

TRAVEL

App-y to help you

OVER-50s travel specialist Saga has rolled out a new free app for Android and Apple which gives booked customers a wide range of options.

The MySaga Holiday App offers a summary of the holiday or cruise, flight information, weather, excursions, ship details, trip payment balance and a holiday countdown which can be shared on social media.

A spokesman said: "We know how important it is for the savvy traveller to have up-to-the-minute easy access to their holiday or cruise details while they're away. Our customers are now able to enhance their holiday while away by making changes and booking exciting excursions."

See travel.saga.co.uk

LATE DEALS

■ **WALES:** Celebrate St David's Day (March 1) in style on a relaxing weekend getaway with Superbreak. The package includes two nights accommodation, breakfast on both days and dinner on the first night. Book and travel before March 31 and receive £30 off your next booking. From £132 per person based on two nights at the four-star St Pierre, Chepstow, including breakfast both days and dinner on the first night. Price valid for arrival on March 1, 2016. Go to superbreak.com or call 0800 042 0288.

■ **BALI:** Return flights from Manchester to Bali from £449 with STA Travel. Price valid on travel between April 1 and December 8, must be booked by March 31. To book call 0800 988 0390, statravel.com, or visit one of the STA Travel stores.

■ **FOLLOWING** the article in last week's Saturday Extra, we would like to clarify that Flamingo Land's Dino-Stone Park will be open for half-term and subsequent weekends up to March 6, where families can enjoy rides such as Twistosaur, Cyclosaur, Pterodactyl, Dino Roller and Rotatur.

When Dino-Stone closes after half-term fun on March 6 there won't be long to wait before the entire Flamingo Land resort opens fully for 2016 from March 12.

In the meantime, the zoo is welcoming visitors from 10am to 4pm, and younger guests can enjoy the Muddy Duck Tractors, Jungle Carousel, Helitoys, Mischief Mansion and Wacky Races before the park fully opens.

For more details about opening times and the 2016 season, go to flamingoland.co.uk

WE HAVE a lot to thank Teddy Roosevelt for. He was founding father of the National Parks - said to be America's greatest invention - and, just as importantly, daddy of the Teddy bear.

The larger-than-life American president was not only an early convert to the need for conservation, but he also brought joy and comfort to children in their millions through his namesake cuddly toy.

This year sees the 100th anniversary of 'Teddy' setting up the great National Park system, an idea taken up later by Europe, and then the rest of the world.

His simple aim was to protect the planet's wild and wonderful places from man's indiscriminate exploitation.

The celebration party will be something special in the state of North Dakota. There, 'Teddy' found peace, solace and his all-important love of nature after his life was shattered by the death of his wife and mother within hours of each other, on Valentine's Day 1884.

And the Teddy bear? Well, Roosevelt, who was a hunter and soldier before he turned environmentalist in chief, was offered the chance to shoot a bear cub that his hosts had tethered to a tree.

Roosevelt refused point-blank, a newspaper cartoonist back east highlighted it pictorially in the New York Times, and the public began talking about Teddy's bear, which became shortened to Teddy bear. The rest, as they say, is history.

But up in North Dakota, tucked against the Canadian border in America's Mid-Western belt of states, the broken-hearted Roosevelt turned his back on his burgeoning political career in New York, and turned to 'the strenuous life' on the wild, frontier limits of late-19th Century America.

On the vast high plains of the prairie, adjacent to North Dakota's weird but wonderful 'Badlands,' Roosevelt tried to rebuild his life. He effectively became a squatter, buying a thousand head of cattle to graze on open range, owned in principle by the Northern Pacific Railway, which was pushing its tracks west.

Teddy had a cabin built, then had a ranch constructed on an isolated stretch of the beautiful Little Missouri River, which feeds the headwaters of the Great Missouri.

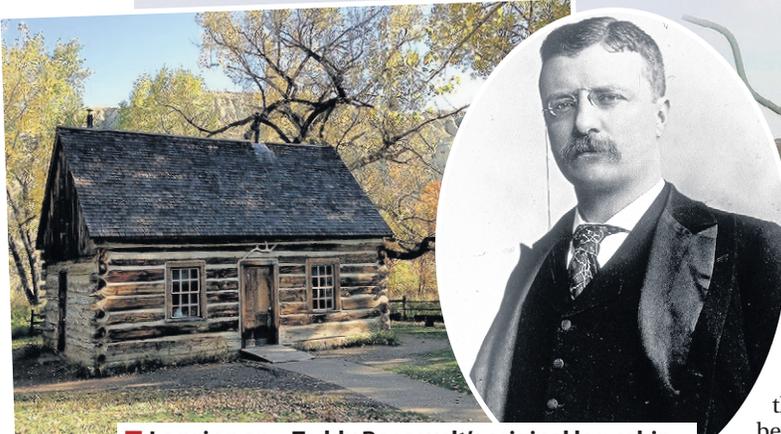
It was while sitting in a rocking chair on the ranch veranda, overlooking the river, and the untouched prairie grasslands that Teddy realised such places should be protected from exploitation.

When he became president, he protected 23 million acres of the USA as official National Parks, and his gift to posterity was secured.

It is fascinating to follow in Roosevelt's footsteps in North Dakota, which has much to offer the seasoned visitor.

Follow in a president's footsteps

LINDSAY SUTTON visits the US state where the man who would lead a nation invented national parks



■ **Logging on...** Teddy Roosevelt's original log cabin at the entrance to the Teddy Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota, left, and the man himself, right

It's a slice of real America, far from the hustle and bustle of the big city or big-ticket tourist attractions of the first-time visitor to the States.

'TR' called it "the most beautiful place in America." Not that it would claim to rival places such as the Grand Canyon, or the peaks of the Rockies, the volcanic attractions of Yellowstone or the sheer magnitude of Yosemite National Park in California.

North Dakota's offering is something different - a historic cowboy experience; a taste of what the pioneer white settlers from Europe faced on the very edge of frontier America; a fascinating insight into the 'First Nation' world

rise from the vast grasslands.

As TR said: "It's a land of vast, silent spaces... a place of grim beauty."

This place that became the 'cradle of conservation' was also the place that made Teddy. He readily admitted: "I would never have become president if it had not been for North Dakota."

From a Harvard-educated New York society snob, he became a frontier cattle rancher, and gained insight into the life of the long-suffering American.

He now understood life's great physical and mental demands, and he became the champion of ordinary men and women, taking on big

of the Native Americans - and all against the backcloth of the haunting beauty of the open Prairie, and the dissected Badlands buttes that

business, and the unfettered power of the oil and railway tycoons. All because of North Dakota.

Although he first arrived "to bag a buffalo," he learned to love wildlife and worked to conserve the bison.

So what is there to see and do here?

En route, you can take in Chicago with all its big-city attractions.

Then I would recommend a 'double bill' visit to South Dakota, to see the famous Black Hills, with the undoubted attractions such as Mount Rushmore's presidential heads carved in the granite - one being Teddy himself - and the quarter-completed Crazy Horse statue being carved nearby.

There are the buffalo herds and the beauty of Custer Park; the historically preserved town of Deadwood; and the urban attractions of Rapid City.

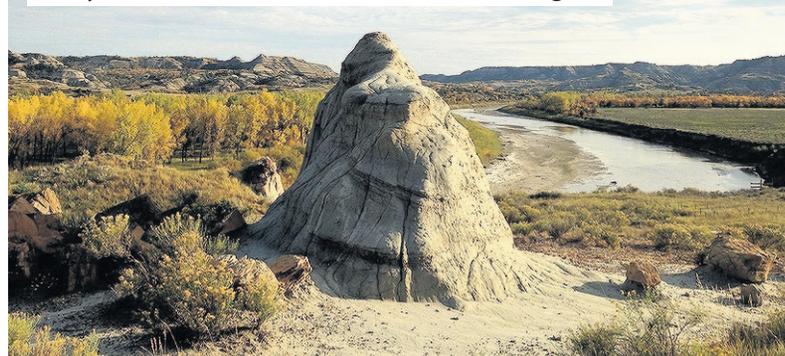
Then, it's a three-hour drive to North Dakota. I strongly recommend the delights of the Enchanted Road, a 30-mile stretch of straight-as-a-die highway, punctuated with huge and amazing metal sculptures every few miles.

They're the work of Gary Greff, a local who got the idea to make the giant sculptures - the prairie pheasants are my favourite - to attract tourists to his home town of Regent. He's halfway there but plans more attractions "to hold folk when they get here."

Next up is the old cowpoke town of Medora, with its iconic Roughriders Hotel and historic Main Street, as well as the southern Teddy Roosevelt National Park, with its 36-mile road run through the powerful Badlands scenery.

Just outside the park's must-do Visitor Centre, with its small,

■ **Rock 'n' rolling river...** The Little Missouri near Teddy Roosevelt's ranch on the North Dakota ranges



BEST BREAK FOR MOTHER'S DAY

SET in the beautiful grounds of Treherne House, treat your mum to a break this Mother's Day in a Malvern retreat that has been tastefully converted from the former stable block and coach house. Contemporary throughout, The Coach House lies detached within an area of outstanding natural beauty set back from the road with views of the Malvern Hills (pictured) from the secluded south-facing garden and is an ideal location for a relaxing break. The price is £341.50, down from £443, for seven nights self-catered accommodation arriving March 4, 2016. Sleeps four in two bedrooms and two pets are also welcome. To book go to cottages.com/03454986900



■ Game on... Huge metal sculptures on the Enchanted Road in North Dakota, left and right



explanatory museum, is Teddy's original log cabin on the old Maltese Cross Ranch site.

There's the old-style, rope-strung bed, buffalo rugs, stove, Teddy's desk for his book writing, and the old kitchen. The tough life indeed.

Going west, then north, you find the remains of Teddy's Elkhorn Ranch. But be warned: it's an unsigned, dirt-track road and a long way out into the harsh 'American desert' country. The Sioux called it "Hell with the fires put out."

Tough as the journey is, it's quite something to be at the very spot that inspired the USA's National Parks.

Then it's on to the northern

section of Teddy Roosevelt National Park, which is a joy. A 14-mile journey in the park takes you past spectacular views of the Little Missouri River, with the occasional herd of buffalo and wild horses adding to the attraction.

The downside is that you're soon in oil country, with fracking and pumping going on, until you drive east to the Mighty Missouri proper, where you can savour the Native American way of life. The Knife River Indian Village has remains of the Mandan-Hidatsa tribes' permanent settlement, with amazing soil-covered structures that housed this pastoral people.

They hunted the life-supporting buffalo, which provided meat and so many different products for everyday life, though they were primarily farmers and traders.

They welcomed American explorers Lewis and Clarke, who were commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson

NEED TO KNOW

■ LINDSAY SUTTON flew with American Airlines from Manchester to Chicago for £560 (aa.com); internal flights from Chicago to Rapid City, South Dakota cost £140 one-way (united.com), and from Fargo to Chicago for around £220 return (aa.com).

■ Rooms at Roughriders Hotel, Medora (left) are from £99 (medora.com); Roosevelt Inn and Suites at Watford City from £89 (rooseveltsuites.com); Holiday Inn Express at Jamestown from £73 (ihg.com) and Hilton Garden Inn at Fargo-Moorhead from £87 (hiltongardeninn.hilton.com).

■ Car hire with Alamo from Rapid City to Fargo is from £234.64 for five days (alamo.co.uk). For further information see NDtourism.com



to find a route to the Pacific, while befriending the native tribes they met en route.

You can visit Fort Mandan and the Lewis and Clarke Interpretive Centre at Washburn to learn all about their historic two-year journey that began in 1804.

An hour away is the state capital of Bismarck, which has an excellent North Dakota Heritage Centre that deals with geological history, prehistoric natural history, and the state's pioneer story. There's also Fort Abraham Lincoln where General Custer was based

before his ill-fated mission to Little Bighorn.

Jamestown is next, its unique selling point being a rare albino buffalo called White Cloud, which roams with a herd next to the National Buffalo Museum.

Then it's on to Fargo-Moorhead on the Minnesota border – a fine shopping city with a Norwegian-style museum called Hjemkomst, which celebrates the building of a Viking longboat and its real-life journey to the 'homeland,' where the local immigrant community hailed

Manchester Evening News

Reader Offers

Quality holidays & breaks at affordable prices



Spanish Riding School of Vienna

At the Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham
2 days from £139.00, 19 November 2016

The famous White Lippizzaner stallions and riders of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna are heading back to Britain in 2016 and you could be there to experience this extraordinary and unforgettable spectacle.

Highlights & inclusions

- A ticket for The Spanish Riding School of Vienna at the Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham (upgrades available)
- Visit to Stratford-upon-Avon
- One night's bed and English breakfast accommodation at a good hotel in the Midlands area
- Coach travel from the local area
- Escorted by a friendly tour manager

Classical Spectacular

A Royal Albert Hall Concert Break!
2 days from £139.00, 20 November 2016

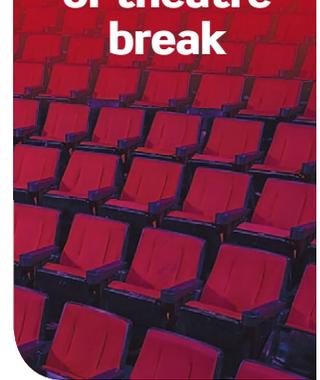
Take your seat in the incomparable setting of London's famous Royal Albert Hall and revel in the heart-stirring atmosphere as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra bring Raymond Gubbay's Classical Spectacular to life. Always hugely popular, this is a classical concert of a lifetime!

Highlights & inclusions

- A Choir seat in the Royal Albert Hall for 'Classical Spectacular' (ticket upgrades available)
- A sightseeing tour of London or time to shop and sightsee
- One night's three-star standard bed and buffet breakfast hotel accommodation in Central London
- Coach travel from the local area
- Escorted by a friendly tour manager



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