

This is what happens when members of girl bands – even multi-millionaire ones – grow up. Kimberley Walsh, previously of Girls Aloud, is bemoaning the fact that spa days are a distant memory. ‘I do look at Instagram and see pictures of people still doing that, and I think, “What am I doing wrong?” How do they have the time?’ she complains.

Kimberley says she’s up to her neck in nappies and playdates. As are most of her friends. Yes, she’s at that age – 35 – when she and her peers are popping out babies at an astonishing rate. ‘My mum’s moved down to London because all my siblings are here now and she has five grandchildren. My sister has a six-year-old, a three-year-old and a four-month-old. I have an almost-three-year-old and a six-month-old. All boys, too. I can’t wait until they’re a bit older and their dad can take them to football. Then maybe I’ll have a spa day.’

The odd thing about hearing Kimberley’s account of motherhood – to Bobby, who’ll be three in September, and baby Cole – is how familiar it seems. One assumes that having babies when you’re rich is a very different affair, one that involves a team of nannies and a wardrobe full of Gucci babygros. She snorts. ‘Well, we don’t have a nanny. And designer labels? No way. Poor Cole doesn’t even have his own clothes. He’s getting Bobby’s. It’s daft to go out and buy more clothes when some of Bobby’s were hardly worn.’

A former pop star who believes in hand-me-downs? How refreshing. But how far will those hand-me-downs be going? There’s another member of her inner circle who might be needing baby clothes at the minute. Kimberley’s best friend is of course, Cheryl, née Tweedy, her fellow Girls Aloud singer. The pair have remained close since the band split, and Cheryl was there when Kimberley married Justin Scott last year.

So has she been passing on advice about motherhood? Alas, we shall never know. Although the chattiest person you could meet, Kimberley clams up when asked even the most innocuous question about Cheryl. ‘As you know, Cheryl’s very private so I can’t say anything about it,’ she says, albeit apologetically. ‘It wouldn’t be fair because it would get blown out of all proportion.’ Can she confirm she’ll be passing on baby clothes to her friend though? ‘I’ll just say I’m very resourceful. I am my mother’s daughter,’ she says, and the subject is closed.

Some might find it odd, though, that she chose the name Cole for her own second-born, given that it was Cheryl’s surname during her marriage to

*Girls Aloud’s Kimberley Walsh tells how she tries to keep her sons grounded despite her wealth. But will she be passing their hand-me-downs on to her best mate Cheryl?*



Kimberley and (Inset) with Cheryl

The Rivals. The band went on to become the biggest-selling girl group of their age, with more than 4.3 million singles and 4 million albums sold. Inevitably, every few months there are rumours they’ll get back together, but Kimberley thinks it’s unlikely. ‘I’ve read about us reuniting and thought, “Well, nobody’s spoken to me.” I’ve not heard anything from any of the girls and I speak to most of them regularly, so it’s not on the cards any time soon. I’m afraid. Right now it feels like we’ve moved on.’

Of course, acting was where Kimberley started. The daughter of Diane, a music teacher, and John, a kitchen salesman, she attended stage school in Bradford and continued to take small parts during her Girls Aloud days. Her credits include roles in *Horrid Henry: The Movie* and the TV series *Britannia High*, and she took the role of Princess Fiona in the West End production of *Shrek The Musical* a few years ago.

It’s clear from our conversation, though, that motherhood comes before any career ambitions, although she’s candid about how hard it is to be the sort of mum she wants to be when she’s a multi-millionaire. ‘I had a working-class upbringing,’ she says. ‘And I’m very aware my children are living a different life to the one I did, but hopefully that’s the first step to not letting it become an issue. A house like ours to play in would have been a dream when I was a kid. We had to share a bedroom.’

‘It’s daft things you realise, like Bobby will never know what it feels like not to be able to go on a school trip, or not to be able to have a new coat. He’s going to take these things for granted – so it’s up to me to work on that and make sure he realises how lucky he is. I do keep drumming into him that not everyone has as much. This is not the norm.’

One way of keeping her kids grounded is to spend time with her family. ‘We spend a lot of time with my mum and sister and her kids. Hopefully that will help to make it a more stable upbringing. And we honestly don’t live a very lavish lifestyle.’

She also sounds like a woman who isn’t done with motherhood yet, despite her protestations of barely having time to even think. ‘I don’t want any more now, but when I look into the future, there may be a want for more. I can’t categorically say I’m done.’ ■

Jenny Johnston

*The Lodge is shown on Fridays at 5.30pm on Disney Channel.*

# Confessions of a millionaire mum

footballer Ashley Cole, but she insists she fell in love with the name after seeing it in the TV series *The Affair*. Whatever, the fact that they’re both mothers now makes the days of Girls Aloud seem like a distant dream.

That was reinforced when Kimberley, who started off as a child actor, joined the new series of hit Disney teen series *The Lodge* – her first appearance is this week. The story focuses on 15-year-old Skye, who moves with her father from the big city to rural Northern Ireland, where they take over a local hotel called North Star Lodge, which was previously managed by Skye’s grandfather. All the usual teen

obsessions are here – love twists, friendship issues, fashion matters – but music is an integral part of the mix. Kimberley’s role is rather apt. She plays a music producer, and quite a cut-throat one at that. ‘She’s warm and her heart is in the right place, but she’s prepared to go as far as she needs

to get what she wants.’ Did she base the character on anyone from her Girls Aloud days? ‘She maybe has a few characteristics from managers I’ve met over the years,’ she admits.

Girls Aloud was born back in 2002 when the members were paired up on the pre-*X Factor* talent show *Popstars*: