

Edward ('Jock') Given CMG CVO, born Glasgow April 13 1919 and died Lymington February 5 2006

Jock Given joined the Foreign Office after war service with the Royal Artillery in East Africa, Ceylon, India and Burma. After his jungle bashing there he resolved to be a sybarite, a resolution which he adhered to thereafter except when sailing small boats. His career started at the Peace Conference in Paris and then took him to New York, Moscow, Paris, Burma and London (including a spell with the friends in Broadway as the liaison man with the Office) before his first tour in Bahrain. There he was heavily involved in running the foreign policy of the Gulf States and travelled extensively in near mediaeval conditions - a far cry from the Gulf of today.

In 1960 he became Consul in Bordeaux, ostensibly to experience the practical aspects of consular service. His friends however wondered whether the food and wine of the region might not have been the bigger attraction. However the clarity of his reports on provincial affairs brought realisation that this was a wasted talent and he was recalled to London to the Arabian Department. In 1963 he was promoted counsellor and posted to Jakarta (the FO always sugaring an unattractive posting with a promotion) but before he could get there the Indonesians burnt down the Embassy and instead he went to the Office of the Political Adviser to the Commander in Chief Far East in Singapore. Never one to have a conventional career, he became chairman on the Joint Intelligence Committee Far East (JICFE, soon rechristened JOCFE) at a time of intense intelligence activity connected with *konfrontasi* and with the increasing American involvement in Vietnam. It was at this time of enormous pressure and major events that he received a letter from the administrators in London querying why the toilet paper in the office was not standard government issue – signed by a Mr E Crapp! Fortunately his wife Katie already knew the eponymous Mr Crapp from a previous posting of her own.

Appointed CMG for his efforts in Singapore he went to Moscow as Head of Chancery to 're enter' conventional diplomatic life. Since this period included the Geoffrey Harrison affair, it turned out to be far from conventional, although the period leading up to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia was a time of intense activity.

He might have hoped for his own embassy at this time but was instead posted as number 2 in Beirut in 1969. Since his first ambassador soon left on long leave and his second was unfit and recalled to London, he had all the responsibilities that he desired, but not the cachet. This came with his appointment to Cameroon in 1971 – where he also represented the UK in Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. This was his least favourite posting with no strategic interest in a poor climate – and one where he could not sail either.

His final posting however was quite the reverse, returning to Bahrain in 1974. By this time, the young men of the 1950's were in power so he found himself instantly well connected. He made his mark on the Emir, who was heard to refer to Jock as "my ambassador". Fortunately he did not do so in the hearing of the Queen during her visit. Jock was heavily involved in organising the successful visit and was appointed CVO thereafter. Jock retired on the day that the Queen departed, a fitting end to nearly 40 years of service.

Retirement from the Service was immediately followed by five years as Director General of the Middle East Association and a spell as Chairman of the Bahrain Society, an association that lasted until his death.

He finally retired in 1982 to Lymington, offering the opportunity to sail the last of a long line of small boats until decreasing mobility made him swallow the anchor in the mid 1990's. It was only this decreasing mobility that stopped him Scottish country dancing, a surprising passion for someone of his bulk, for in his prime he stood over 6 foot and 17 stone. No wonder some Beirut policemen were one night frightened by the majestic sight of Jock in full dancing rig only partly covered by a voluminous cloak. Retirement also enabled him to indulge in his love of cooking, fine wines and to continue to exercise his enormous talents as a raconteur: there was nothing that did not lead to a story.

He married first in 1946 Philida Bullwinkle and secondly in 1954 Katie Kelly (a niece of Sir David Kelly a former Ambassador in Moscow) who has since died.