

THE TIMES



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Newspaper of the Year



Free inside Glossy art poster Mona Lisa and Matisse



Dancing on ice The Winter Olympics opened last night in the Russian city of Sochi with an ambitious ceremony that got off to a faltering start. News, pages 10, 11; Sport, pullout

No 10 police porn arrests

Officers face inquiry over claims they exchanged hardcore images on duty

David Brown, Fiona Hamilton

Armed police officers guarding Downing Street are being investigated over allegations that they exchanged hardcore pornography on their smartphones while on duty.

Scotland Yard said last night that three officers had been arrested on suspicion of possessing and distributing images "of an extreme sexual nature". A fourth officer has been interviewed but not arrested. All four officers are

from the Metropolitan Police's Diplomatic Protection Group (DPG), the unit at the centre of the "Plebgate" affair, which led to the resignation of Andrew Mitchell as the Government's Chief Whip.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, whose pledge of "total policing" includes a commitment to "total professionalism" by his officers, will be embarrassed by the allegations.

Sir Bernard apologised this week to

Mr Mitchell for the conduct of PC Keith Wallis, who was jailed for a year for fabricating a witness account of the "plebgate" incident in Downing Street in September 2012.

The obscene material is understood to have emerged from an examination of officers' telephone activity that formed part of Operation Alice, the inquiry into "Plebgate".

Officers from Scotland Yard's anti-corruption squad are said to have become concerned at the nature of some

picture messages being exchanged. Further investigation raised concerns that some of the messages were being sent while officers were on duty.

One line of inquiry is whether the exchanging of pornographic images took place during night shifts, with officers at different posts around Downing Street sending picture messages to one another.

A Met spokesman said that the three officers arrested had been detained in

Eat!

Recipe guide
Bill Granger
Italian
cookbook

Magazine



The female power list

Magazine



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Travel

Page 30

'An amble across Oklahoma and America's mythic Midwest — this is Route 66 for softies'

John Bungey and daughter go on a road trip



Potter House at Dunton Hot Springs, Colorado (2); camel ride in Morocco (3), below

50 best adventure holidays

From camel treks in Africa to snorkelling in Antarctica, **Robert Ryan** picks the best trips for 2014

Adventures for softies

1 Wild kayak in Turkey

Base yourself at the lovely Ece hotel on the waterfront of Sovalye, a pedestrianised island in the Gulf of Fethiye, and you can sign up for a two-day kayaking tour, which will take you across the clearest of seas to isolated ruins, sunken cities and deserted coves. The tour includes a wild camp with an evening meal prepared by the guide — mainly consisting of fresh fish caught that day.

Details Seven nights' B&B at Ece costs from £850pp including flights, transfers and a day's cruise on a gulet — a two-masted yacht. A two-day kayak sea safari, with overnight wild camp, costs from £220pp, including breakfast, lunches and dinners (020-8605 3500, exclusiveescapes.co.uk)

2 Luxury Rockies

Scott Dunn has a trip combining the glories of the Old West with the luxury of the 21st century, staying at hotels such as the Four Seasons in Denver, Dunton Hot Springs near Telluride, and Amangiri in Utah. You can hire a private speedboat to explore Lake Powell, take the Via Ferrata climbing course or experience the far less touristic northern rim of the Grand Canyon. The trip finishes in Las Vegas for adventures of a different kind.

Details Thirteen nights costs from £5,520pp including flights, all transfers, some meals and a private flight over Monument Valley (020-3411 9830, scottdunn.com)



3 Multi-active Morocco

If the idea of going to Morocco is adventure enough, then park yourself at the Reball, a comfortable riad complex at Sidi Kaouki, 20 minutes south of the coastal town of Essaouira. Then, when you feel brave enough, you can enjoy the activities on offer, from camel picnics and horse riding to quad biking and watersports. There's an on-site hammam to relax in afterwards.

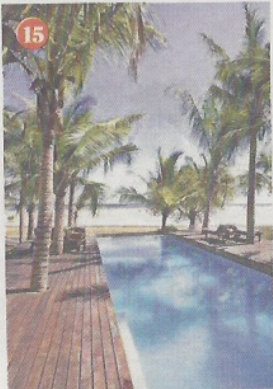
Details Seven nights' B&B with activities and flights costs from £695pp (020-7112 0019, fleewinter.com)

4 Climbing in Nevis

Compact, charming and friendly Nevis can't boast the West Indies' best beaches but has lots of other activities — one of the best of which is Nevis Peak. At 985m, climbing it is not a soft option (there's plenty of scrambling over slippery and steep slopes) but the joy is that you can return to the plush Montpelier Plantation & Beach hotel. There are gentler guided walks too, the best led by local Lynell Liburd, or you can take a bike to explore the former sugar cane plantations with Winston Crooke.

Details Seven nights' B&B, £1,795pp with flights (020-7873 5000, coxandkings.co.uk). The hotel can arrange all activities or contact Lynell Liburd's Sunrise Tours (00 1 869 669 1227, nevisnaturetours.com, £24 for the Nevis Peak climb) and Winston Crooke's Bike Nevis (00 1 869 664 2843, bikenevis.com, tours from £39) ▶

24 Travel



15
5 Cycle Italia
 Monti Sibillini National Park in the Marche/Umbria is a dramatic, empty corner of Italy, full of soaring mountains and wildflower-covered plateaux. New this year are two guided bike tours from the Palazzo Seneca, a converted 16th-century palace in the town of Norcia, which acts as a gateway to the park. There's a gentle gourmet cycle tour (visiting local producers with a cookery lesson), or a more advanced version.
Details Three nights' B&B and two days of cycling costs from £495pp (gourmet) or from £725pp for the advanced (00 39 074 38 17 434, palazzoseneca.com). Fly to Rome or Perugia

6 Mantas in the Maldives
 The Explorer might be a live-aboard but it is a Four Seasons' live-aboard — in fact, this catamaran is the most luxurious dive boat in the Maldives. New this summer are two seven-day expeditions (August and September) under the auspices of the Manta Trust, to Baa and Ari atolls, collecting data on manta rays and whale sharks.
Details From £3,380pp, full board, including three dives or snorkels per day. Flights to Male cost extra (020-7753 0520, fourseasons.com)

7 Sailing in Greece
 Fancy learning a few yachting tips but not yet ready for the full Robert Redford *All Is Lost* experience? Try the toe-in-the-water packages at the Westin, Costa Navarino, available through



7
8 Zip over India
 As part of Ampersand's Rajasthan Desert Tour, you can zip-wire over the magnificent Mehrangarh Fort near Jodhpur. This fort was built in the 17th century and is more than 400ft high; speeding along any of the six zip-wire routes gives spectacular views of the fort's ruins beneath your feet and of Jodhpur in the distance. Other

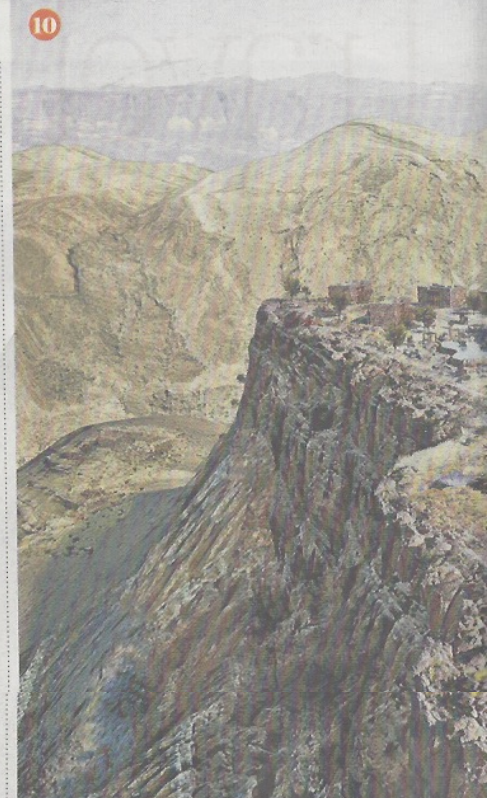
highlights include a desert camp and a camel ride into the dunes.
Details Thirteen days costs from £3,515pp B&B, including flights, guides and the zip-wire (020-7819 9770, ampersandtravel.com)



6

9 The Amazon in style
 Travelling up the Amazon doesn't have to be dugouts and poison darts. This Last Frontiers holiday features an elegant and traditional riverboat called *Tucano* that operates seven-night trips up the rivers Negro and Blanco north of Manaus in Brazil, where a vast network of tributaries is home to wildlife and Amazonian tribes. The cruise comes with a knowledgeable naturalist guide.
Details A nine-night trip, including flights, two nights' B&B in Manaus and seven nights' full board on the boat, costs from £3,250pp (01296 653000, lastfrontiers.com)

10 Rugged Oman
 On a spectacular bluff high over a vertiginous gorge in the Al Hajar Mountains, about 2½ hours drive from Muscat, the new all-suite Alila Jabal Akhdar is in a bold location. It is aimed squarely at those who like a touch of adventure with a side order of comfort. Expect a programme of desert and mountain hikes, serious mountain biking, paragliding as well as wildlife, historical and cultural trips.
Details Opening the first week of April, suites at the hotel start at £231, room-only (jabalakhdar@alilahotels.com, alilahotels.com). Fly to Muscat



Family adventures
11 Safari South Africa
 The Makalali Private Game Lodge, close to Kruger National Park, has introduced a junior bush ranger course which, over two days, teaches 6 to 12-year-olds survival techniques, including identifying edible plants and how to track wild animals. There are regular game drives, too.
Details From £2,390 (£1,760 under 12s) including flights, three nights' half board near the Kruger and three nights' full board at the Makalali Private Game Lodge, including the bush ranger course (020-7666 1250, rainbowtours.co.uk)



Make it a summer to remember

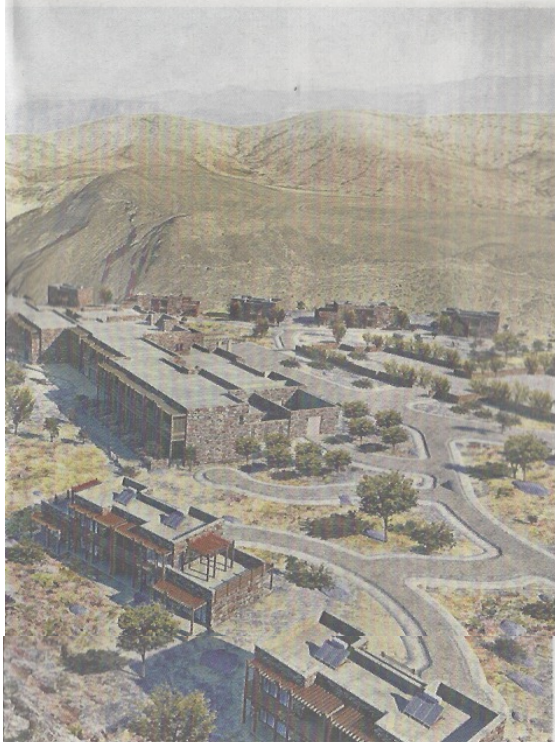
Select holidays from £699 per person

Book now with Emirates Holidays and One&Only Resorts to enjoy complimentary half board* and savings of up to 35%.

DESTINATION	FROM
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One&Only The Palm, Dubai	3 nights £809
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One&Only Le Saint Géran, Mauritius	7 nights £1,479
One&Only Reethi Ran, Maldives	7 nights £2,139

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Book by 28th Feb 2014. Prices are per person and include return resort transfers and selected Emirates Economy Class flights from London Gatwick. Other airports and weekend departures available at a supplement. Prices are based on two adults sharing and based on the following travel periods: Dubai selected dates between 1st and 28th Jul 2014; Mauritius 27th Apr to 30th Jun and 11th Aug to 28th Sep 2014; Maldives 11th May to 30th Jun and 30th Aug to 28th Sep 2014; Cape Town 22nd Apr to 15th Jun, 1st to 15th Jul and 8th to 25th Sep 2014. Booking shown is based on Maldives offer. Subject to availability. Offers may be withdrawn at any time. Terms and conditions apply. *Complimentary half board not applicable at One&Only Cape Town. ATOL 4086



12 Canyoning in Utah

One of the latest crazes in the beautiful and unique Utah landscape is slot canyoneering, which means squeezing through narrow fissures in rocks. These open into stunning, untouched multicoloured gorges. For 10-year-olds and over, Tourdust has a self-drive family holiday, including a day's guided slot canyoneering, two days' rafting on the Colorado River, a day's hiking in the Arches National Park and time in Zion and Bryce Canyon national parks. **Details** Two weeks costs from £1,056pp, including car hire, accommodation and some meals but excluding flights to Las Vegas (020-3291 2907, tourdust.com)

13 Summer in Alaska

Summer in Alaska is a time of roaming grizzlies, grazing caribou, padding wolves and leaping salmon, all in a spectacular landscape. Exodus has a new-for-2014 two-week Alaskan Family Discovery trip which includes visiting the wild Denali National Park, glaciers at Prince William Sound and kayaking. **Details** Fourteen days costs from £2,586 for under-12s and £2,949 per adult, including flights, three nights in a hotel (room only) and nine nights' camping with meals (0845 8639601, exodus.co.uk)

14 Swedish smorgasbord

The rivers, lakes and forest of Värmland, central Sweden, offer a different menu of summer activities for families. This Discover the World trip features pedalling a trolley along disused railway lines, touring by horse and cart, timber rafting, beaver safaris and forest hikes. **Details** Seven nights' full board costs from £956pp (8-15s £797). Flights to Stockholm and train ticket to Karlstad are extra (01737 214250, discover-the-world.co.uk)

15 Dhow in Mozambique

This fantastic eco-adventure from Turquoise Holidays involves sailing around northern Mozambique on an Arab dhow with a local crew, including a professional guide and skipper, for four nights. That is followed by three nights at Ibo Island Lodge in the drop-dead-gorgeous Quirimbas Archipelago. There are sea turtles, whales, spectacular bird life, friendly locals and great snorkelling. **Details** Seven nights costs from £2,840 per adult and £2,160 per child (ages 8-11) including flights and most meals (01494 678400, turquoiseholidays.co.uk)

16 Trucking in Thailand

Western & Oriental has a truck safari deep into the Thai rainforest and into unspoilt areas of southern Thailand, from Khao Sok National Park to the stunning Cheow Larn Lake, staying in swish tented camps. There are Asian elephants to ride, mangrove forests to kayak and ancient rainforest to trek. The trip finishes with four nights in Phuket. **Details** The eight-night package costs from £1,399 per adult and £699 (under-12s) including flights and some meals (020-7666 1234, westernoriental.com)

17 Teen Colombia

Families Worldwide is rolling out a selection of teen-orientated holidays for 2014, one of the most surprising being Colombia, until recently a byword for trouble for travellers of any age. Led by the company's managing director, it takes in Bogota, beautiful beaches, the sultry city of Cartagena, coffee country, bamboo rafting, fishing with locals and the option of whale watching. **Details** Twelve days' B&B with some other meals costs from £3,099 per adult and £2,949 per child aged 10-11, with flights (01962 737560, familiesworldwide.co.uk)



18 Families on the Nile

Egypt is slowly creeping back on to the tourist radar (although do check Foreign Office advice) and, boy, the locals will be glad to see you. The Adventure Company has a nine-day Feluccas & Pharaohs trip that takes in the Pyramids and Sphinx, Aswan (via an overnight train), a Nile cruise, a donkey ride and a visit to the Valley of the Kings, ending up at Hurghada on the Red Sea. **Details** From £989 per child (5+) and £1,095 per adult, including flights, all land transport, and B&B plus some other meals (0808 2507506, theadventurecompany.co.uk)

19 Donkeys in Spain

For families with younger kids who might be grateful of a lift, Away from the Crowd offers this donkey trek between hotels (7-15km a day) in the Guadarrama National Park. The route meanders through medieval villages, and young children can do the whole journey on the donkey. **Details** Six nights with most meals costs from £589pp; children under 12, £397; donkey hire, £144 (00 34 921 44 70 98, awayfromthecrowds.com). Fly to Madrid and take the fast train to Segovia

20 China with kids

Make your own kite and fly it on the Great Wall of China, learn Chinese calligraphy and mould your own terracotta warrior on this new family group trip with Wendy Wu tours. The eight-day tour starts in Beijing, then heads to Xian for the terracotta warriors and Chengdu for the pandas. **Details** From £2,290 per adult and £1,790 per child, including flights, visas, all meals, entry fees and activities (0844 2885396, wendywutours.co.uk)

Big adventures

21 Sahara sojourn

Algeria, long a no-go area, has again become a tourist destination and Peregrine Adventures' 15-day Expedition Algeria takes in Roman ruins and the M'zab Valley — a Unesco World Heritage site that includes the fortified village of Ghardaïa, as well as awesome desert landscapes. **Details** From £2,320, land-only (fly to Algiers), including all guiding, one internal flight and most meals (0808 2745438, peregrineadventures.com)

22 Outbacking in Oz

The Gibb River Road in Kimberley, northwest Australia, is a bone-shaking 400-mile track that links some of the continent's most dramatic natural sights, including vast gorges and



waterfalls. Bridge & Wickers has a trip traversing it in a 4x4, staying in simple but comfortable accommodation. It also includes hikes and helicopter trips over the Bungle Bungle rock formation. **Details** Eighteen days, beginning with two nights in Perth and ending with time at the beach, costs from £6,700pp including flights, transfers, 4x4 hire, helicopter flight and most meals (020-3411 0711, bridgeandwickers.co.uk)

23 Unknown Africa

Most people couldn't find Guinea Bissau on the map (it's tucked beneath Senegal on the west coast of Africa). One of the first UK operators to feature the tiny country is Explore and its 2014 tour travels by bus, boat and canoe across savannah, lagoons, rivers, forest, mangroves and the ocean to remote villages. Admire the prolific birdlife, nesting green turtles and saltwater hippos along the way. **Details** Twelve days costs £3,192pp, including flights, eco-lodge and camping, most meals and transport (0844 4990901, explore.co.uk)

24 Active Balkans

Taking in Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Montenegro, newcomer The Natural Adventure Company covers a lot of ground in its rafting and hiking trip to the Tara Gorge, Europe's deepest canyon. It includes hiking in the forests of Sutjeska National Park. **Details** Seven nights' full board costs from £980pp, with all activities, but not flights to Dubrovnik (020-8515 1144, thenaturaladventure.com)

25 Belize's black hole

Lower yourself into darkness at the Black Hole Drop in Belize, by dropping 220ft from the jungle canopy into the crepuscular world of the sinkhole. This 14-day adventure trip from Naturally Belize also features guided walks, spooky caves full of ancient artefacts and time on the coast for snorkelling. **Details** Two weeks, mostly full board, costs from £2,635pp, including flights (020-8274 8510, naturallybelize.co.uk)

26 Backroads Burma

Now Burma is back on the travel map there is a chance to trek into its untouched backcountry that, unlike other Asian destinations, has not been fully explored by tourists. Audley Travel has a 14-day trip exploring Shan hills around Inle Lake, meeting the tattooed Chin tribes and climbing one of Burma's highest mountains — Mount Victoria. **Details** From £4,070pp including 12 nights' B&B in small hotels, return flights and use of driver/guide (01993 838105, audleytravel.com)

27 Packraft New Zealand

The sport of "packrafting" involves hiking with an inflatable boat that's pumped up when you need to cross rivers and lakes. Expedition X offers half-day trips but later this year will present overnight camping in the magnificent setting of Fiordland. **Details** An overnight trip costs £248, two nights will be £395, including camping/meals (00 64 3 445 3080, expeditionx.co.nz). Add your expedition to an STA Travel (0800 9880390, statravel.co.uk) adventure package at £1,495pp for flights, five nights' accommodation in Queenstown, car hire, and some activities ▶