

Antony Curtis Wolffe – Internee

Thanks to Antony's son James for providing the text below.

Wolfgang Kurt Schmidt was born in Berlin in 1920. His mother was a member of a prominent Jewish family. The family suffered persecution under the Nazis; and in 1937 his parents sent him to school in England. In 1938 he won a bursary to study architecture and town planning at Edinburgh College of Art. In August 1939, he decided not to return to Germany (where his parents remained), but to remain in the UK.

At the beginning of the War, Wolfgang was classed as a refugee from Nazi oppression and asked to continue his studies. Following the fall of France in May 1940, the British Government ordered the internment of most adult enemy aliens (ie German and Italian nationals) in the UK.

Wolfgang was held in internment camps on the Isle of Man and then in Canada. In 1941 the British Government acknowledged that most of the civilian internees were “friendly aliens” or refugees, and Wolfgang was returned to Edinburgh, where he resumed his studies, also serving during the War as an Air Raid Warden. He graduated from Edinburgh College of Art with a Diploma in Architecture in 1943; and a Diploma in Town Planning in 1944.

But for his nationality, he would have been awarded the City of Edinburgh Medal for Civic Design, and the Medal was accordingly not awarded that year. In 2015, the College of Art gave him the Medal at a special ceremony in Edinburgh.



In 1947, Wolfgang Schmidt naturalized as a British citizen, and in 1950 changed his name to Antony Curtis Wolffe. He first came to south west Scotland in 1949, to work on the Dumfries Town Plan. He moved to Gatehouse-of-Fleet in 1952, where he established his architectural practice. In 1961 he married Alix Graham and they raised two sons and a daughter in Gatehouse. Antony prepared the first statutory lists of buildings of architectural and historical importance for the counties which now make up Dumfries and Galloway; and was Burgh Surveyor of Gatehouse before local authority reorganization in 1973. From 1981 until 2016 he was a Trustee of the Murray Usher Foundation. He was a President of the Galloway Preservation Society and of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. In 1994 he was awarded a MBE for services to architecture.



Antony Wolffe retired in 2012 at the age of 91 after practising as an architect in Dumfries and Galloway for over 60 years. The records of his architectural practice were taken into the archive of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland and are now held by the National Archives at Dumfries. Antony died in 2016, aged 95, a most highly respected member of the community.