

Ray Morrell



Ray passed away on 27th November. He was born in Rochford on the 24th August 1933 and he spent his first five years in Southend before German aircraft, dropping their unused bombs in the area after hitting London, forced the family to relocate to Bournemouth. Ray was good at his studies and after recording the top 11 plus score in the area, was offered a scholarship at Canford Public School. On leaving at the age of 16 he joined Lloyds Bank where he worked for two years until his call up for National Service. Ray entered the RAF, travelling to East Anglia to join his unit. On arrival the Sergeant Major welcomed the new recruits with a few barked commands before ordering all those who had attended Public School

to one end of the room. Based on this selection criteria alone he was chosen to receive flight training. The photo shows Ray at the age of 18 just after he had completed his first solo flight in a Tiger Moth.

Ray met his wife to be Gill at a dance in Market Drayton, close to Tern Hill where he was then stationed. He was posted to several locations around the UK and so Ray and Gill were often separated. In contrast to the ease of communications we all now take for granted, the two arranged by letter to telephone at specific phone boxes at pre-set times. They were married in Market Drayton 1956.

Ray had joined 74 Squadron at RAF Horsham St Faith in 1953, flying Meteors. He left the RAF in January 1956 after completing his National Service. When he left he was given £360 and he used this to gain his licence to fly commercial aircraft. However there was little work in the UK and so he and Gill went to West Africa where Ray spent five years working for West African



Airways. Back in the UK he began a 25 year career with British European Airways, later British Airways. He retired from BA, aged 55, in 1998 but didn't feel ready to stop flying and so took up a position in the United Arab Emirates, flying a private jet for the Sheik of Sharjha for two years, after which he returned to the UK and hung up his wings.

With thanks to Ray's sons, David and Phillip.