

PLAYING OUT

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I grew up in a northern mill town in 1980s England. I remember playing out all the time as a kid. Sometimes my friends and I would have a kick-about in the street. Other times we'd wander over to the school fields to see who else was playing out. Or maybe we'd go up to the 'Old Hossy' – a spooky, overgrown woodland on the ruins of the former isolation hospital. We'd climb trees, make dens and find creepy crawlies there. Nowadays kids don't seem to do these things as much. In the UK today only 21% of children play out whilst for their parents the figure was 71%. Parents' three favourite places to play as a kid were the street, the fields and the woods whereas today these places are the least popular, children are much more likely to say 'in my home'. But why is this? Most kids say they would actually prefer to play out. The comic strip looks at what might be going wrong. It follows the ordeals of one of today's kids, James, as he journeys through the urban environment searching for the opportunities to play out which I took for granted just a generation ago.

REFERENCES

- Design Council (2014) – Active by Design.
- Eureka! The National Children's Museum (2014) – Play for Today.



