

Ken was born on September 30th 1931, to parents William and Alice.

His school days were spent at Chulmleigh School where he left in 1946 to work on a local farm.

Very sadly his father was killed in a tractor accident in the May of 1947, followed by the death of his nine-year-old sister Valerie from leukaemia in the same year.

As a sixteen year old boy Ken was faced with the possibility of the family being split up, for the family to be able stay together, Ken his mother and five brothers, he had to look for a job that included a 'tied house'. This he managed to find and the whole family moved to Atherington.

In the August of 1955 just before his 24th birthday Ken joined the RAF and served for 31 years with postings all over the world.

In 1958 on one late night journey home from London (The Midnight Paper Train), he met Elaine who was also travelling home to North Devon. They became engaged in 1959 and married the following year. They started their family with the arrival of Wendy in Gibraltar in 1964, and Susan at Scampton (the original home of the 'Dam Buster' squadron) in 1970.

1982 saw Ken named in the Queens New Years Honours List with the award of the British Empire Medal. This was in recognition of his dedication and skill when working with the dogs at the RAF police dog training school at RAF Newton during the Parvovirus epidemic. The same year he was posted to Germany and so received his medal during a ceremony with the British Ambassador in Bonn.

The family moved back to North Devon in 1984 and settled at Valley View in Lee.

Kens last posting was to St Mawgan, and he retired from the RAF in September 1986, joining the local Probus and RAFA associations. Not one to 'sit around', the following year he was asked to join the Sultan of Oman's Air Force, his task was to take charge of the Oman Air Force police dog training school which he carried out successfully, finishing in 1992. He also spent six months in Brunei over the winter of 1995/96 training security guards for the Brunei royal family.

He finally gave up military work and settled back to rural life in North Devon, where he took a keen and very active part along with Elaine in village and community life. Every year he would carefully tend his vegetable patch on the cliff top, providing a whole variety of delicious produce. He also kept up his interest in livestock farming helping out on shepherding duties with Farmer Jeffries, myself and Kenny Stevens along with looking after a few sheep of his own!

During this time, he became grandfather to four grandchildren, Vicky, Jamie, Niall and Anya, of whom he was immensely proud.

Ken and Elaine moved to Sleights in 2002. Ken continued his involvement with local branches of Probus and RAFA, and also the RAFA Association. In 2003 he started as a volunteer with the James Cook Museum in Whitby, where he continued until very recently.

He also made sure he had a 'vegetable patch' in the garden!

He enjoyed his holiday trips to Tenerife with family and friends, and a longer trip to stay with family in Australia.

2010 saw the celebration of Ken and Elaine's golden wedding with a big party in Sleights, the Diamond wedding in 2020 was a much smaller gathering because of the covid 19 regulations!!

We celebrated Kens 90th birthday with a family meal at the Victoria Hotel in Robin Hoods Bay, along with many conversations with family on the "Squawk Box", his affectionate name for small internet video devices!

Ken was still very active, working on his veg patch! But above all very family oriented he continued to be the 'Elder' brother to his family up to just two weeks before he died.