



“Where’s the romance in sharing a bathroom?” Ariel Leve

Send your views

NEWS **COMMENT** BUSINESS SPORT LIFE & STYLE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

OUR PAPERS AUDIO / VIDEO CLASSIFIEDS

COLUMNISTS JOIN THE DEBATE OBITUARIES BLOGS CARTOON FAITH RELATED REPORTS

Where am I? Home Comment Columnists Guest contributors

Sponsored by **SEARCH**

[MY PROFILE](#) | [OFFERS](#) | [SITEMAP](#)

From The Times

February 17, 2007

Look, just grow up and kick out the kids

Carol Midgley

No week is complete without a survey on which middle-class parents are invited to hone their stomach ulcers. This week's offering went something like this: two thirds of parents over 50 are still paying out for their children and will continue to do so until the day they pop their wide-fitting clogs. The Bank of Mum and Dad is a flourishing institution, daily doling out cash for their offspring's new cars, housebuying deposits and day-to-day grocery expenses until the "kids" are into their forties and developing a paunch. If we need an acronym to define this financial angst it is, apparently, KIPPERS — kids in parents' pockets eroding retirement savings.

Mmm. While no one can deny that student debt, soaring property prices and the tendency to marry later mean progeny remain living at home for longer cadging beer money and failing to rinse out the bath, I suspect millions of parents know that another acronym is equally relevant here: GRUPS.

Grups — a shortening of grown-ups — was recently coined by *New York* magazine as the signal that the generation gap has closed. Grups are cool parents: "Dadsters", if you like, enjoying the perks of middle age but talking and dressing like twentysomethings. They like the same music as young people ("Josh, can you download the Killers onto your mother's MP3?"), enjoy sex, wear combat trousers and retro trainers, and may even take the odd recreational drug. But they are, in fact, old. This doesn't stop them getting down with the kids, though, and thus they give their children no incentive to leave home and every reason to stay.

Such a plethora of shared interests mean there is nothing left to rebel against; grups have only themselves to blame. While they may feign exasperation to their friends — "Will we ever get the kids out from under our feet!?" — they are secretly triumphant. Having twentysomethings hanging around your house by choice is an ego trip — the ultimate proof of parenting success. Our kids count us as friends. How cool is that?

As recently as a couple of decades ago the sure-fire way to make one's children leave home was to cramp their style. What teenager or twentysomething wanted to hang around while *Sale of the Century* and *Songs of Praise* dominated the telly? Their music was loathed, there was seldom an alcoholic drink in the house and their parents wore embarrassing slacks. Now families all watch *The Simpsons* together, parents teach their teenage kids about wine, mothers and daughters shop with equal enthusiasm at Topshop and borrow each other's *Grazia* magazine. They might take a nominal amount in rent but in any case parents often stash it away to be represented to son or daughter later as a surprise lump-sum gift.

Meanwhile, the financial institutions warn parents to cut the apron strings and teach children to stand on their own two feet. This week it was the investment giant GE Life which said that parents are risking their own futures by spending too much on their grown-up children. Last month, Churchouse Financial Planning reported: "We see a lot of parents who've made it to their sixties and are annoyed that their children are in their mid-twenties and still at home." The Council of Mortgage Lenders, which represents the big banks and building societies, says that half the number of first-time buyers under 30 are helped financially by their parents — up from one in ten in 1995. Alliance & Leicester says that the average amount given to children to start their own home is £17,677. Nearly 20 grand as a hand out? No wonder young adults aren't hurrying to close their accounts with Bank of Pater.

Having enjoyed a free university education, I genuinely feel sorry for young graduates starting life with a round-shaped ball and

TIMES RECOMMENDS

- Wake up! The bees are on their knees
- Monty Python approach to diplomacy
- Discuss race honestly? We' ll stick to our prejudices

OUR COLUMNISTS

Columnists

David Aaronovitch **VIEW**

Blogs

Alpha Mummy **VIEW**



Rove's dirty secret

In defence of Karl Rove... and shedding some light on him

Comment Central



50 religious insights from George Bush

Faith Central: Libby Purves



Peter Stothard

On the death of a cussed, charismatic, difficult, devoted English journalist, Richard Stott

SMOKING BAN

thousands of middle-class parents who not only nag their children about being left behind in the property boom from age 18 but actually buy nice properties for them to live in as university students à la Cherie Blair? Don't they see that the whole point of being a student is to exist like a pig in filth so that you are motivated for ever more to get off your backside and never live that way again?

A friend recently confided that her 18-year-old daughter had stayed over at her boyfriend's parents house. Not only did they sleep together but his grumpy mother brought them toast in the morning and sat on the bed chatting about their night out. I don't know about you but this makes me feel queasy. Generation gaps were invented to prevent this sort of thing.

A house in which the fridge is always full, the laundry always done and taboos are nonexistent is not a parental home, it is Nirvana. Next time hipster parents pretend to complain about their children not flying the nest they should perhaps be honest with themselves. And ask whether this generous spendfest on their children isn't just another form of Botox. In order to stay clean of alcohol and cocaine Robbie Williams has apparently been putting away 36 double espressos, 60 cigarettes, 20 cans of Red Bull and a raft of uppers and downers every day. As "clean" living goes it doesn't exactly add up to the Detox Diet. Williams has now checked himself back into rehab.

AA counsellors often tolerate extreme cigarette and caffeine use as a necessary evil in helping clients to tackle the greater demon of drink. But Williams's substitute fixes seem equally if not more likely to kill him. In fact, without wishing to trivialise addiction, they make a triple vodka and orange look like a fruit smoothie.

- Diane Abbott, MP, defends the £2,235 expenses that she claimed in taxi rides protesting: "I cannot ride a bicycle. I cannot drive. And there is no Underground station in Hackney." Right. And as a socialist and friend of Ken Livingstone, she would find it outrageous to use a bus, I suppose?

On her website Ms Abbott claims to be a champion of public transport. Lashing two grand on a fleet of cabs isn't perhaps the best way to show that commitment. Still, we shouldn't be surprised. Having sent her son to private school after castigating other Labour MPs for doing the same, she is the reigning queen of cheap talk.

HAVE YOUR SAY

what ever happen to being excited about getting out on your own and getting rid of mommy and daddy! it's up to us as parents to cut those strings as hard as it is. as the song says. " I will survive" They will grow up MoM and Dad and belive me they will thank you in the end.

kelly oomen, inverary, canada

Give it to your kids now, or let Gordon Brown steal it when you die? bit of a no-brainer, really.

Claire Daington, Wigan,

My poor 55 year old husband has no job and is not likely to get another one but he is still expected to contribute toward keeping his children. Some people don't know they're born and this Government is expecting too much of ordinary people.

judy, liverpool, england

[Read all 22 comments](#)

HAVE YOUR SAY

[PRINT](#)

[EMAIL](#)

[POST TO DELICIOUS](#)

[POST TO NEWSVINE](#)

[POST TO YAHOO!](#)

[POST TO DIGG](#)

ALSO IN GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

Come back Colbert, Heathrow needs you
The one question you must never ask an economist
Nudge, wink, it's only human

ALSO IN COLUMNISTS

Beware the beast within . . . even if it's a shaggy dog story
A problem, but still not a catastrophe
Go ahead, punk, name my day. OK, November 1

[Where am I?](#) [Home](#) [Comment](#) [Columnists](#) [Guest contributors](#)



The day of the zealots

First the pub, now the street? Smoker Rod Liddle takes on the anti-smoking activists



A Don's Life

Mary Beard of Cambridge and the TLS on culture ancient and modern

[MOST READ](#)

[MOST COMMENTED](#)

[MOST CURIOUS](#)

TODAY

Beckham the idle idol gets first hint of a...
Gap-year students told to forget aid projects
Profile: Karl Rove
A kiss is just a kiss . . . but this famous...

CLASSIFIEDS

CARS JOBS
PROPERTY TRAVEL

CARS OF THE WEEK

Mercedes C200 Kompressor
2002/52
£11,950
SE England

Porsche Cayenne S Cayenne S
2005/55
£33,500
SW England

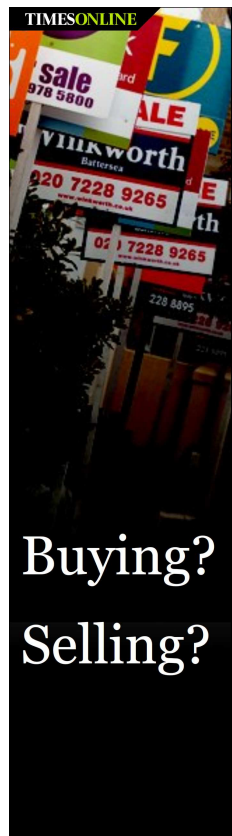
Car Insurance
Get insured at internet prices

Car Insurance
Great car insurance deals online

Search for more cars and bikes

Search Ad Reference:

SEARCH



Ads by Google

[NEWS](#) | [COMMENT](#) | [BUSINESS](#) | [SPORT](#) | [LIFE & STYLE](#) | [ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT](#) |

Sponsored by Live Search

SEARCH

Contact our advertising team for advertising and sponsorship in Times Online, The Times and The Sunday Times.
© Copyright 2007 Times Newspapers Ltd.

This service is provided on Times Newspapers' [standard Terms and Conditions](#). Please read our [Privacy Policy](#). To inquire about a licence to reproduce material from Times Online, The Times or The Sunday Times, click [here](#). This website is published by a member of the News International Group. News International Limited, 1 Virginia St, London E98 1XY, is the holding company for the News International group and is registered in England No 81701. VAT number GB 243 8054 69.