

Country life

Moving to the countryside

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Moving house is one of the top stressors. It is included in the highest life stressors along with financial loss, a death in the family and retirement. So when I decided to move home earlier this year, I took the necessary precautions. However, no matter how much you plan, there are always events you can't even imagine.

Moving from a compact, modern, minimalist flat in a busy area to a large, country house in a quiet village was quite a culture shock. It was, however, exciting and something I was really looking forward to. However, to ensure a stress-free move, preparation is all important.

I discovered a website that supplies packs for moving. These packs include flat packed boxes (small, medium, large or really large) together with bubble wrap (enough to wrap me in), marker pens, tape and labels. This was much more 'move friendly' than bothering friends and family, and the corner shop for cardboard boxes and saving newspapers to wrap glasses and crockery.

When packing, it is important to label boxes, or make up an inventory of what is in which box. There is nothing more frustrating than looking for that important item in hundreds of boxes once you have moved.

Stocking up on basic food and drink items in the new home, pre-move, is also helpful, as you will not have the time to go out and shop during the moving day. It also helps, although it is not something you can influence, if the day is bright and sunny. There is nothing worse than moving house in the rain.

My stress-free move was enhanced by the beautiful village I moved to. The house is stone built with original leaded pane windows. The view from the bedroom is over the undulating hills of the Peak District in north Derbyshire. The house itself was rather old-fashioned with a wooden rack in



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the kitchen for hanging washing. I seem to remember my grandmother having one of these many years ago.

In the living room a fireplace stood, ready to welcome logs and coal to make a warm and inviting room in which to relax each evening. We bought marshmallows to toast in the flames.

The gardens to the front and back of the house were full of wild flowers, apple trees, plum trees, and well-established shrubs and bushes. There was a small shed full of logs and coal ready for use in the fireplace. The street outside had no street lights; it was a private road.

So in the evening when darkness came, it really was pitch black outside. However, the view over the village was so compelling, it didn't really matter that you couldn't see a hand in front of you outside the house. When looking out of the window the village was represented by small lights, like

stars that had become earthbound. However, due to the undulations of the land they were dotted around, like lights on a Christmas tree.

The most wondrous aspect of a move to the country is the silence. When moving from a busy area, full of traffic, the

"The view from the bedroom is over the undulating hills of the Peak District in north Derbyshire"

hustle and bustle of shoppers, people stopping to talk, loading cars, hooting horns, accelerating, breaking and all the usual noise one would expect in a busy thoroughfare, the silence is deafening.

That first night in my bed, there was no need to close the

curtains; there was no one to look in the window. However, I could look out and see the lights. I could hear nothing, not one sound. I slept soundly, the best night's sleep I had experienced in years. When I woke up it was to the same view and the same silence.

Over the next few days, I discovered the problems one needs to consider when moving to the countryside. The first shock was when the man who came to install the satellite dish scrambled down the ladder in a hurry after he found a wasps' nest in the roof.

I climbed up the ladder, much to his horror, to have a look - I was curious. I subsequently found a whole business in removing wasps' nests and hired someone to come and do it.

Then, during a slight damp and drizzling day, I was shocked to find three frogs in my drive, leaping around and croaking. I nearly jumped as high as the

frogs, but I learned to live with them. I have also learned to live with spiders, of all shapes and sizes. Insects are a part of country life.

Summer has been wonderful; autumn is here now and the trees are beautiful colours of red, gold and auburn. The air is colder and the house is colder than my little, compact flat. However, it makes the roaring fire full of logs more welcoming and the hot water bottles in the beds each night remind me of my childhood.

I wonder what winter will bring. I can't wait to see the views when the hills and valleys are a blanket of snow and the sheep I meet wandering around in the roads each morning are covered in snow.

One thing I do know, I couldn't wish for a more stress-free environment to come home to after a busy day at work. The whole aura of the village breeds calmness, relaxation and tranquility.





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