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16th November 2010

The 3rd Sir Michael Weir Annual Lecture

Sir Michael Weir was the founding Chairman in 1990 of the British Egyptian Society and continued until 2006 when he handed over to The Rt. Hon Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean, shortly before his death. The annual lecture is a tribute to a man who was liked and admired by friends in Egypt and the United Kingdom. The first lecture, "*After the Crash*", was given by The Rt. Hon. the Lord Patten of Barnes, CH, PC, and the second by Sir Magdi Habib Yacoub, FRS, Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Imperial College, London.

We are honoured to have as our 3rd distinguished speaker Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles KCMG, LVO. Sir Sherard was a close friend of both Hilary and Michael Weir, and gave a very moving tribute at Michael's Memorial Service at St. James's Church, Piccadilly. He was a Third and then Second Secretary in Cairo 1980-83 when Michael was British Ambassador to Egypt. His talk will be entitled "*Mid West meets Mid East - The American Republic in Imperial Action*". Sir Sherard will take some questions afterwards.

Sir Sherard, a graduate of Hertford College, Oxford, and a fluent Arabic speaker, has had a very distinguished Diplomatic Career. From 1999-2001 he was Principal Private Secretary to Robin Cook, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and became British Ambassador to Israel from 2001-2003. He was next appointed Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, a post he held until 2007. From May 2007 until February 2009 he served as Ambassador to Afghanistan in Kabul. He left the post in 2009 to take up a new role as Special Representative of the UK Foreign Secretary for Afghanistan and Pakistan (a similar role to that held by Richard Holbrook who reports to the US President), and recently stepped down from this appointment and took Early Retirement from the Diplomatic Service. He is at present working on two books, one about Afghanistan and one offering amusing anecdotes from diplomatic life, before taking up a full-time job in the commercial world, which is likely to involve him in travel to the Middle East and elsewhere.

We are fortunate that Sir Sherard, at very short notice, has agreed to give this important lecture, and the Society is keen that the evening be well attended; so do please invite any friends and colleagues who might be interested. The lecture will be held at the Institution of Civil Engineers, One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA. The doors open at 6:30 pm for a 7pm start. There will be a drinks reception after the lecture.

Yours sincerely,

Noel Rands, Honorary Secretary

Please detach and send to 5, Brownlow Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 5JT e.mail noelrands@hotmail.com

I /we shall be able to attend Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles' lecture on 7th December 2009 at 6:30 pm for 7pm.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Tel/Fax/Email: _____

Honorary President: H.E. the Egyptian Ambassador
Chairman: The Rt. Hon. Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
Vice Chairman: Professor Magdy Ishak-Hanna
Treasurer: Mr. Mohamed Nasr Farid
Secretary: Mr. Noel Rands
Patron and Founder Member: Dr. Ahmed El Mokadem