



Above: KCMG Star

Minister's list of recommendations to the Queen - for the New Year and Birthday honours lists. The Committees examine nominations from the public, government departments and others across the whole range of national life and the committees are made up of Arts and Media; Community, Voluntary and Local Service; Economy; Education; Health; Science and Technology; Sport; State.

With regard to the Order of St Michael and St George it is bestowed upon persons of high office and upon those who have rendered extraordinary or important non-military service in a foreign country. The Order can also be conferred for important or loyal service in relation to foreign and Commonwealth affairs.

The Order was instituted in 1818 by the Prince Regent (later George IV), and was intended to commemorate the placing of the Ionian Islands and also Malta under British protection. Initially the Order was conferred upon those holding high position and commands in the Mediterranean. The islands there, acquired as a result of the Napoleonic Wars, were at that time very strategically placed and thus of importance to Britain. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, due to the expansion of the British Empire, the Order was then extended to those who had given distinguished service in the Dominions and Colonies, as well as foreign affairs generally and it has since evolved to encompass

any members of the Diplomatic Service and those who render service to UK interests overseas. The chapel of the order is in St Paul's cathedral.

Today the Order consists of the Sovereign, a Grand Master (currently The Duke of Kent), and includes three classes: 125 Knights and Dames Grand Cross (GCMG), 375 Knights and Dames Commander (KCMG and DCMG), and 1750 Companions (CMG). The Order's motto is "Auspicium melioris aevi" ('Token of a better age'). The banners of arms of the Knights and Dames Grand Cross are hung in the Chapel of the Order, which is in St Paul's Cathedral. Unique to this Order is the arrangement under which the enamelled metal plates of the complete armorial achievement of all three classes are placed in the seats of the Chapel.

The Star and Badge of the Order feature the cross of St George, the Order's motto, and a representation of the archangel St Michael holding in his right hand a flaming sword and trampling upon Satan. The collar of the Order is composed alternately of the lions of England Royally crowned and of white enamelled Maltese crosses, and of the cyphers SM (St Michael) and SG (St George). The centre of the collar consists of two winged lions each holding a book and seven arrows, surmounted by an imperial crown. The composition of the collar is therefore a reminder of the origins of the Order.

Bibliography

- <http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page4884.asp>
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