

In memory of John Graham De'Ath, Air Commodore RAF (ret'd), MBE, MA, FIMgt, who died peacefully on 10th April 2023 aged 90.

John was an accomplished athlete and Olympic triallist before suffering from polio in his early twenties. After making what appeared to be a full recovery, he managed to return to a high standard of short and long-distance running and squash, among other sports.

In 1951 he joined the RAF as a Cranwell cadet straight from Whitgift Middle School in Croydon and, as an officer cadet, was selected to line the route at the 1953 Coronation. His RAF postings took him all over the UK, as well as Malta, the United States and Germany.

John retired from the RAF in 1986 to take up a post as Home Bursar at Jesus College, Oxford, where he had a happy and successful second career. During this time he developed post-polio syndrome, which eventually forced him to retire from his College post. During his time in Oxford he was heavily involved in various sporting organisations, including the RAF Athletics Association, Achilles Club, Oxford University Athletics Association and Oxford University Air Squadron. He was an active campaigner for women's sport.

Despite being a wheelchair-user from 2010, John continued travelling around the world with the help of his wife, Sonia. Sports, wine, music and travel were his passions.

He passed away peacefully on Easter Monday in a care home, after several happy days spent with his family, singing along to favourite songs, joking, and smiling to the last.

