The Butlins Future Report

A study of how the changing shape of British families will impact on holidaying in 25 years time
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The Butlins Future Report looks forward 25 years to examine the exciting potential of British holidays and family fun in 2037.

Having just celebrated our 75th birthday, our research comes as we prepare to launch the most ambitious hotel in Butlins history – Wave Hotel & Apartments at Bognor Regis. To celebrate this we wanted to take our insight to a new level and understand what family life could be like when we reach our 100th birthday.

This report isn’t about hovering hotel rooms and robot-run resorts. When it comes to holidaying in Britain, our research highlights that intergenerational re-connection breaks, offering the chance to create sparkling memories, will become increasingly fundamental to family life by 2037.

Our own Butlins insight team worked with Trajectory, UK trend forecasters, to assess the changing shape and needs of families in 25 years time and identify emerging lifestyle trends which will impact on how we holiday in the future. This is underpinned by quantitative research amongst young people, parents and grandparents on their hopes and aspirations for family time in the future. To add to this, we’ve also asked young future-gazers to tell us what they want from their hotel of the future.

From our modest start in 1936 we have continually evolved to fulfil and exceed expectations of British families, whilst remaining true to our fundamental intent of bringing families together to share quality time and great holiday memories. And our research shows that exciting times lie ahead.

Increased life expectancy, bigger, more geographically dispersed, families and shifting roles will redefine the way millions of Britons holiday in 2037. And whilst technology will play a part in keeping in touch, re-connection breaks across generations will become commonplace in Britain’s holidaying culture.

Back in 1936, our founder, Sir Billy Butlin, was way ahead of the times when he developed his first resort in Skegness. 75 years on, Butlins continues to evolve to surprise families. This July sees the launch of Wave, specially designed for tweens and their families, but what’s next? The Butlins Future Report shares unique insight into the future of family holidaying.

Mark Hunter
Director of Happiness, Butlins
Rise of the Relation Vacation
Increased life expectancy, shifting grandparent roles and more complex family structures will drastically redefine the way millions of Britons holiday in the future.

By 2037, Relation Vacations combining up to 14 family members and four generations spanning an entire century will be commonplace when it comes to planning breaks.

In 25 years time when Britain will be populated with an extra 1.2 million children, six million more grandparents and a further 1.5 million great-grandparents, the typical family of the future will be:

- Two great-grandparents
- Four grandparents
- Two step-grandparents
- Two parents (cohabiting partners, father previously married)
- One step-mother (previously married to the father)
- Two children and one step-brother (from father’s previous marriage)

Extended family members are more geographically spread than they used to be yet this has not led to bonds between them weakening. In fact, better and cheaper communications technology and transport, and the expectation on grandparents to help with childcare (see below) will mean that, in reality, bonds between the extended family are likely to be stronger than ever in 2037.

Globalisation and the post-industrial movement towards depopulation of cities have allowed families to disperse geographically, both nationally and internationally, in the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Some regions within the UK experienced inflows and outflows of hundreds of thousands of people in 2011 (ONS). Clearly people move about the UK a great deal, and over the next 25 years they will continue to do so. Over the next 25 years there will also be an increase in the amount of Britons living abroad, as globalisation continues apace and opportunities to retire and work abroad multiply. Since 1975, more Britons left the country than returned, and if such rates of emigration continue for the next 25 years, then between now and 2037, 1.4 million more Britons will have left the UK than have returned. According to IPPR, in their 2006 report Brits Abroad: Mapping the scale and nature of British emigration, roughly 5.5m Britons lived permanently abroad, almost 1 in 10m of the UK population.

An increasing number of Brits are living abroad (Source: ONS, International Passenger Survey)
Our survey reveals that such dispersal looks set to continue. Thinking about parenthood in 25 years’
time, more than a third of children (36%) would consider setting up home somewhere new, and 1 in 5
(19%) say they may emigrate. The parents of the future view holidays as a remedy to these distances,
with 42% viewing family breaks as the best way to re-connect.

The dispersal of the family does not, however, mean that the family is any less close than it used to
be. Rather, developments in communications technology such as email and Skype, and transport
mean that family members can stay in touch better than ever before despite long distances between
them. According to Understanding Society in 2009/10, more than half (56%) of adults see their father
and two thirds (63%) see their mother at least once a month, whilst according to BHPS in 2006/07, 3
out of 5 adults (62%) speak to their father and 4 out of 5 (78%) speak to their mother on the phone
at least once a week. Indeed given family bonds are still strong and the contact between members
frequent (and will become more so as these technologies advance and become more prevalent),
geographical distance between family members will make desire for reconnection holidays, and the
quality together-time they can provide, all the stronger.

Means of communication and contact have become more prevalent (Source: National Transport
Survey; Ofcom; ONS)

In fact, according to our survey, over three quarters (79%) of Britain’s great grandpa-
use family breaks as a chance to bond with younger generations and feel young αζ
of future grandparents cite holidaying with family as their top choice of way to spend
together. The Relation Vacation will be a big part of the holidays of the future.
Expanding for Generation Xtra
Over the past 50 years, the proportion of ‘traditional’ households has decreased, and by 2037 we will see a diverse array of families and households dotted all over the country – and continent.

And with an extra 1.2 million children aged 5-14, six million more grandparents and 1.5 million more great-grandparents by 2037, holiday firms will need to consider evolving their offer to accommodate Generation Xtra – this new category of bigger, more dispersed family unit.

A greater number of children (Source: UN WPP 2010)

So what might resorts offer these families in 25 years time? In the future, families could be holidaying in spacious penthouse-style apartments with up to eight bedrooms and spacious living areas to fit entire families who want to be close together. Larger kitchens would be needed for self-catering options as all the generations will want to sit down to eat together.
Virtual holiday personal assistants will be projected onto apartment walls to get families up and organised. A family entertainment schedule would be individually assembled based on the number of family members and range of generations holidaying together, with automatic countdowns and announcements available for those who want reminders. And when it comes to dining out, banquet-style dining tables will be a common feature in resort restaurants to seat the entire family.

With one eye on the future, Butlins is already trialling holiday personal assistants and a concierge service to help families build itineraries. Interconnecting rooms can be found at the new Wave Hotel & Apartments and the team are already finding that the larger family tables in The Deck restaurant are incredibly popular with intergenerational holiday makers.
Butlins architects, PWP, behind the Wave Hotel & Apartments, say the future for holiday resorts lies in ‘intelligent buildings’ that can measure heat, moisture and pollutants to improve the comfort of each individual room. This will become ever more important as larger families occupy spaces.

We could also see the development of a super-material which has as big an impact on our society as the invention of plastic. Created as a composite from natural, sustainable resources and recycled materials, it could capture carbon and other harmful pollutants. It would also protect families from harmful UV rays whilst using the sun’s energy for heat and power. This super-material could even be anti-allergenic to help families live healthily whilst on holiday.

Modular construction is also tipped to be the future for hotel development. Enhancing the build quality, significantly reducing environmental impact and improved through-life performance make this form of construction ideal. And it’s these lightweight steel frames with 532 luxury fitted-out modular units, joined together on site, that have been used to create Wave Hotel and Apartments.

Technology will mean that you need never miss home when you are away or you could swap a UK landscape for anywhere in the world. State of the art projection techniques will allow images to be cast onto surfaces to create any known scene in the world all under a cloudless projected sky.
The year is 2037. Fossil fuel costs have tripled in the last 25 years.

Butlins parent company Bourne Leisure will have invested in significant agricultural land holdings to implement a programme of managed forestry which will be harvested for fuel for biomass boilers that provide heating and hot water on the resort.

Climate change means that British summers could be more erratic, necessitating entertainment, retail and public areas to be in a controlled environment. Technological discoveries in material science have led to the production of a very light, strong, wonder material that can enclose large areas and this will form the covering for a huge central enclosure, building on the success of the Skyline Pavilions that were at the heart of each resort in 2012. Within this biosphere temperature and humidity are controlled to provide the perfect environment for a fun filled holiday resort.

State of the art projection techniques allow images to be cast onto the inside of the biosphere roof surface that create any known scene in the world all under a cloudless projected sky. You could be in Bognor Regis but get a taste of Barbados!
New Breed of Super-Gs
21st Century Butlins has come a long way since hosting glamorous granny competitions decades ago, and so has the modern role grandparents play in today's society.

By 2037, the role of Britain’s grandparents would have shifted even further with the arrival of the “Super-G” – a genuine superhero within the extended family. This new breed of grandparent will be juggling work and household jobs with childcare for grandchildren, emotional support for their own children and care for their own parents and in-laws.

Mainstream forecasts suggest that longevity will increase, (due to new breakthroughs in medicine and healthier lifestyles). This means that in 2037, the family will be even more vertical. There will be more generations in the family and fewer family members within each generation than there have been in the past. Great grandparents will become more common, and the parents of the future will have fewer siblings than their parents do today, whilst the children of the future will have similarly low numbers of siblings.

Higher life expectancy and low fertility are resulting in Vertical Families (Source: UN WPP 2010)

![Graph showing life expectancy and total fertility rate over time]

This growing vertical family structure increases the likelihood of grandparents being tasked with caring for both older and younger generations. More mothers will continue in employment post-children, so grandparents will be helping out with the care for grandchildren - drawing the family unit even closer.

In fact, 9.8 million grandparents in Britain are expected to be run off their feet in 25 years time – that’s 44%. Just one in five (21%) having time to take up a new hobby and ‘granny rooms’ will become a common household space in the long-distant families of the future, making it easier for Super-Gs to save the day.

Nearly all (94%) current parents who expect to become grandparents by 2037, say they would be prepared to look after their grandchildren once a week or more. In fact, one in five (19%) future grandparents would be prepared to down tools and take care of the grandchildren every day. This trend is already underway and looks set to continue.
Grandparents are increasingly involved in the care of their grandchildren  

But with life expectancy increasing, great grandparents could also have a much bigger role to play in childcare in 25 years time. If fertility rates remain stable Britain will see 50% more great grandparents by 2037. One in six (16%) expect to help out with their great grandchildren and almost half (46%) say they would be happy to swap retirement for nappy changing once a week or more.

With grandparents and great grandparents playing an even greater role in childcare, they will become an integral part of holiday planning. The family holiday will develop to include them, both as a thank you, as support, and as an opportunity for strengthening family bonds.
We have already seen a shift away from traditional gender roles in the home and this is set to continue. As women become even more active in the workplace and gain greater financial independence, men will have a much bigger role to play in childcare and household chores. Giving rise to the birth of the **3D Dad** – for whom domestication, dynamism and devotion are core values.

Over the past two decades, looking after the family home has become less prevalent as a reason for women to be economically inactive. This is partly driven by shifts in attitudes towards gender roles, but another factor has been the proliferation of time-saving technology around the home which has drastically reduced time spent on housework.

**Women's role in housework has dropped as men's has increased**  
*(Source: Jonathan Gershuny, BBC, ESRC, ONS)*
Gender roles are also changing in the home, with more equality in household chores, but there’s still a long way to go. One in three (35%) dads currently shun housework, and one in six (16%) do little to no childcare. But it’s a far more optimistic outlook for 25 years time with 60% expecting to split chores evenly, and 40% pulling their weight with childcare.

More than one in nine (11%) dads could also be staying at home to look after the children, compared to just 4% today.

These changes in the family dynamic are set to create and sustain stronger bonds between fathers and their children as a result of more time spent together. This will ultimately lead to an increased demand for holiday activities for the whole family and encouraging every member to get involved.
Leisure time and holidays are very important to Britons and throughout the 20th century the statutory entitlement to paid holiday has increased dramatically. In 1938, The Holiday with Pay Act was passed, something Billy Butlin campaigned hard to introduce, allowing 40% of employees in the UK some form of paid holiday entitlement. This increased to 95% in 1970. Indeed even during the recent downturn, spending on recreation and culture continued to rise whilst total household expenditure fell. Given this, it seems likely that consumer spending on recreation and culture will continue to increase in the future, even without strong economic growth. If it continues to grow at the same rate as in the previous 7 years, it will have increased from a total of £103.3billion in 2011 to £183billion in 2037 – an 83% increase.

This love of leisure and recreation is reflected in British love for holidaying. Britons are the third biggest holiday goers in Europe, in terms of nights spent away from home. In 2010 each household in the UK took an average of four holidays.
In the future, then, given that leisure time will remain important; holidaying will be as popular as ever. The nature of holidays will change though, in that they are likely to become more domestic. This will be driven by the desire for more Relation Vacations, which are easier to organise domestically between extended family members, and by negative attitudes towards flying. Already the vast majority of people (70%) make one or less air trips a year (British Social Attitudes), and many of the parents and grandparents of the future (27% of current parents and 26% of children) say they would cut down on flying in the future as they are worried by the environmental impact of air travel.

Based on how families holiday now - and the trends in family shape, leisure and holidays over the next quarter of a century - we might expect a family in 2037 to holiday as follows:

- 1 x family summer holiday abroad (1 week)
- 1 x domestic extended family reconnection break (4 days)
- 1 x supplementary family holiday (3 days)
- 1 x weekend-away for for children with grandparents (2 days)

**Hotel Room of 2037**

With the aim of finding out what the children of today would love to see in the hotel room of tomorrow, Butlins asked school children to describe and draw their ideal hotel room.

From the huge range of responses several key themes emerged, with most children identifying ways to maximise family time activities and minimise chores and travel time. Also prevalent was children’s desire for high-tech gizmos in hotel rooms, with sci-fi gadgetry included in the majority of descriptions.

Butlins has collated and identified the top 10 ideas and created the ultimate wish-list below:

1. Holographic butlers in each room, designed to help the family plan every aspect of the break
2. Fish tank floors filled with coral, starfish and other tropical creatures
3. Robot cleaning service, so there is no need to worry about clearing up on holiday
4. Touch screen walls to control all electrical appliances instead of having light switches and remote controls
5. Zero-gravity areas, so the whole family can learn to fly
6. Sweet dispenser that can source any imaginable treat
7. Teleporters to transport guests around the resort
8. Trap doors in each room that lead directly into the pool
9. Invisibility screens so that mum and dad won’t know when the children haven’t gone to bed
10. All the best games consoles, in a dedicated video game area

Whilst it may be a few years until Teleporters can be found at resorts, Butlins is ahead of the trend with The Games Port at Wave Hotel & Apartments, an area where families can enter into some healthy competition and rivalry. Likewise, the Holiday PAs at the Bognor Regis resort are not yet holograms but Butlins Butlers have already been introduced in one hotel on resort to help families create the perfect itineraries and plan activities.
Throughout Butlins 75 year history, families and how they spend their leisure time have changed a great deal, and the British holiday company has constantly adapted and evolved in order to meet their shifting needs.

The next 25 years will be no exception for Butlins, and our forecast paints an exciting picture of how we could be holidaying in the future.

Families are becoming bigger, more intricate and more vertical, as well as dispersing further geographically. But it is these very factors that will strengthen emotional bonds between extended family members in the future, causing acceleration in the need and desire for more flexible, domestic family breaks.

The nature of the family holiday is set to change and extra large apartments, virtual holiday assistants and dedicated intergenerational dining tables could all be a part of the Butlins experience by the time it reaches its centenary year. What is certain is that the travel industry will need to be primed and ready to meet the needs of the families of the future.
The first Butlins opens in Skegness.

1939

1940

1945

WWII Butlins sites are requisitioned by the forces as recruitment and training bases.

1950

1960

1962

Butlins Minehead opens

1963

The Queen and Prince Philip visit Butlins Pwllheli where Prince Philip was billeted during WWII.

1964

Billy Butlin becomes Sir Billy Butlin

1965

1969

1972

Rank Organisation purchases Butlins

1975

1980

1986

1998

1999

The Skyline Pavillion is constructed at the heart of each resort by the same engineers that designed the Millennium dome.

2000

2004

2005

2007

Butlins Bognor Regis opens

BlueSkies, Butlins first vacation club, opens at Minehead

Butlins from Rank Organisation

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2015

2037

New hotel, designed for extended inter-generational families launches

Wave Hotel & Apartments, tailored to families with tweens, launches at Bognor Regis

Ocean Hotel & Spa launches with a stunning £2m Spa at Bognor Regis

Bullins investment has now topped £250m in the three seaside resorts since 2005

Shoreline, the first Butlins hotel, launches at Bognor Regis

2038
Contact

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Notes to editors

Qualitative and quantitative research was undertaken for Butlins by Trajectory during April 2012 and www.onepoll.com among a sample of 2,200 grandparents, parents and children from 15 – 21 May 2012.

About Butlins

Butlins has three beachside resorts, Bognor Regis (West Sussex), Minehead (Somerset) and Skegness (Lincolnshire) and welcomes around 1.5m guests per year.

Butlins won the Tourism and Leisure Training Team Award as well as the Overall Winner Award in the Training Team categories at the Customer Service Training Awards 2011.

It was named as the Best UK/Domestic Tour Operator 2010 in the British Travel Awards as well as 2010 UK Customer Experience Award in Travel, Leisure and Tourism. It is part of Bourne Leisure Ltd which also owns Warner Leisure Hotels and Haven Holidays.