

Superb weekend? You can Bank on it

Even if the promised sunshine doesn't appear, get out and make the most of the three-day break. **TANIA ALEXANDER** takes a look at what attractions are on offer for families throughout the UK

1 A blast down the River Thames, London
If you are in London this weekend and the kids are not usually keen on sight-seeing, they'll no doubt change their tune if you offer them a London RIB voyage (020 7928 2350/ www.londonribvoyages.com) on the Thames. This James Bond-style 50-minute trip aboard a high-speed powerboat starts at the London Eye and whisks you towards the Houses of Parliament and then back down to Tower Bridge. Once past Tower Bridge the boat picks up speed to about 40mph, which feels exceedingly fast in a 12-seater. Expect lots of spectacular turns plus informal chat from the guides along the way who have jobs as stand-up comedians in the evenings, so there is plenty of entertaining banter too. Prices £26 adults, £16 children. Sailing jackets and life jackets provided. Trips run every hour between 10am and 6pm and can be booked in advance or you can turn up on spec.

2 Keep an eye on the sky in Strathaven, South Lanarkshire, Scotland

90m in which the hot air balloons will be tethered down and then illuminated in time to music. Weather-dependent. Entry free.

3 Bug Hunting on Brownsea Island, Poole, Dorset
Act out Swallows and Amazons on Brownsea Island (01202 797744/www.nationaltrust.org.uk), a wildlife haven with red squirrels, peacocks and deer. Owned by the National Trust, this is a wonderful island to just potter around, with lots of marked walks and spectacular views of Poole Harbour. This Monday families can also take part in a free minibeast trail, where they will be provided with magnifying glasses and containers. Turn over logs and stones to find insects, snails and slugs and learn how important it is to leave them safely in their environment. If you are stuck for ideas for the rest of the week the event continues until Friday. Prices: £4.70 adults, £2.30 children, £11.70 families (two adults, three children). Boats to the island run from Sandbanks (five minutes) or Poole (20 minutes).



007 HEAVEN: Take a trip along the Thames Bond-style

