

Inspiring families with fresh thinking on parenting

Children's Creative Writing Competition - 2012 Winners!



Articles ▼

Yano Life Yano Bites The Big Debate Education Food Stuff Reviews Well Being The Team

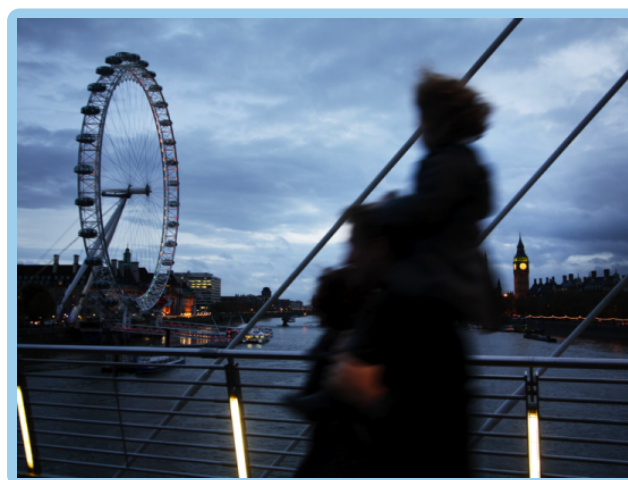
 Contact

Raising Kids: city vs country

Posted on **18th October, 2012** | filed under **Featured, The Big Debate**

Ursula Hirsch Korn on why she prefers to bring up her children in the chaos of the city rather than the quiet of the countryside

'When a man is bored of London he is bored of life.' Or, to update **Samuel Johnson**, he has been sold the idea of some **Cath Kidston**-inspired floral idyll by his wife and decamped to the countryside to give his newly minted brood the perfect rural childhood.



I've lost count of how many of members of my **NCT** and **antenatal classes** have left the capital since we all gave birth to our firstborns almost nine years ago, but I think I am almost the last woman standing. The reasons for turning their backs on urban living were numerous and varied.

Some wanted to be near to their families to benefit from the free childcare and babysitting, some yearned for a bigger house and could only afford a mortgage on such a mansion many miles outside the M25, but a fair few simply held an unshakable belief that growing up in the countryside is somehow better for children.

The pretty village I lived in as a child was surrounded by fields. My friends and I could play out on the village green, which also hosted a picturesque fête every year, complete with a maypole and Morris dancers. There was a sturdy stone-built church that rung out the hours and a pretty pub with a thatched roof.

My home was spacious and packed with period features such as roaring open fires and a pretty stable door, though we stopped short of having roses trained around it. I walked to the tiny village school where the idea of cut-throat competition to get a toehold in the catchment area was as alien a concept as life on Mars.

But thanks to this country childhood, I was determined that I would NEVER, EVER move my children out of the city. The problem is that, along with all the freedom rural living offers, came a mind-numbing sense of

isolation, boredom and suffocating insularity.

Village life is lived cheek by jowl and you cannot so much as consider painting your kitchen a different colour without the whole place knowing about it and giving you their (often unwanted) opinion on it. Dare to be different in such a tiny community and you will be ostracised.

There is no way my eldest son could have enjoyed the years of ballet lessons he took from age five to eight stuck out in the country. Even if lessons were offered, he never would have lived down the shame of doing something so out of the ordinary. In London, that he is not always a typical boy is seen as something to be celebrated. In the countryside he would simply be viewed as odd.

I will allow that things might have changed from my day when my tiny village school held a special assembly where the single black child explained that we didn't have to point out her differences as she 'couldn't help them'. The poor child only lasted a term after being so ruthlessly singled out by the teachers.

Even so, I still believe that an urban upbringing is best for my boys. While many parents who lived happily in the capital until they had children suddenly seem to see their home as a grime- and crime-ridden place as soon as they view it from behind a Antenatal classes **Bugaboo**, I couldn't wait to share its magical, dazzling and busy beauty with my children.

My childhood weekends of bumping along country lanes on my BMX and building dens in ditches pale in comparison to a stroll along the **South Bank**, sampling foods from around the world at a pop-up festival.

We can visit world-class museums and art galleries for nothing whenever we like. I still remember the shared thrill of taking my toddler son on the riverboat that links the **Tates Modern** and Britain. I loved the paintings, he loved the Thames, but we both had a brilliant day out.

We only have to step outside our door to experience the cornucopia of cultures that make this cosmopolitan city their home. Many people decry the number of 'foreign' children who are now being educated in our school, but for my children it means they have friends from around the globe from whom they learn far more than any geography lesson.

Perhaps even more importantly, being brought up in a big, multicultural city teaches them that human value that is so often in short supply – tolerance. They don't balk at someone who is different from them because there isn't really any such thing as the norm in a city of eight million people.

I won't pretend that bringing up children in the city is perfect – taking a buggy on the Underground is a challenge and the vicious competition for places in good schools is not much fun – but I am never tempted to swap the exhilarating chaos of city living for the quiet of country life, and I suspect the older they grow, the more my children will thank me for swimming against the tide of parents washed out to the wilds of the countryside.

Share this article:

Like 0

Raising Kids: city vs country was posted on 18th October, 2012 by Ursula Hirschhorn under [Featured](#), [The Big Debate](#)

You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.



About the author: *Ursula Hirschhorn*

While I have rather more years of experience of writing for magazines and newspapers than I might like to admit, I suspect that my most recent challenge of attempting to bring up four little boys qualifies me far more than any journalistic achievements to pontificate on child rearing. That said my years of contributing to titles as diverse as The Daily Mail, Parentdish, The Independent, NHS Choices, Conde

Nast Bride, Woman, Ready for Ten and Made for Mums, has at least gifted me the ability to string a sentence or two together. I have also graced the GMTV sofa and held forth during many a radio debate on LBC and BBC Five Live, proving I can talk as well as write.

Like

[Add New Comment](#)[Login](#)

Showing 0 comments

Sort by popular now ▾

[✉ Subscribe by email](#) [RSS](#)Trackback URL

Latest articles

In praise of boys

28th January, 2013 | [Featured](#)

Disney's latest game: a blockbuster at a big-budget price

24th January, 2013 | [Featured](#)

Why your kids will thank you for music lessons

21st January, 2013 | Education

The facts about food labels

17th January, 2013 | Featured

**LATEST
TWEET**

RT @KatyHillTV: Got boys? You'll LOVE this! x RT @YanoLife: Why does having boys get such bad press?

Lucinda Neall <http://t.co/hDoE8xEj> ...



(about 19 minutes ago)

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

WE'RE ON GOOGLE+

AND WE'RE ON PINTEREST

VISIT OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

- Education
- Featured
- Food Stuff
- The Big Debate
- Video
- Well Being
- Yano Bites
- Yano Life
- Yano Wall
- Disclaimer
- Home
- The Team
- Yano Team
- Yanoists
- Yano Wall
- Contact

Copyright Yano 2011-2013 ©