

Allan Rowley

MI6 officer and expert on southeast Asia who played a pivotal role in the region after the war

Brave, worldly and excellent company, Allan Rowley was just the sort of man the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), or MI6, was looking for as it began reshaping the organisation with which it had muddled its way through the Second World War. Rowley had developed notable leadership qualities, winning the Military Cross fighting in the jungles of Burma, and had acquired useful experience of southeast Asia.

Whether the Cairo roof party where he met the beautiful and vivacious SIS secretary Anne Cresswell, who was to become his partner in a long and loving marriage, was also the place where he was recruited is uncertain, but not unlikely. Rowley was ready for something new as a war wound had left him with a limp, confining him to desk work in the army.

Early recognition of his potential was indicated by a posting to head the SIS office in Rangoon in the early 1950s. Burma, which is modern Myanmar, had left the Commonwealth in 1948 but the Westminster-style government had run into trouble.

The shrewd and charismatic prime minister in waiting, Aung San, had been assassinated by a jealous rival and the politically volatile peoples of the central plain felt themselves ill-used when their particular party failed to win an election.

Frequent changes of government and a weak economy provided fertile ground for penetration of the indigenous "Red Flag" (traditionalist) and "White Flag" (revisionist) communist parties by the rival agents of Moscow and Beijing. By his characteristically frank and friendly engagement with the relatively naive local communist leaders, and in co-operation with the Burmese police, Rowley was able to counter both penetration attempts — and keep the issues domestic.

He also attempted the ultimately disheartening task of trying to win over the recalcitrant hill tribes to the idea of being ruled from Rangoon. The tribes had loyally supported Britain during the Japanese occupation and mistrusted the men of the central plain for being

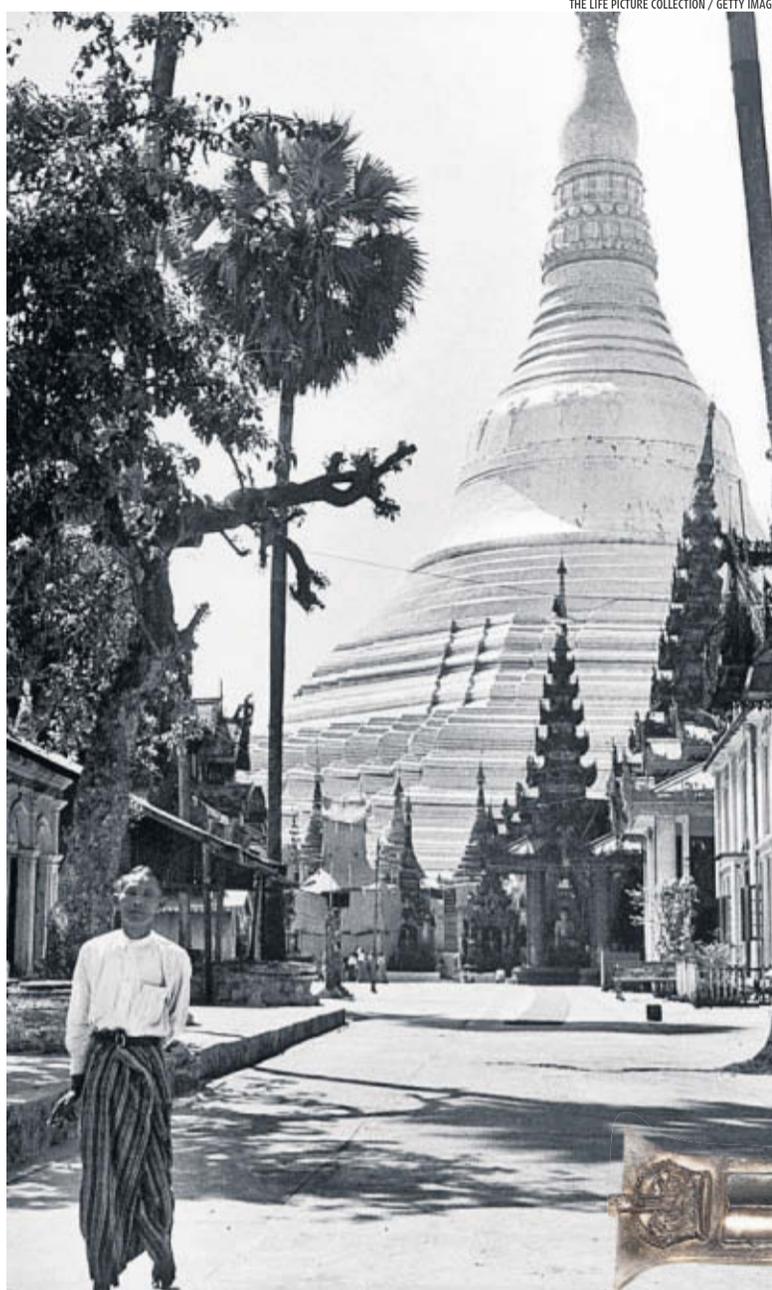
Rowley brought a special ethos to the Far East brotherhood

soft and corrupt. They were also religiously at odds with the Buddhist majority as a result of being subjected to Christian missionary zeal in the 19th century, and they proved impervious to Rowley's warm-hearted persuasion.

His grasp of Asiatic mores and prejudices led to his secondment to the office of the British commissioner-general for southeast Asia in Singapore, Sir Robert Heatlie Scott, who had succeeded Malcolm MacDonald in 1955. It was a delicate time for British influence in the region with Malaysian independence on the horizon, expanding communist influence in the Indo-China states, and Australia and New Zealand still hesitant about British withdrawal from east of Suez.

Appointed OBE in 1959 for his work with the commissioner-general, he jumped at the offer of another secondment, this time to Melbourne as an adviser to the Australian Secret Intelligence Service. He immediately felt at home in Melbourne, so much so that as his time there drew towards a close he left the service to become a businessman in Australia. This was not a success, however, and he rejoined the SIS in 1967, aged 45.

Acknowledged as an expert on southeast Asia, he was posted to Kuala Lumpur as counsellor and foreign af-



Allan Rowley was appointed to head the MI6 operation in Rangoon, top, in the early 1950s after being recruited, possibly at a roof-top party in Cairo, where he met his future wife, Anne Cresswell, above. She was already working for the intelligence services. He had won the Military Cross in 1945

fairs adviser to the British high commissioner. The cosmopolitan and vibrant Malaysian capital suited him well. Whisky "stengah" in hand, holding forth at "The Dog" — the Royal Selangor Club — soon brought him new friends and, crucially, the trust of ministers and senior officers of the Malaysian police and special branch.

Despite the main political party UNMO (United Malays National Organisation) being representative of all ethnic groups, resentment simmered among the poor urban Chinese. In May 1969 the population of Kuala Lumpur's "China Town" rioted against alleged Malay dominance. Violence spread to

other towns in Selangor state and the urban Malay population met violence with violence. A state of emergency was declared and the local predominantly Malay brigade of the Malaysian army was deployed in the streets in support of the police.

Order was restored but Rowley's advice in the aftermath was evidently key to the return of calm. This was recognised by his appointment as a Tan Sri, a superior form of Dato (knight) and a high honour.

From 1972 to 1974 he was seconded to the Northern Ireland Office, where his good fellowship and calmness in the face of continual and often exasperat-

ing crises helped to improve interdepartmental intelligence co-operation. He and the then Northern Ireland secretary, William Whitelaw, became particularly close. During the most trying times Rowley would match a tired and embattled Willie drink for drink, giving him opportunity to let his hair down with someone in whom he had absolute trust.

Rowley's final post with the SIS was as Controller Far East, a deanery stretching from Pakistan to Japan and New Zealand throughout which he was known, respected and welcomed at the highest levels. Always electing to stay with the head of station, he would sit up until the early morning, listening and encouraging. He brought a special ethos to the Far East brotherhood. He was appointed CMG in 1978.

His wife died on March 19 this year. He is survived by three daughters: Charlotte Eastwood, director of risk

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and compliance in a Jersey Trust company; Sarah Van Haeften, the director of an art gallery in London; and Joanna Wort, a retired chef; and a son: Nicholas Rowley, the chief executive of an educational technology company.

Frederick Allan Rowley was born in Rajputana, India, where his father was the regimental quartermaster sergeant of the Worcestershire Regiment. He was educated at Haig School, Aldershot, where his ambitions were to play cricket for Worcester and join the army. He was selected for the county colts and through

this found a job as a clerk in Aldershot town hall. A territorial army soldier on the outbreak of war in 1939, he was selected for officer training in India and commissioned in 1941 into the 10th Baluch Regiment, a unit with a reputation for courage dating from 1844. Rowley joined the 5th battalion in the 19th Indian "Dagger" division training for the 14th Army's eventual recovery of Japanese-occupied Burma.

The 19th Indian division just beat the 2nd British division in the race to Shwebo, the regional capital on the central reaches of the Irrawaddy. It was there that Rowley won his Military Cross in February 1945. As a company commander of 5/10th Baluch, he led the attack on a Japanese position half a mile ahead of the ground held by the battalion. With dash and skill he surprised the enemy, turning them out of a position that was delaying the advance of the entire brigade.

Two months later he was badly wounded, resulting in the limp that would have confined him to staff or administrative posts had he elected to stay in the army. Both in the army and when with SIS, he is said to have claimed as an objective that anyone coming to his office should feel happier on leaving it than when they entered.

Allan Rowley, CMG, OBE, MC, soldier and senior officer of MI6, was born on July 27, 1922. He died on July 28, 2014, aged 92

Lives in brief

Michael Brooke, QC, was born on May 8, 1942. He died on June 8, 2014, aged 72



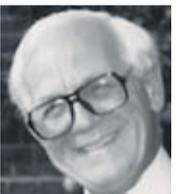
In the late Eighties and early Nineties Michael Brooke helped to win compensation for more than 1,000 haemophiliacs who had been treated by the NHS with transfusions of blood infected with HIV. He was the lead junior counsel in the case alleging government mismanagement of the National Blood Transfusion Service.

The law was against the haemophiliacs, but after Brooke's powerful presentation of the case, the judge, Sir Harry Ognall, took the unprecedented step of writing an open, handwritten note recommending a settlement. Even more significant was his handling of the Hepatitis C litigation in 2000, another case concerning contaminated blood transfusions. By then a QC (he took silk in 1994), his case was based on European and comparative law. In 2003 he was elected a Bencher of Gray's Inn.

He was born in London in 1942, the only son of a theatrical couple, Reginald and Beryl Brooke. He appeared in seven films as a child actor, including a role as Jack Hawkins's son in *The Long Arm* (1956). He studied law at Edinburgh University and was called to the Bar in England in 1968. In 1972 he married Sophie Vautier with whom he had three sons: Nicholas, Anthony and Benjamin. They divorced in 1985. He later married Mireille Colahan.

After setting up the London-Paris Bar Exchange — involving a mock trial with barristers performing in a foreign tongue — Brooke was awarded the Legion d'Honneur in 2012.

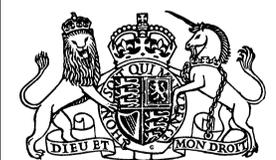
Martin Mays-Smith, banker, was born on November 17, 1930. He died on April 25, 2014, aged 83



As head of banking at Kleinwort Benson, Martin Mays-Smith will be remembered for his wise lending decisions. Later in his career, as chairman of First National Finance, he turned the company around when it was suffering a liquidity squeeze. He was a man of great conviction, who also worked tirelessly for charitable causes.

Born in 1930, he was educated at Eton and read classics at Trinity College, Cambridge. He worked at the Bank of England, Barclays, and William Brandt & Sons before moving to Kleinwort Benson in 1972. Old school, he was less interested in making piles of money than in behaving well. Yet he was a ferocious negotiator. He began one business lunch asserting, "Don't you dare ask for a rate reduction because you won't get one — now what would you like to drink?" His first wife, Jenny, died of cancer in 1989. Their three daughters survive him, together with his second wife, Eliza.

Court Circular



Buckingham Palace
12th October, 2014

The Earl of Wessex this afternoon took the salute at the Annual Inspection of the Light Cavalry, Honourable Artillery Company on Smith's Lawn, Windsor, Berkshire.