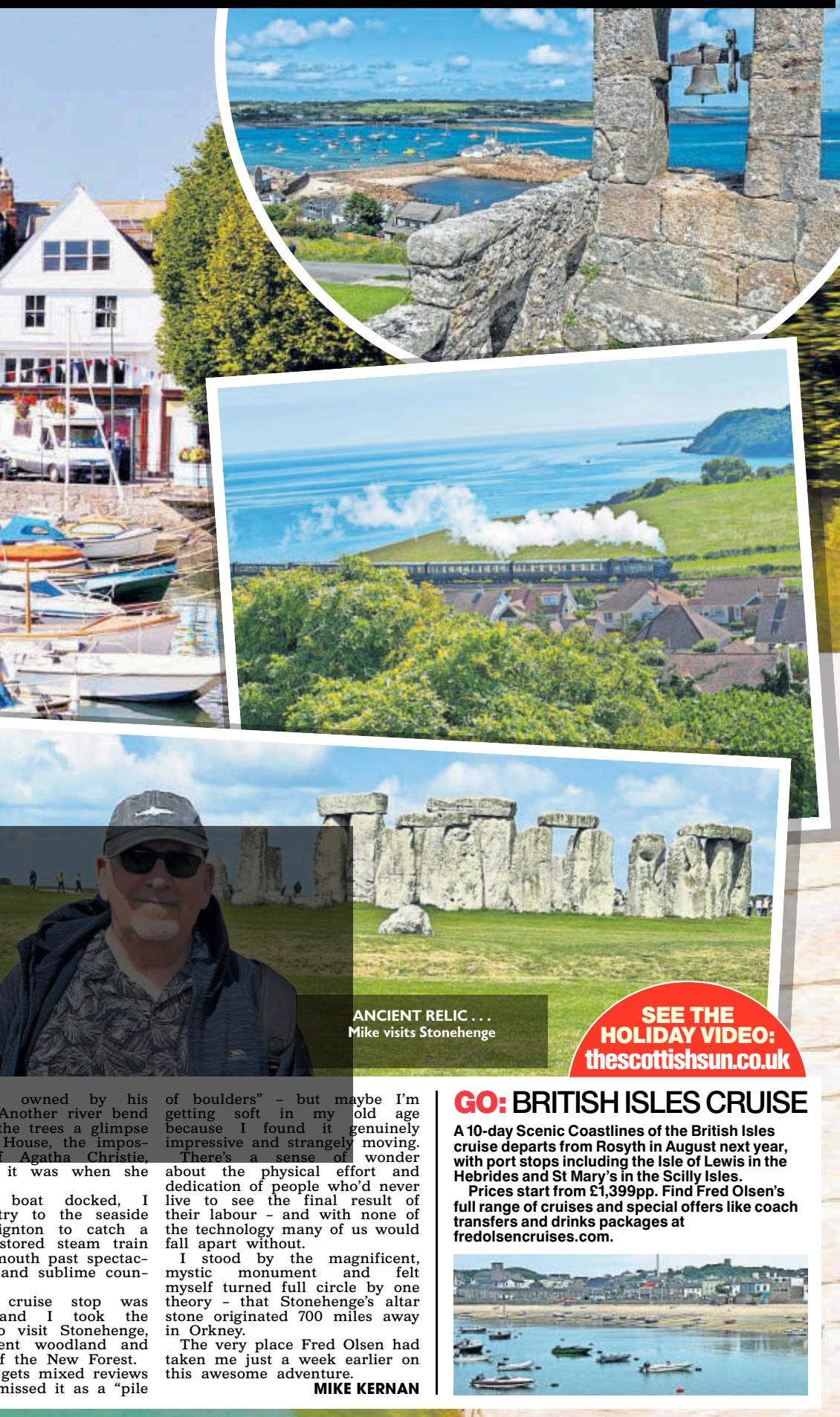
I stood by the magnificent, mystic monument and felt myself turned full circle by one theory - that Stonehenge's altar stone originated 700 miles away in Orkney.

The very place Fred Olsen had taken me just a week earlier on this awesome adventure.

MIKE KERNAN

LINER VOYAGE AROUND BRITAIN'S BEAUTIFUL COAST

YOU BAY-UTY... Dartmouth's scenic harbour. Right, St Mary's in the Scilly Isles and steam train to Paignton



Sea UK at its best

SEE THE HOLIDAY VIDEO: thescottishsun.co.uk

GO: BRITISH ISLES CRUISE A 10-day Scenic Coastlines of the British Isles cruise departs from Rosyth in August next year, with port stops including the Isle of Lewis in the Hebrides and St Mary's in the Scilly Isles.

Prices start from £1,399pp. Find Fred Olsen's full range of cruises and special offers like coach transfers and drinks packages at fredolsencruises.com.

