

DOWNTURN DYNAMOS

'OUR HOLIDAYS ARE PRECIOUS - AND NOW THEY WON'T BREAK THE BANK'

Vicky Hill, 38, lives with her husband, Gordon, 38, in Edinburgh. Vicky works as an auditor and Gordon is a university lecturer. They have two children, Rebecca, nine, and Andrew, five.

'For the past five years we've taken our family holidays in the UK, partly for convenience but also because Britain is a beautiful place.

This year we wanted to go to London - we visited two years ago and the children adored it. We didn't want to deprive the kids of holidays, but we had to find a way to cut down on the expense. So, instead of staying in a hotel, we decided to swap homes for the week, which we arranged through a website. We swapped with Claire and Tom, who own a house in Notting Hill. While we lived in their home for a

week, they stayed in ours, which saved us around £700. It was a fantastic adventure and one that we plan to repeat in the future.'

Claire Hodgson, 38, lives with her partner, Tom, 47, in Notting Hill, London. Claire, who is due to have her first child in August, runs a theatre production company and Tom works in the film industry.

'Tom and I travel lots for work, so we tend to take holidays in the UK. This year we chose Edinburgh, as I have friends there. City breaks can be expensive, which is why the house swap seemed like a good idea. We've saved around £450 by not paying for accommodation. The thought of having strangers in my house didn't worry me - I was just concerned that their house was cleaner than ours!'

Visit www.ukholidayswapshop.co.uk for details on swapping homes throughout the UK.

