

Jim Bell, 1939–2021

Jim was born on 14 June 1939 at 62 Bailey Road, Cowley, Oxford.

On leaving school he went to work for Pressed Steel in Cowley but quickly realised drilling holes in sheet steel all day wasn't for him. His next job was as a GPO telegram boy which involved driving a small motorbike around Oxford.

Conscription was still in place with young men aged 18 and over being called up for National Service for two years. Jim discovered that if he joined up at 17 and did three years' service he would be classed as a regular which attracted a higher level of pay so, on 5 February 1957. Jim joined the RAF.

Jim and Barbara were both in the RAF and met whilst stationed at RAF Brampton, Huntingdonshire. They were engaged in 1958 with plans for their wedding during 1961 when they had both completed their service in the RAF.

Following basic training as an airman Jim followed up with training to become an RAF policeman. On leaving the RAF he pursued a career in the police force and worked in and around Oxfordshire. He relocated to Deddington in 1981 and transferred to Bicester CID and finally the Serious Crime Squad from where he retired in 1990 after 30 years' service.

He wasn't ready for full retirement and became the CEO of the British Microlight Association, based in the Bullring, Deddington, a position he held for ten years before retiring in 2000. He was an active member of his Freemasons Lodge in Banbury where he became secretary, an office he held for many years.

Jim was a long-serving member of the Royal British Legion and secretary of the Deddington Branch from 1982 to 1988. To mark their appreciation of his membership and contribution, the RBL Deddington Standard was in place in the church during his funeral.

Jim suffered bouts of ill-health in his latter years and, at one time, thought he would be on dialysis for three days a week for the rest of his life. Miraculously his kidneys rejuvenated and enabling him to avoid dialysis treatment.

Jim and Barbara were married in Westmoreland in 1961 and had two sons, Andrew and Christopher, and granddaughter, Zulieka. He is survived by Barbara, his wife of 60 years and their sons.

The turnout at Jim's funeral spoke volumes for the impact he made throughout his life and for his involvement in our village and the people he came into contact with, coupled to his Masonic years. His duty to his country and citizens of the United Kingdom as a member of HM RAF and further public service in the police demonstrates Jim's exemplary devotion to helping others and preserving law and order.

***Tony Lowe
on behalf of Barbara and family***

