

# Big Kid or Kidult?

by Esmerelda Weatherwax (Aug. 2008)

Comedian Richard Herring in wrote in The Sunday Times shortly after his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday last year –

While many people in their forties have families and responsibilities, an increasing minority still resemble teenagers. Scary, wrinkled, grey-haired teenagers, with some kind of terrifying premature ageing disease, but teenagers nonetheless. It's enough of a phenomenon to have been given its own portmanteau label: kidult. They're adults, but they behave like kids.

[Urban Dictionary](#) has a definition I prefer “Star over London Zeppelin at its temporary base last month. There were plenty of people there, some (all male) aircraft enthusiasts, some local middle aged and elderly couples who were intrigued at this huge thing coming over their house and a party of school pupils of around 15 years, with their teacher.

The Zeppelin came in maybe 50 foot above our heads to land in the adjacent field. I was the only woman with a camera. I seemed to be the only adult woman showing any enthusiasm for the airship itself or having any knowledge of their history over England. The schoolgirls were showing just as much interest. Their teacher was very enthusiastic and this was having an effect on all his pupils. One of the airship pilots is a woman so maybe they will be the next generation.

The Bomber crews, as described by Patrick Bishop the author of *Bomber Boys* from which I quoted above,

were “doing a job that would harrow the most hardened veteran but in many ways they behaved like the adolescents they had so recently been”.

My husband belongs to an unofficial reunion club of his old regiment. A few years ago they (men of all ages) returned to the site of some of their training. Some sedately took the tourist path around; others went off piste as they did when in service. Some wore silly outfits including one chap who dressed as their mascot which outfit included a pink fright wig. There was a lot of harmless horseplay and the weekend raised money for various charities including homeless ex-servicemen. But they had nothing to prove. No need to *act* sober and responsible; they had *proved* sober and responsible by their service in a formidable regiment. Mind you no one in their right minds would mess with that bunch so they could wear all the pink wigs in the world with impunity.

I have spent this last week working with my church's children's holiday club. When I spent a happy half hour with the Toytown market floor puzzle was I indulging the kidult, or responsibly checking that all the pieces were there, lest a child be disappointed? When I built a boat from a