

*The Times* (London), June 16 1987, Tuesday

Obituary of Mr J. G. **Mavrogordato**

Mr J. G. (Jack) **Mavrogordato**, CMG, one of the world's best known falconers and author of the authoritative text on sparrow-hawks, died on June 14. He was 82.

He was a barrister, who spent much of his working life in the Sudan.

John George **Mavrogordato** was born on May 9, 1905, and was educated at Charterhouse and Christ Church, Oxford. His interest in the sport started as boy when he flew owls, then he learned more serious falconry in Kent.

He practised at the Chancery Bar from 1932 to 1939 and worked in the Ministry of Aircraft Production during the war, after which he was appointed Advocate-General in the Sudan - where there was a more spacious kind of falconry to be enjoyed. He held various other legal posts in the Sudan until he retired in 1961.

Meanwhile he had published, in 1960, *A Hawk for the Bush*, a major treatise on the training of the sparrow-hawk. Falconry, although deplored as a blood sport, was then beginning to appeal as a romantic pastime to a new generation. The existing literature tended to have been written long ago by country gentlemen with professional falconers to do the work for them.

'Mavro's book was extremely practical and appealed to the new breed of enthusiasts, who usually had to fly in country more suited to the once-despised sparrow-hawk than to the long-winged hawks.

The book - a godsend to beginners - also had a great deal to teach experienced austringers about the taking, rearing and hacking of eyasses; diet; calling-off; the haggard; and health and disease.

It established the author's reputation and he followed it with the companion volume *A Falcon in the Field* (1967). Here, he was concerned with the training and flying of long-winged hawks or falcons with the accent on flying at 'wild quarry in the field'. The book was handsomely illustrated by George Lodge and D. M. Henry.

**Mavrogordato** wrote with controlled fervour about the art and mysteries of this ancient sport in which the cardinal virtues are patience, diligence and an all-excluding absorption in the manners of the falcon and the behaviour of its quarry.

He himself did most of his flying, until a few years ago, on Salisbury Plain and in Scotland, and did partridge falconry in Lincolnshire.

He was a past president of the British Falconers' Club. Latterly, he was probably better known on the world scene than in England. He was something of a recluse. In 1982 he published an autobiography, *Behind the Scenes*.

He never married.