



style. The sprawling family bedroom has a king-size and two large single four-posters plus en suite bathroom with a stand-alone bath and window shutters. At the hub of the castle is the Great Hall, with its beamed ceiling, stone fireplace and dining table seating 12, overlooked by a minstrel's gallery. There are six acres of grounds to explore, with lovely woodland walks to the River Eden and a walled herb garden. St Andrews, with its world-famous golf courses and long sandy beaches, is within easy reach. **Details** Self-catering for 13 is from £600 per night (airbnb.co.uk)

**15 Silverholme Lake Windermere, Cumbria**

It's hard to beat the location of this eight-bedroom Georgian manor house on the shores of Lake Windermere. Ascend the grand staircase to country house-style bedrooms with antiques and floral fabrics. Downstairs is a thoroughly modern kitchen/diner with floor-to-ceiling windows and sleek units plus a more formal dining room with deep red walls, candelabras, a marble fireplace and oil paintings. Take a Segway tour of the 5,000-acre Graythwaite Hall estate or fish for trout in the well-stocked private lake. Children will love the high-wire adventure course Go Ape at nearby Grizedale Forest. **Details** Three nights' self-catering for 16 is from £3,000 (oneoffplaces.co.uk)

**16 Blencowe Hall Penrith, Cumbria**

Go brown trout fishing or clay pigeon shooting in the grounds of this grade I listed fortified twin-towered manor dating back to the 1400s. Inside the oak-panelled interior are 12 rooms, ten en suite, some with cast-iron roll-top baths and four-posters. Play billiards or cook on the Aga in the well-equipped kitchen with its American-style fridge freezers. On the edge of the Lake District, Blencowe Hall is close to Greystoke village, with its ancient castle. **Details** Three nights' self catering for 24 is from £2,893, a week from £8,241 (01386 701177, ruralretreats.co.uk)



manor on a 50-acre estate near Hay-on-Wye can arrange everything from butlers and chefs to chauffeurs and jazz singers. The nine boutique hotel-style rooms feature white linen, featherdown duvets and Vi-Spring beds. There's also a baby grand piano, pre-laid fires and fresh flowers from the garden in the elegant reception rooms. All the usual country pursuits such as hunting and fishing can be arranged, as well as canoeing and guided walks.

**Details** Two nights for 18 is from £3,400 and a week is £5,250 (01874 754216, countrypad.co.uk)

**14 Dairsie Castle Cupar, Fife**

Even the children get four-poster beds at this six-bedroom, self-catering castle, ruined in the 19th century and rebuilt in the early 1990s in a medieval



**17 Middleton Hall Belford, Northumberland**

This grade II listed manor house near the spectacular Northumbrian coast has a jaw-dropping Grand Hall complete with an ornate ceiling, huge log fire and plenty of comfy sofas. A carved wooden staircase leads to ten contemporary rooms with mullioned windows. If you don't fancy cooking in the well-equipped kitchen a chef can be arranged to rustle up a three-course dinner worthy of Mrs Patmore, served in the dining room with its panelled walls, marble fireplace and chandeliers. Fish in the lake or play a game of snooker in the games room. Bamburgh, with its spectacular castle, is only five miles away. **Details** Three nights' self catering for 24 is from £2,885, a week from £3,785 (01244 352300, sykescottages.co.uk)

**18 The Parsonage Ombersley, Worcestershire**

You can't miss the unusual topiary animals as you arrive along the sweeping drive of this wisteria-clad grade II listed manor house, with its 12-acre gardens complete with arboretum, manicured lawns and orchards. Inside it's super stylish with cowhide rugs, faux fur throws, heavy draped curtains and a sleek kitchen. The pièce de résistance is the light-filled orangery with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the garden. Upstairs are six bedrooms, three en suite, one with a contemporary bath under the eaves. Visit Harvington Hall, an Elizabethan moated manor house, or explore Ombersley with its Tudor and Georgian architecture.

**Details** Three nights' self-catering for 12 is from £2,325, a week from £2,960 (01637 881183, uniquehomestays.com)

**19 Wortham Manor Lifton, Devon**

Experience the life of a Tudor gentleman at this 15th-century manor house. The magnificent dining hall is ideal for a special occasion with its gothic oak-beamed ceiling and huge stone fireplace (some guests host medieval banquets with pigs roasting on a spit, jugglers and minstrels). There are eight bedrooms, some with wood panelling and lofty ceilings, and a well-equipped kitchen. A cosy wood-panelled sitting room has an open fire and lots of books (but no TV).

**Details** Four nights' self-catering for 15 is from £886 (01628 825925, landmarktrust.org.uk)

**20 Felmingham Hall near Ayisham, Norfolk**

If you really want to feel like the Lord or Lady of the Manor at this immaculate Elizabethan house you can hire your own butler, cook and even childcare. Inside, the seven-bedroom property oozes character, with oak panelling, ornate ceilings, tapestries and antique oak furniture. Most of the suites have four-posters and all have sleek modern en suites with roll-top baths or showers. **Details** Two nights' self catering for 14 is from £2,950, a week from £6,100 (01242 220006, thewowhousecompany.co.uk)

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