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'I want a Viking baby': Single British women flocking to world's biggest sperm bank in Denmark

18:07, 24 January 2015 By **Gemma Aldridge**

Demand for the 'luxury Scandinavian product' has exploded thanks to an unexpected clientele – single, British women

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An endless stream of strapping, blonde men strut into the fifth floor of an imposing Danish office block.

The blue-eyed visitors could easily be here for a model-casting.

But what goes on inside is FAR less glamorous, as **the Sunday People** discovered when it visited.

Cryos International in Aarhus is the world's biggest sperm bank and hundreds of cash-strapped Danish men attend their offices twice a week.

Their semen deposits sell for up to £1,000 a unit – depending on sperm count and

And in the past two years, demand for their luxury Scandinavian product has exploded thanks to an unexpected clientele – single, British women.

For a quarter of a century Cryos has been shipping its precious samples to desperate women in over 80 countries.

But shocking new statistics reveal that for the first time, more than half its British clients are **women going it alone** in the quest for parenthood.



Viking genes: Scandinavian babies are all the rage with British singletons Like many lesbians and infertile straight couples have done for years, the Bridget Joneses of the world are now simply logging onto the company's website and picking their donors.

Their chosen sample is then delivered to their door in the UK and used for **a solo shot at artificial insemination**.

So why do hundreds of British women each year chose to become single mothers? And why do they flock here to start their unconventional modern families?

The answer, according to Holly Ryan, 37, from London, is simple – and slightly unnerving: “The Danes are superior race and I want my child to be a part of that race.

“You only have to look at them to understand. They're extremely good looking and they carry themselves with an air of confidence you just don't get in Britain.

“I knew as soon as I decided to have a baby on my own that I wanted the donor to be Danish.”

Holly is one of seven women in her circle of friends who have used Danish sperm from Cryos to have what are known as Viking Babies.

They're part of a generation of over 3,000 fatherless British-Danish children thanks to the trend which is sweeping the nation.

Holly decided to become a single mum when she hit 35 and the sound of her ticking biological clock became deafening.

She **tells the Sunday People** : “I'd always wanted to be a mum.

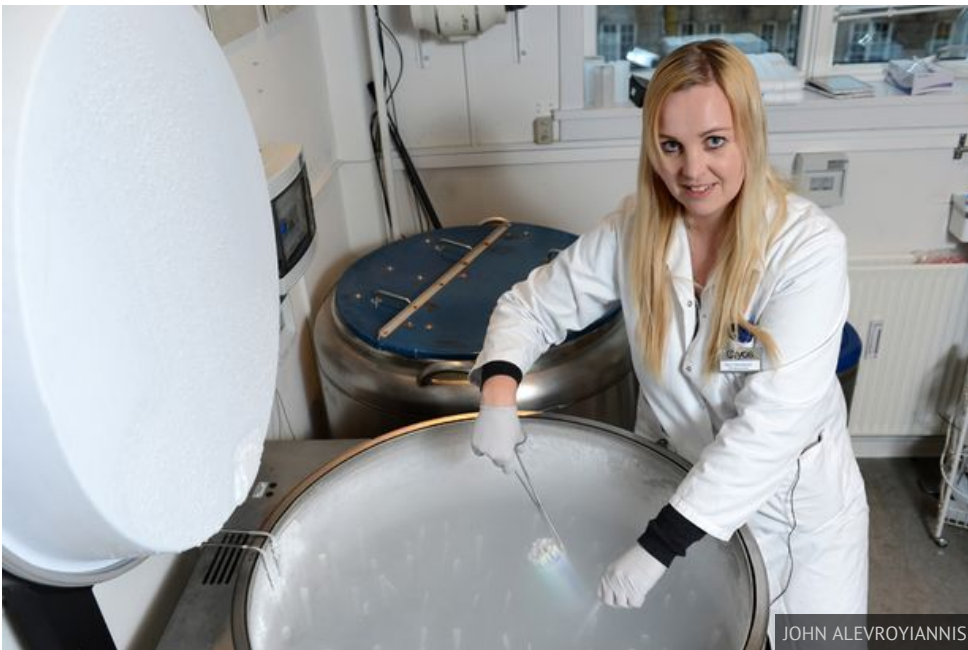
“I was brought up by my dad in a single parent family so I always hoped a child of mine would have two parents around.

“But when I found myself single in my mid thirties my desire to be a mother



Satisfied client: Holly says the Danes are 'a superior race' "Being a woman and not being a mother felt like having a Porsche in the garage but never taking it for a drive.

"I knew that Danish men were superior in every way so it seemed obvious to have one as a donor."



Busy: Lab technician Eben Rasmussen, at Cryos Sperm Bank

24-year old donor Simon Rasmussen understands. He has been attending Cryos two or three times every week since last July to boost his own bank balance.

But there is a much stronger reason for his decision to donate.

He's obsessed with the idea of sharing his perfect Viking genes with the world – and Britain is no exception.

Casually holding onto a plastic sample cup outside the booth where he is about to make his donation, he says: "I like the way I look. My hair colour, my eye colour, my height.

"I have been very lucky to have got very good genes from my parents and as a result I have a very happy life.

"I can understand why British women who don't find a man of their own want to have a baby with Danish DNA.

know them.”

Fellow donor adds: “It’s definitely a macho thing. They have high standards here so even to have your sperm accepted when your friends get rejected is great.”



Sharing: Sperm donor Peder Thompson

Last year alone over 500 British babies were made with Danish sperm and over 250 were born to single women.

The numbers have been increasing steadily since 2005 when the UK joined 11 other EU countries in a ban on **anonymous sperm donors** – something Denmark has refused to do.

It may sound like the place where miracles happen but as we go behind the scenes of the Cryos lab, there’s something sinister about the apparent simplicity of the whole process.

“This is where we get the cup,” Simon grins, showing us a black metal cabinet in the lobby. “Then I go in there and enjoy myself.”

Behind a white door, hardcore pornography plays endlessly on a plasma screen and a rack of dirty mags is nailed to the wall.

A thin, disposable white paper sheet tops a hospital bed along one wall and a reminder about the dangers of Ebola is pinned to the back of the door.

Suddenly the boyish glee in Simon’s eyes makes me wonder whether he realises the seriousness of what he is about to do and it’s difficult not to feel uneasy.



Liquid gold: The samples are stores carefully

The yellow boxes of samples stacked up by the trade entrance for shipping could just as easily be Ebay orders waiting to reach their new homes.

Has anyone here really thought about the consequences for the kids?

Owner and founder of Cryos, Ole Schou, says he has.

Lifting the lid of a giant metal cannister in the office lab he grins through a fog of liquid nitrogen.

“We have a hundred litres of semen here. Can you imagine how many potential babies that is?

“I do talk to some donor children who tell me they feel cheated. They have some kind of identity crisis because they don’t know where they come from.

“It’s inevitable that some of them have an identity crisis, especially if they have come from anonymous donors, which most of them do.”



Happy: Sperm donor Simon RasmussenHe adds matter-of-factly: “But I don’t have sympathy. I ask them what they think the alternative is.

“I tell them the alternative is not being here. How can they argue with that?”

before they're even born.

Suddenly it's painfully obvious why all this feels like a scene from a futuristic, dystopian movie.

There's no doubt the work done by Cryos makes dreams come true for many childless women, but are we leaving ourselves open to a generation of depressed, misplaced young people in a crisis of identity?

Media agent Holly says not. She's determined that her donor baby won't miss out on a father figure because she plans to get a male nanny when she goes back to work after maternity leave.

Perhaps she has the right idea. The boom is just getting off the ground, so only time will tell.

Whatever the emotional outcome, one thing's for certain. There are going to be some very striking young men in the UK in 18 years time.

Don't see it as a perfect solution, psychologist warns

The issues surrounding elective single-parenting and anonymous sperm donation could impact on **a child's development**, an educational psychologist warns.

Teresa Bliss said when children, particularly boys, hit puberty it becomes important for them to know where they come from.

She said: "When they are trying to develop their own identity, it can be hard enough in a single-parent family. Being deprived of the chance to know about their other parent could cause more problems.

"To a child a donor is not a donor but part of them and to grow up without that part can be damaging."

Bliss adds that a lack of awareness on inherited diseases can also be a problem.

"Speaking to parents of children with dyslexia, for example, if the mother can't reveal who fathered her child it's impossible to know if there is a history.

"That gap in knowledge opens like a yawning hole for some children, particularly if their relationship with their mother is not good.

"It seems wrong to deprive children of that fundamental information about themselves."

- The Vikings Are Coming, BBC2, Thursday, 9pm

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