

## School's out!

## 20

## WAYS TO KEEP KIDS HAPPY

Stuck for ideas to entertain your brood? **Simone Kane** looks at a selection of events around the UK this spring

**1** The Science of Survival, the new paid-for exhibition at **London's Science Museum**, launches yesterday. It uses games and build-your-own activities to explore effects of climate change and dwindling resources on our future. Aimed at children aged eight years plus (survival.scienceof.com).

**2** Families can have fun with falconry at **Kielder Waterbirds of Prey Centre in Northumberland**, which runs a range of educational courses and activities. Its Family Hawk Walk (£120 for two adults and two children) includes a country stroll with a Harris hawk. Book ahead (kielderwaterbirds.org.uk).

**3** Build a rover robot and take part in science workshops with **Gallery Buskers at Mars Yard**, the new visitor experience at the **National Space Centre, Leicester**. It replicates the surface of Mars, and will be used to test the British-built ExoMars rover robot. Bridget (spacecentre.co.uk).

**4** The **Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire** has introduced a new Canoe Safari, a unique way to follow its wetland trail. Visitors can also learn about bird surveying, or take a Land Rover Safari in search of the brown hare. Canoe safaris cost £3 on top of the usual entrance fee (wwt.org.uk).

**5** More than 70 clubs will be exhibiting hundreds of scale replicas of aircraft, ships, cars, bikes and trucks, as well as Doctor Who models, at the **Scale Modellers Show at RAF Museum Cosford in Shropshire** today (rafmuseum.org/cosford).

**6** The **Dumfries & Galloway Wildlife Festival** in Scotland continues until next Sunday.

**7** Head to **Dinosaur Isle on the Isle of Wight, Hampshire**, to take part in a special Fossil Walk along local beaches to hunt for pieces of the past. An all-weather museum, Dinosaur Isle has plenty to keep visitors busy with animatronic dinosaurs and its own fossil displays. Fossil walks are held daily from 7-11 April and cost £32 for a family on top of the usual entrance fee. To book ahead go to dinosaurisle.com.

**8** Potential pirates passing the **Tall Ship at Glasgow Harbour** in Scotland can climb aboard for some swashbuckling storytelling. Resident raconteur Lulu Black will have adults as well as children spellbound with her legends of the sea. Sessions at 11am and 12 noon, 7-11 April and 14-18 April (glennie.co.uk).

**9** Kids can pair up with a 2,000-year-old Celt to learn about life in an Iron Age fort at **Castell Henllys in mid-Wales**. The centre's Celtic Fun Activities for Children lets them try their hands at bread-baking, spinning and dyeing wool, building a traditional round house and training to be a warrior. Celtic Fun Activities twice daily on 8, 10, 15 and 17 April. Booking advised (castellhenllys.com).

**10** The **Shiny Scales and Lizard Tales Festival** takes place at Seven Stories, the **Centre for Children's Books, in Newcastle**, and includes a host of dragon and dinosaur-themed events. Author sessions, storytelling, puppet-making and animation workshops are just some of the diversions during the festival, which runs until 27 April (sevenstories.org.uk).

**11** Looking for foodie fun? Head to the **Exeter Festival of South West England Food & Drink**, which takes place in **Devon** from 12-15 April. In the Food Is Fun Marquee kids can get active with Exeter City FC players, help chef James Chubb cook up some seafood or learn how to create the ultimate Cornish pasty (visitsouthwest.co.uk).

**12** Budding chefs can book on to **La Petite Ecole**, a one-day cookery course at **Le Manoir**

**13** There's a treat in store for grans and grandpas next weekend when they can travel free on the **West and East Sussex Railway** during **Grandparents Weekend**. Take a train along the picturesque route between Tenterden and Bodiam Castle on 12 or 13 April and grandparents go free when travelling with a full-paying child under 11 years' old (knsr.org.uk).

**14** **Chester Zoo** is holding two Sensory Awareness Days next weekend to help people with sensory disabilities to get more out of their visits. Animal talks will be interpreted in sign language and special tactile sessions will allow visitors to touch animal skins. Carers are admitted free. (chesterzoo.org).

**15** There are lots of traditional crafts and skills to be tried out at the regular **Green Day - Big Weekend**, organised by the **Fedw Hir Eco Centre** near **Merthyr Tydfil** in South Wales. Local experts will be on hand next weekend to help children master such skills as lathe turning, willow weaving, pottery making, dry-stone walling, wood carving, hedge laying and chainsaw carving (southernwales.org.uk).

**16** The **Museum in Docklands, London**, is celebrating **Bangladeshi New Year** on 14 April with a day of events for families. There's storytelling, silk painting, rhythm workshops and a variety show by the Kobi Nazrul children's group (museumdocklands.org.uk).

**17** Hop to it and join in the **Froggy Fiesta at Walton Lake in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire**, on 17 April, when rangers from the Parks Trust will introduce children to some amphibious antics (theparkstrust.com).

**18** There are lots of events across the **National Forest** over the spring holidays. The **Rosliston Forestry Centre, Derbyshire** is holding a **Five for a Fiver** day on 18 April when children can choose five active pursuits including archery, laser combat and the climbing wall, for just £5. Runs from 12 noon until 5pm (roslistonforestrycentre.co.uk; nationalforest.org).

**19** Welcome the blossom at **Low Farm in Cumbria** in a traditional festivity on 19 April. **Damson Day** marks the arrival of tons of white flowers on the fruit trees in the Lyth and Winter Valleys and is marked by demonstrations of damson cookery, orchard walks, sword-fighting, archery, music and traditional crafts (lythdamson.co.uk).

**20** Early birds will catch the worm - and the best bird-song - on the **RSPB Dawn Chorus Walk** at the **Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Co Down, Northern Ireland**, on 19 April. There's a special scavenger trail for children. Book ahead (ufm.org.uk).

