

Travel

MY HOLS MICHAEL PARKINSON

He wasn't cut out for the Congo, but beat all-comers at beach cricket at Scarborough

“The first time I went on a plane was during my National Service, when I worked in the army's public-relations department. We flew on a DC-3 to Cyprus. It was a bumpy and alarming experience, but I've travelled on many planes since.

In 1999, I took Mary on Concorde for our 40th wedding anniversary. Many of the pilots belonged to Wentworth golf club, so the plane would do a little wobble of the wings when it flew over the course. In those days, they allowed people into the cockpit. I saw the entire east coast of America beneath me, and space ahead. It was sensationally romantic. When we disembarked, there were no steps downwards. You stepped straight into this luxurious lounge complete with its own customs.

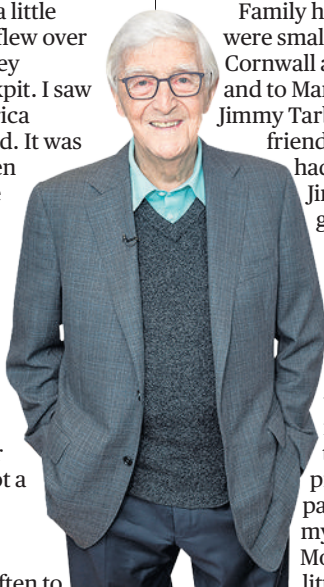
My stint as a war reporter wasn't something to which I was suited. I was sent to the Congo by the Daily Express, which was terrifying, and I also covered the Six Day War for the BBC. I'm a runner, not a fighter and I didn't want to become the subject of a telegram home.

Holidays as a child were often to

Scarborough, which my father chose primarily because it had beaches suitable for playing cricket on. We would go away during Barnsley Feast Week in August and stay in a boarding house. We weren't allowed into our room between 9am and 6pm, so I remember long rainy hours spent in a bus shelter down the road waiting to be let back in. We weren't beaten at beach cricket for many years – but my father was a terrible cheat.

Family holidays when our boys were small included visits to Cornwall and Salcombe, in Devon, and to Marbella, Spain, with Jimmy Tarbuck. We would stay in friends' villas and play golf. We had some hilarious times. Jimmy is so funny and still a good friend.

One of the best holidays we ever had was to Phoenix, in Arizona, where we stayed at a golf hotel. Sadly, it was marred as it was where we witnessed the first manifestation of the terrible brain disease – progressive supranuclear palsy – that eventually took my great friend Dudley Moore. He'd come to do a little concert and he couldn't



YORKSHIRE GOLD
A young Michael with his parents in Scarborough

Sir Michael Parkinson, 83 – “Parky” – was born near Barnsley, and worked for the Manchester Guardian and the Daily Express before going on to host his chat show, Parkinson, TV-am and Desert Island Discs. By his estimate, he has interviewed more than 2,000 celebrities. He lives in Bray, Berkshire, with his wife, Mary. They have three sons and eight grandchildren. His theatre show, An Evening with Sir Michael Parkinson, tours from September 1.

make it up the stairs. Everyone thought he was drunk at the time.

Being severely bitten by bed bugs on a 747 on my way from London to Australia via Singapore in 1979 certainly wasn't among my most pleasant travel experiences. In those days, the upper deck had a small bedroom, where I was trying to sleep. When I discovered the unwelcome insects, the PR for the airline arranged to meet me in a Rolls-Royce and took me to the Raffles Hotel by way of compensation. They put up a sign saying “Welcome Norman Parkinson”. Not the PR's best day.

Now I'm older, all that queuing up and waiting around in airports dissuades me from going away. Mary and I go for the occasional short trip to stay in a nice hotel in the UK. With family close by and living in a beautiful part of the world, there is no real reason to escape from it. We may go to Australia for the next Ashes tour, though.

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Interview by Roz Lewis

THE KIT LIST

Travel gadgets tried and tested.

By Chris Haslam

360-DEGREE CAMERAS



COMPETITION WIN A LUXURY BREAK FOR TWO IN THE YORKSHIRE DALES

WITH THE DEVONSHIRE ARMS AT BOLTON ABBEY

WHERE WAS I?

I'm in a mischievous mood. So I've brought Navigationally Challenged Friend (reads maps upside down) to this village. It was the birthplace of a naval officer – ergo navigator – in 1724. He was appointed captain of the Jamaica in 1754. “I'll bet he didn't get lost,” I quip. NCF harrumphs as he tells me to motor southwest to a small town. This, I know, means northeast, thus, eight crow-miles later we reach the birthplace of a department-store owner, born in 1836 (parents: John and Elizabeth). But it's architecture that has drawn me here, which is why we seek out a disused railway

viaduct, 317 yards long, curved and with 27 arches. There is a heritage railway two miles to the west, enthuses friend. So that means east. The original line opened in 1858.

Later, we make for a second town, 16 miles to its south. (My south: not NCF's.) It is noted for its school, established during the 16th century. Old boys include a diarist (expelled; died 2007) noted for society gossip. Friend, however, wishes to see the castle that dates from 1594. Thus, he issues (wrong) instructions. Sure, it's a castle but this one, 12th century, is ruined. “I'm never doing this again,” he whines, realising his mistake. The castle he wants, still very much intact, is a cannon's blast south. It was built by an adventurer and navigator *par excellence* (born circa 1552). To which status I know my Navigationally Challenged Friend will rise some day. In my dreams.
Chris Fautley



THE QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the name of the first town?
- 2 Who was the diarist?

THE PRIZE

The winner and a guest will stay for two nights in a superior four-poster room at the Devonshire Arms Hotel & Spa, at Bolton Abbey (thedevonshirearms.co.uk). Owned by the Duke and

Duchess of Devonshire, it is one of the finest country-house hotels in the north, and is the perfect base to explore the rugged moors, with the 12th-century ruins of Bolton Priory providing a dramatic backdrop. Paul Leonard, lately of the Michelin-starred Isle of Eriska, is the new head chef, and two dinners for two (excluding drinks) are included in the prize, one at the Burlington restaurant, the other at the

more informal Brasserie. It must be taken before December 20, 2018, subject to availability.

Devonshire Hotels & Restaurants is offering Sunday Times readers 10% off all rates at any of its properties until March 31, 2019 (excluding Christmas and New Year's Eve), if booked before August 31. For more details, or to book a room, call 01756 718111, quoting the reference Times10.

HOW TO ENTER

Only one entry per person, at thesundaytimes.co.uk/wherewasi by Wednesday. Normal Times Newspapers rules apply. No correspondence will be entered into.

LAST WEEK'S PRIZE

The answers are **Walthamstow and Johnny Dankworth**. Blah blah blah.

