



"I WAS about two years old when this photo was taken on the beach at Colwyn Bay. To

this day I can remember the frustration I felt at trying to build a sand castle with a wooden spoon and not making more than a pile of sand.

That must have been about 1944 but we lived in Colwyn Bay until I was five and my memories of the place are very vivid. I can recall my brother taking me to the field over the road to gather mushrooms for breakfast. He told me that a bear lived in the brook at the end of it so I ran home and didn't dare go back. I can also remember the thrill of seeing a tank driving up the road with these enormous searchlights.

That must have been for VE day or VJ day. I was aware that there was a war on, primarily because my dad was away serving with the RAF. He was posted to India soon after I was born and the first time I remember meeting him was at Colwyn Bay railway station in 1946. All these people were streaming off the train and my mother was in a great tizzy. Then, at the end of the platform, there was a guy in a forage cap with a kit bag. He kissed my mum and brother and then me. I'd never been kissed by someone with a moustache before – I was used to being kissed by women –



so I've had a slight aversion to that ever since.

Soon afterwards we moved to Claygate in Surrey and I hated it to begin with. Then my parents distracted me with this old brass

chest that you put logs in. I quietened down a bit after that.


I went to grammar school in Guildford and then on to Oxford. I met Michael Palin quite early on at university and we started

doing cabarets and revues together.

I was desperate to get TV work after university. I'd sent hundreds of letters and was about to take a position as a copywriter for Anglia Television in Norwich when Frank Muir got in touch and gave me a job in the BBC's Light Entertainment department in London, writing continuity scripts for things like *The Billy Cotton Show* for £20 a week.

Mike and I started contributing material to *The Frost Report*, which Eric Idle wrote for and John Cleese was in, so we got to know each other that way. We then met Terry Gilliam on *Do Not Adjust Your Set* and John suggested we should all do something together. That was how Monty Python began.

We had no idea that people would still be talking about it 40 years later – it's far more famous now than it was then – and we truly thought it wasn't quite as funny as *The Goon Show*. All I can remember is the terrible struggle with the material. We were always going out on limbs and trying ideas that we were unsure of and thinking, 'Will people laugh at this?' Or, 'We're going to be found out.'

These days I'm a patron of Colwyn Bay Theatre and, in between projects, I'm trying to help get them on the map. I have always felt very Welsh, even though my mum was a Lancashire lass, and I go back to my home town from time to time. Colwyn Bay is very different now that it's got a six-lane motorway going through it, but I'll always hold fond memories of the place." 

Terry offers health information, Monty Python style, at www.myhealthtips.com.

My favourite photograph by comedian Terry Jones

Monty Python made the 70 year old a global star – but Wales is where his heart is, as he tells Nick McGrath

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