

KIRIBATI GOVERNMENT HONOURS JOHN SMITH, CMG

The following Press Release was made by the Kiribati Honorary Consulate on July 12th 2009:

'I am delighted to release the following message from the Secretary to the Cabinet, Government of Kiribati:

"I am pleased to inform that the Beretitenti, acting in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet, has agreed to confer the Kiribati Grand Order/Ana Tokabeti Kiribati on Mr. John Smith CMG.

"The ceremony to bestow medals on awardees this year will be held on Monday 13 July at Bairiki, Tarawa and coincides with National Day celebrations. I would appreciate advice if Mr. John Smith were able to attend so we can confirm arrangements for the ceremony. Alternatively, we could arrange for you to do the honours in the UK on behalf of Government at a time and place convenient to Mr. John Smith.

"Please convey my thanks to the UK Kiribati community for the nomination".

The nomination was as follows:

'On behalf of the I Kiribati community in the UK, I have the honour to recommend Mr John Smith CMG, former Governor of the Gilbert Islands before Independence in 1979, for the award of ANA TOKABETI KIRIBATI.

'On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of Independence in 2009, it seems highly appropriate to honour the contribution that he made to the people of Kiribati, supporting the negotiation of Independence and in particular, facilitating the design of the unique political system that has served the nation since 1979. He made this contribution despite intense pressure from the UK for him to influence the I Kiribati decision makers to follow the 'conventional' route to Independence, and at personal cost.

'The political stability of Kiribati since independence, when compared to the less happy history of many of the former British dependencies that became independent with 'Westminster' constitutions at about the same time as Kiribati (in the Pacific and elsewhere), confirm John Smith's foresight, wisdom and commitment to the nation of which he was then Governor. He has recently celebrated his 80th Birthday, and has now retired to live near his children. In our view, it is most right at this time to recognise his role in helping to build the independent Kiribati nation'.

The medal will formally be presented to John Smith on October 17th at the Kiribati Consulate. KTA Members will be most welcome to attend, and further details will be posted on the Website nearer the time.



**John and Sylvester Smith at the
30th Anniversary Independence Celebrations at Carmarthen**