

THOSE QUAIN'T BEACH PROPERTIES ARE WORTH A LOOK

# Hut is where the heart is

townie's guide to  
a country weekend

JESSICA FELLOWES



**A**ugust is coming to an end. It's traditionally a time to frolic in the surf, burn your nose in the sun and eat sand sandwiches. If you haven't packed your beach ball and kiss-me-quick hat yet, you're probably planning on something indoors that won't get called off at the last minute by the fickle British summer weather.

But you shouldn't be so easily deterred. You need to make like the country folk. Their working lives are dictated by the weather, not their holiday time. If they want to go to the beach they go. In rains, they take shelter in their beach huts, here's why you can't do one.

First off, don't believe everything you read in the papers (except, obviously, the fact that Tracy Ferns said her beach hut to Charles Spencer, and Keri Hindley, aged 16, won the £100,000 prize on the game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*). Do as you would say, a weekend of a large square feet for £13,500

—the price of a two-bedroom terrace house in Yorkshire. But most beach huts are mere shacks and modestly priced. Until a few years ago, you could snap one up for just a grand or two. At least, the country people could before townies like Tracy and Keith got in on the action.

Rural families would then have a hut on the nearest beach and spend every weekend in the summer down there. Some have been in families for decades and are worth one, it can be a case of 'dead man's shoes'.

Still, there are ways to find a hut for sale, you need to go local. Check out the local papers, even websites (see box), and even walk up and down the beach (this is how they advertise in the *Slate of Wigan*). Ask a local council for information. If you find out who owns a hut, you might be able to rent one for a summer or two.

Once you've got your plot, you don't even have to use the same hut; some beaches have strict guidelines, but you could let your imagination run free for inspiration. go to

TIP FOR  
IN THE KNOW?



Visit to I Pennington St, London E98 1BD  
Write [www.thelondonpaper.com](http://www.thelondonpaper.com)  
Text 88955



**FORTUNE** | Huts in Muddiford, Dorset, are not cheap

Sheford, on the Lincolnshire coast, this weekend for the Bathing Beauties exhibition where artists will showcase 100 wacky scaled-down designs of beach huts from honeycombs to a giant gin and tonic and a multicoloured 'jabba'. If you go to bespoke hut maker, such as James Ward in Norfolk, you can have one made to your own wild specifications. But if all you want is a modest place to store your bucket and spade, a tradi-

tional beach hut is just the job. Remember that there is no electricity or running water. You need battery-operated gear and solar screens. Oh, almost all beaches, it is illegal to sleep overnight in your hut. Make it cozy but don't reckon on being able to party all night. Be friendly to your beach hut neighbours and lend them a sand/fleece towel or a squirt of sun lotion.



**Tailor-made huts:** Get your own one built from £5,000 by James Ward. 01328 853 148. [www.uk-beachhuts.co.uk](http://www.uk-beachhuts.co.uk)

For more info, see [www.countrylife.co.uk](http://www.countrylife.co.uk)

## THE HOTTTEST

**Where to bug a hut:** The following websites advertise a range of huts for you to buy: [www.beach-huts.com](http://www.beach-huts.com) [www.beachhuts.org.uk](http://www.beachhuts.org.uk) [www.beachhutworld.com](http://www.beachhutworld.com)

**Don't want to buy?** You don't have to buy a hut. Try staying in a converted fishermen's hut in Whitstable in Kent from £130 per night. For more, visit [www.hotelcentral.co.uk](http://www.hotelcentral.co.uk)

**Hut exhibitions:** The Bathing Beauties showcase runs until this Sunday and the festival follows on 22-23 Sep, when the winning designs are opened to the public. Visit [www.bathingbeauties.org.uk](http://www.bathingbeauties.org.uk)