

# Your place or mine? Holiday swap

**Julia Thompson** gets the low-down on house exchanges. Find out if this type of holiday is for you and your family

By Julia M. Thompson

Leaving your home during the summer holidays can be as liberating as it is disquieting.

Are the pets being cared for? Is the alarm on, the water off? Are windows and doors locked? Post, newspapers, and milk cancelled? Fridge and rubbish emptied?

Hiring a housesitter to protect your home, pets, and plants can set you back at least £100 per week; add the cost of holiday accommodation and transport and you may just consider forgetting the adventure altogether!

Not so, say seasoned travellers – there is another alternative: A home swap.

What could be easier? You take my home, and possibly car, in Wandsworth, Clapham or Balham and I'll have yours – preferably in Barbados or Sydney, thank you.

What is the catch?

"It is a very well kept secret," Caroline Connolly of HomeLink International told Money Market. It needn't be.

HomeLink, the world's largest and most respected home-swap organisation, boasts some 14,000 members in 69 countries. And for membership costs of just over £100 a year, that's 69



Fancy swapping your digs for a villa?

possible holiday destinations – anytime! "Many of our members have been swapping for over 20 years and would not holiday any other way," says Connolly. The advantages of a swap are manifold.

A family can swap toys, bikes, neigh-

bours, and even car while catching a glimpse into another family's way of life and culture. How divorced is this from an insipid and expensive hotel.

Peace of mind is a big boon too, as your own home will be safer, and your pets and plants cared for.

"You are much less likely to be burgled if someone is putting the lights on; then there is someone there to water the plants or feed the cat, or fish," says Connolly.

**"It is not the size of your home that matters but, rather, its location, cleanliness and general comfort."**

But allowing a stranger into your home can take a leap of faith.

"You have to be a trusting kind of person – a generous person – to do this.

It does attract this type of person; so, generally, we don't have many problems," says Connolly, adding that the mutual confidence necessary for a successful swap is based on verifiable criteria.

She says expectations and varying levels of cleanliness can be the biggest irritants during a swap, with accidental breakages posing a minor risk.

Homes on offer through HomeLink,

most owned by professionals, range from sumptuous homes with grounds, a pool, and modern comforts and – in some cases – even domestic help. Others on offer are small city apartments.

And if you are thinking of an exchange, remember it is not the size of your home that matters but, rather, its location, cleanliness and general comfort.

"Look at a map and imagine where you can get to in an hour-and-a-half of driving; countryside, historic towns, National Trust properties – I bet there will be a huge range of attractions near your home," says Connolly.

"Everywhere in Britain is close to something," she adds.

So, forget the housesitter, the rental car, the insipid hotel, the bloated costs and swap your home instead – it may be the best holiday you have ever had.

**For information on joining HomeLink International visit**

**WWW.HOMELINK.ORG.UK**

## ADVERTORIAL

### Want to rejuvenate your aging skin to its former glory or just treat your skin to make it the best that it can be?

Our treatment programme combines sessions of interdermic therapy with other specific treatments to rejuvenate the skin (with biological precursors, vitamins...)(local physiological hypermine), dermocosmetics, which are specifically developed and strictly personalised.

Right from the first weeks and even from the first session the patient will notice an improvement in the treated area. With this technique

and with each session, we treat the epidermis, dermis, skin tissue and skin muscles to tighten the skin and redefine volume, using a specific protocol for each case which helps to delay the first signs of aging. We create tight chemical columns which

uplift facial and body structures reducing fine lines, expression lines and areas of drooping skin.

The treatment has excellent results which are visible from the first days of its administration. With this programme the patient will see a decrease in fine lines and expression lines, and a retraction in zones which present drooping or loose skin. This treatment does not require a prior allergy test

The treatment, suitable for both men and women, does not require any type of pre-

preparation, and after its application, the patient is able to incorporate immediately into their normal life. The treatment is carried out in the form of out-patients and does not have any side-effects. More than 1000 patients, aged between 20 and 65 have already received this treatment with a high level of satisfaction. The protocol of the treatment is specific to each patient, with regards to the grade of aging and the personal characteristics of their skin. In general, it is advised to complete, to stimulate the skin, sessions of radiofrequency, to aid the increase of localised heat and the repairing and modelling of profound structures.

The application of the products is carried out with very small needles after the application of an anaesthetic mask or a local anaesthetic according to the patient and the area that is to be treated.

Days after the application the treatment will create slight alterations in the skin including light inflammation and irritation and/or pain in the treated zones.

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**"The treatment has excellent results which are visible from the first days of administration"**

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