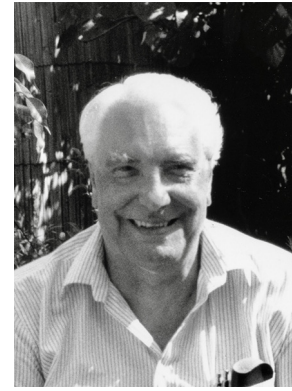


Peter Terry, 1929–2022

Born in the Ellen Badger Hospital in Shipston-on-Stour on 16 April 1929, my lovely dad was the only child of Stanley Richard and Ruth Lizzie Terry who at the time had a dairy farm in the nearby village of Pillerton Hersey.



Early school days were spent in Stratford, where his claim to fame was that at Grammar School he had sat in the same classroom as Shakespeare. But shortly after the outbreak of World War II when father was called up and his mother was working for the War Office, boarding school in Sutton Coldfield (where he had family connections) became his home. The only thing I remember him telling me about this period was that he used climb out of his bedroom window and catch the bus in to Birmingham to attend classical concerts at the Town Hall!

The first person in his family to develop an enthusiasm for aviation, he built many model aeroplanes and travelled far and wide to watch and record as many different aircraft as possible and as a result became a 'First Class Spotter'. At the age of 14 he cycled nearly 30 miles to RAF Defford which was then one of the most secret places in the country where airborne radar was being developed and tested. Not surprisingly he was 'arrested' and then taken round and shown all the aircraft at close quarters before being sent on his way. When he visited us for Christmas 2019 it was so lovely that we were able to take him to the RAF Museum at Croome Park where RAF Defford was located which was the first time he had visited the site in 76 years.

Back home in Shipston on 29 April 1945, he witnessed a young lady fall off her bike and was so smitten that he wrote a most endearing letter to his future mother-in-law, requesting that he might take her daughter to 'a small but pleasing entertainment at the Plaza Cinema'. Not surprisingly aircraft often featured in subsequent outings. When hop picking together, apparently my mum did all the work whilst my dad lay on the grass with his binoculars watching aeroplanes! Even their wedding in Shipston seven years later, had to be delayed as my dad was in Egypt with the RAF and they finally tied the knot on 25 August 1952.

In 1947, as soon as he 'escaped' school (his words), my dad joined the RAF. His new life began with a routine of 'advanced button and floor polishing, painting coal white, and all sorts of other strange activities which were supposed to turn an 18 year old in to 'an efficient flying machine'. Flying training under the auspices of instructors from Bomber Command was followed by advanced training on fighters. Fighter Command was not where he wanted to be and he was very happy to head to Lincolnshire to fly heavy bombers which were his real love, including the massive B-29 Boeing Superfortresses which were on loan from the Americans.

In 1953, whilst at Millom in Cumbria and not known for his singing prowess, my dad took part in a revue where he and his mate Ralph performed as the Cistern Brothers in a sketch from 'In Town Tonight', a popular radio programme of the day hence the choice of its theme tune, Knightsbridge March for the processional music.

My dad considered himself very lucky to have had so many opportunities to fly and rub shoulders with the finest pilots, but after 10 years and postings at 19 bases across the UK, it was decision time – either advance his career in the service, which would mean taking a desk job, or make the move into civilian flying. His log books show that in February 1957 he was assessed as being

an exceptional pilot and his determination to keep flying meant he chose the latter option.

Acquiring the necessary qualifications to make this move meant many nights studying and my mum even learnt Morse Code, as the signallers in his squadron couldn't send it slowly enough for him to practise. As a consequence, he became one of the very few pilots in the RAF with the highest level of civilian qualification. All this hard work paid off and he immediately joined Silver City Airways flying regularly across the Channel with very varied passengers and cargo including racehorses and even monkeys, for which he told me he got danger money.

At this time my parents were living in Folkestone in Kent and I was born on 1 February 1961. There we stayed until a medical problem in 1964 brought my dad's flying career to an abrupt end.

After a brief return to Sutton Coldfield to work for the family paper firm, we moved to Deddington which became home for the next 56 years. The ideal job had come up as a Flight Simulator Instructor at Kidlington Airport, right next door to where we are now, and only a few years later he became Head of Department which involved the selling and installation of flight simulators across Europe, Africa and the Middle East until his retirement in 1992. There were tales of eating sheep's eyeballs in Egypt and being at a Helicopter School in Spain, when the Colonel in charge appeared complete with steel helmet and two pearl-handled revolvers to brief the assembled company on how best to get out of the country if a planned coup was successful. He crossed the Channel on the night of the big storm of 1987 with the attendant at the petrol station giving him a far more accurate weather forecast than poor old Michael Fish. He even used to go to the pub with the legendary ladies of the Air Transport Auxiliary when they visited Kidlington. Generations of pilots were able to benefit from his expertise and he made numerous friends on his travels and spoke regularly to his friend Chester in South Africa right up until he died.

As a family we travelled too, and had lots of days out and wonderful holidays driving through the UK and Europe often with nowhere booked to stay in advance. There are literally thousands of slides and prints documenting every trip he made either for work or for fun. In addition to photography, military history, church architecture, classical music, current affairs, natural history, were all great interests and he was an avid reader.

He could turn his hand to nearly anything – DIY, drawing, fettling cars (which had learnt from his uncle as a teenager back in Shipston) and was immensely pleased to have been able to put a super charger in his Riley 1.5 in the 1960s. One notable exception was plastering: his only attempt resulted in him uncharacteristically getting so frustrated that he threw the plaster at the bathroom wall, and fell off the ladder breaking two ribs! In his retirement he made beautiful hand-painted military models and spent nearly four years as part of the local Map Group researching, producing and hand colouring the Millennium map of Deddington and the surrounding parishes, which is displayed in the centre of the village.

He was fiercely patriotic and loved the Queen's Jubilee celebrations back in June and it seemed particularly serendipitous that when he was in hospital just before he died, the Red Arrows passed directly overhead.

He was tremendously supportive of me (whatever I got up to!) and it was an unexpected bonus of Roger and me getting together that they were able

to share their mutual love of aviation and regularly exchanged emails and articles. He adored Malika and was immensely proud of her achievements and loved hearing about Ralphie her horse.

Completely selfless and absolutely devoted to my mum, he cared for her throughout her illness even to the detriment of his own health, and for as long as I can remember, every day would ask 'is there anything you need me to do?'. Particularly in recent years after my mum died, the telephone calls, letters and visits from his dear friends and family were a constant source of pleasure and he was also deeply grateful for all the care and support given by Nonto and latterly the staff at Featherton House. The sweltering temperatures have understandably prevented some from coming today but it is lovely to see so many of you here and thank you so much for being able to share this day with us.

Jacquie Gordon

Deddington is extremely fortunate to have been able to call on Peter's talents as a cartographer and artist. His incredibly detailed and beautiful maps of Deddington, Clifton and Hempton, painstakingly researched and drawn over three years, can be seen in the undercroft of the Town Hall. Copies are in the Primary School and the Windmill Centre, and the originals are carefully preserved for posterity in the Parish Council offices.

They are also available at: <https://www.deddingtonhistory.uk/mapgroup>

See also: <https://www.deddington.org.uk/gallery/index.php/Maps/DMG-Millennium-maps>

Mary Robinson