

Obituary

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Jim Russell, 1921-2018



REMEMBERED:
Jim Russell

JIM Russell (JL Russell) was born in the village of Pontnewydd in 1921. The eldest of three children, he attended Abersychan Boys School. Inspired by his architect uncle from an early age, Jim attended the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff in 1937, but his studies were interrupted by war service when he received his call-up papers in 1941. Initially joining the Welsh Guards, he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers a few months later, finally recommencing his studies after being de-mobbed in 1947.

After qualifying, Jim initially worked for the Newport Borough Architects Department. He had fond memories of that time, when he was instrumental in the design of Duffryn High School (now John Frost High School, Newport) one of the many schools built in the post-war baby boom period of the late 1950s. He moved to Cwmbran Development Corporation

in 1960, becoming deputy chief architect in 1963, and then chief architect and planning officer in 1972 and was concurrently seconded to Newtown, Powys as chief architect and planning officer for Mid-Wales Development Corporation.

Jim retired in 1982, his career studded with awards for the important contribution he made to the shape of housing developments and landscaping of Cwmbran, the shopping centre, the Police Training Centre, industrial and business premises and schools. During his career he lectured on architecture, and acted as an examiner for the Welsh School of Architecture.

Jim and his wife Stella were co-founders of the Gwent Autistic Society and Autism Wales. Jim was the first chairman of the Gwent Autistic Society and during his time as chair, the Society was instrumental in securing and setting-up Ponymoile School's autistic special needs centre and

Orchard House in Caerleon, a home for autistic adults. A keen golfer at Newport Golf Club, he was also a great fan of all things Welsh, whether rugby or Lloyd George.

Jim and Stella moved to Oxfordshire in 2002 to be near their daughter. They lost their son Andrew, who was autistic, in 2003.

Jim spent a very full and happy time in Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, until recently, when failing sight and other health issues prevented him from getting out and about. He passed away on January 19 at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading.

Jim will be sadly missed by his wife, daughter, son-in-law, relatives and his many friends both in Torfaen and Oxfordshire.

A thanksgiving service will be held at Goring Free Church on Monday, February 12, at 12.30pm. Donations in his memory can be made to Noah's Ark, Children's Hospital for Wales, Cardiff - chadwicksfuneralservice.com/our-services/donations