



MOTHER OF TWO AND FORMER BABY SPICE EMMA BUNTON ON WHY HER EMOTIONAL TRIP TO MADAGASCAR HAS MADE HER REALLY, REALLY WANT ANOTHER CHILD

In a village two hours' drive from Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, Emma Bunton is cuddling a beautiful day-old baby and feeling a little broody.

She's in the African island country to meet mothers and babies who have been helped by the Pampers and Unicef I pack = 1 vaccine campaign, which has now helped to eliminate maternal and newborn tetanus in 15 countries. The deadly disease causes one newborn fatality every nine minutes around the world but is easily preventable by a simple vaccine.

"On the plane there, I felt really nervous," says the former Spice Girl. "You don't know how you're going to react and I'm quite an emotional person. But although we saw some heart-breaking things, it's amazing to see the work Unicef are doing first hand. They make a difference in so many places, and it's great to be a part of that progression."

"At the village health centre we met mothers and babies who go there for their tetanus vaccinations. Many had walked miles with their babies, just as the pregnant women do to have their babies. I felt humbled; they're such brave, wonderful people. Giving birth in Madagascar is a risky business. I feel

so lucky for the healthcare I received. It makes you realise how much we take for granted."

Emma, 38, lives in North London, near where she grew up. She's been an ambassador for Unicef for several years but this is her first trip to a foreign country with them, so she was understandably apprehensive – and reluctant to leave her sons Beau, seven, and Tate, three, who were in the safe hands of her partner Jade Jones.

"I'm such a hands-on mum that I thought, 'Can I leave them?'" My work revolves around the boys now so to be away from them, even for only a few days, is difficult. I miss them every second. But having been to Madagascar, I'd love them one day to see a part of what Unicef do and see how lucky we are."

FAMILY FIRST

Emma's life has changed dramatically since she became Baby Spice almost 20 years ago. She has had her own babies and put her singing career on hold, becoming a DJ for the breakfast show at Heart FM alongside Jamie Theakston so that she can spend as much time with her boys as possible. Like

the women she met in Madagascar, family has always been priority for her.

"Just because I was going away for three days, my mum, brother, nephew and my uncle came round for dinner. We're a very close family and both Jade's parents and mine help with the kids. Jade does everything in the morning and I'm generally home by midday so that gives me the rest of the day to do pick-ups, homework and dinner. Weekends are generally free so that's a big time for us."

Although things are settled in the Bunton household, there might still be room for a new family member – especially after Emma cuddled so many babies on her Unicef trip. She turns 40 in just over a year and being a mum again is one of the things she'd like to do before reaching that milestone. Would she like a boy or girl? "I really don't mind. I've had such a ball with my boys, I love babies and enjoy the process of being pregnant."

"I really think I'd like to have another child but I do get a little bit nervous because three scares me a bit. I'm always a bit broody and it has become worse since the trip. One more, maybe. Jade ▶

At the Ankadinandriana Health Centre, where mothers and babies go for their tetanus vaccinations, DJ, singer and mum of two Emma meets a little girl (above left) and cradles a new-born boy (top, with his mother Romine), which brings memories flooding back of when she was a new mum

'I'm always a bit broody and it has become worse since the trip. Jade likes the thought of another one too - he'd have a football team if he could'





'I'd love to take my mummy friends to Madagascar to see how they're helping'

Melanie Brown now she's back in the country as an *X Factor* judge. "It's great to see her," says Emma, who has been with Mel B in Mexico to lend a hand in the judges' houses segment of the show. "Mel's perfect for *The X Factor* because she's a good balance of being very honest but she's also very witty."

"I'll definitely go down to the studios because we don't live far away. Beau is a big fan and went in the audience with Jade last year. Tate is too young but is music mad and sings all the time."

Having both her and Victoria in the country more means that their kids will be able to see more of each other. "Our kids are at that age where they play together so hopefully we'll be able to meet up a bit more," says Emma. "The kids have a better social life than we do."

"Beau knows all the Spice Girls as Scarlet's mummy [Mel C] or Bluebell's mummy [Geri Halliwell], which is really sweet. At school, he had to sort pictures of famous and non-famous people into piles. He said to his teacher: 'I know this man because I've met him round the house but can't think who he is.' She said, 'That's David Beckham, darling.' He had not a clue."

DAD ROCKS

Beau and Tate enjoyed seeing their dad perform with his former boyband Damage in The Big Reunion, as did Emma.

"I love seeing him up on stage," she says of her partner of 16 years. "It's exciting and he's so sexy, I'm like, 'Phwoar!' I screamed throughout it and was singing every word. He wants his kids to see what he does as well so it's lovely that they can."

Will they marry one day?

"It's something we haven't sat down and organised. If we did and had time to, we probably would. We feel so settled as we are and we still adore each other; I still really fancy him. We have a real connection and talk a lot; we have respect for each other, a great friendship, lots in common, and we make each other laugh. We're on the same wavelength with the kids too, and that made us a lot stronger."

Watching Jade in The Big Reunion gave Emma itchy feet to perform again. The Spice Girls bade farewell at the London Olympics closing ceremony in 2012 but, with the girl band's 20th anniversary coming up, Emma would love them to get together one more time.

"There's nothing quite like the rush of adrenaline and excitement when you perform and then you look to the left and right of you and

Emma holds two-week-old boy Tsiky (above), shares a joke with young locals (left) and visits a mother in her home (bottom left). Thanks to Unicef's help in providing simple vaccines, they are all free of deadly tetanus

likes the thought of another one, too – he'd have a football team if he could – as does Beau, although Tate doesn't quite understand what that means yet."

As for that milestone birthday... "My mum went back to college at 40, became a black belt and studied reflexology and reiki. I'd definitely like to do some more learning. I don't feel too settled yet – I'm not made that way."

PARTY GIRL

There's no doubt Emma will have a big 40th party like fellow Spice Girls Melanie Chisholm and Victoria Beckham. "I love a good party," she smiles. "If I wasn't into music then I'd like to be a party organiser. My birthday is at the end of January so everyone is over dry January by then."

"Mel's was such a brilliant night; we stayed up very late at Victoria's and it was really nice to catch up with everyone. It was a lovely dinner and party and Mel C and I let everyone down by having too much to drink!"

Emma is also seeing a lot more of





they're mates whom you've known for almost 20 years. So of course there will always be a part of me that would love to do that again – apart from having my children, that was the best thing ever.

“Music will always be my first love; I'd like to do some solo stuff, some more singing with Jade and writing – and I would love to work with the girls again but who knows if that will happen.

“It's a weird transitional time right now because I'm not yet 40, it's not yet 20 years but it's all coming and I'm kind of waiting for it. I remember my mum saying everything goes so fast. She'd say, 'I don't want you to grow up,' and I was like, 'Oh, Mum, shut up!' But that's exactly how I feel now. Everything is going so fast and my children are growing up so quickly.

“But helping with the Unicef and Pampers campaign makes me realise how lucky we are. When I returned from Madagascar, I was outside with the kids playing and I got really emotional again thinking about the people we met and what we have access to that they don't. It really does change your outlook.

“I'm even more passionate about this campaign now. The great thing is it's so easy. Just by doing a normal shop to pick up specially marked

Pampers provides one vaccine. My only dream for my babies was that they'd be born healthy. It's great to see how the efforts of parents have helped make that dream a reality for mums in some of the world's poorest countries.

“We all go back to our lives, our problems and looking after our own children but parents can still help. I'd love to take all my mummy friends back to see how they're helping.” **H**

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PHOTOS: JORDI MATAS/UNICEF

For more information on the 1 pack = 1 vaccine campaign, visit facebook.com/PampersUKIve.



Emma's trip has made her realise how fortunate she and her family are. Meeting so many adorable children, such as Fitahiana, two (below), has also made her broody and she would love to give her boys Beau and Tate (both right, with their musician dad Jade Jones) a little brother or sister

ADDITIONAL PHOTO: FEATUREFLASH

