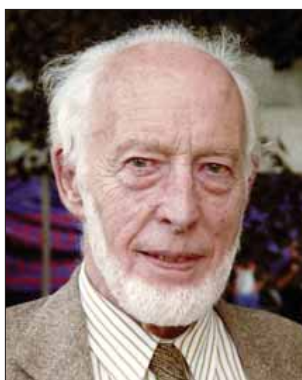


JOHN BARTHOLOMEW

CARTOGRAPHER AND MAP-MAKER

Born 15 January 1923 — Died 16 January 2008



John Bartholomew, who has died aged 85, was one of three brothers who were the last of five generations to run the Edinburgh cartographic business of John Bartholomew & Son Ltd. With Peter and Robert, John maintained the firm among leading map publishers of the world until their retirements in 1980 following a buy-out by Reader's Digest.

John Bartholomew & Son Ltd was a world leader in cartography, supplying maps and atlases to a global market. When eldest brother John took over as cartographic director, the responsibilities inherited from his father (also John) included editing the Times World Atlas and a company output that included productions whose popularity never hid their scholarlyness – Reader's Digest Atlas, Bartholomews Concise Atlas, gazetteers and many school atlases.

When Bartholomew graduated in geography from Edinburgh University in 1951, his father insisted that his son have experience in maps before taking a role in the family business. So he served a cartographic apprenticeship before taking on full responsibility for maps in 1959.

Bartholomews was a business founded on innovation, from George Bartholomew born in 1784 to his great-grandson John George Bartholomew (1860–1920) who pioneered a system of layer colouring for contours. He introduced new business methods as well as major atlases included the *Survey Atlas of Scotland* (1895) and *Physical Atlas: Meteorology* (1899) and *Zoogeography* (1911). John (Ian) Bartholomew (1890–1962) studied in Leipzig, Paris and Edinburgh, and completed the *Times Survey Atlas* (1922) and later The Mid-Century edition of the *Times Atlas of the World* (1955–60), a leading world reference atlas.

Yet the business never failed to lose the homely touch. Under John's direction, Bartholomews maintained and expanded a huge team of volunteer local 'map revision officers' – cyclists and walkers who ranged across their particular patches of the UK submitting changes and alterations for the renowned 'Revised Half-Inch Contoured Maps'. For nearly a century, 'Bart's Half-Inch' retained such a reputation for accuracy and detail that no touring cyclist would venture out on a run without a Bart's map stuffed into the rear pocket of his cycling vest. For years into the 20th century, Bart's Half-Inch bore the

insignia of the Cyclists' Touring Club in the centrefold of each sheet. Royal patronage was welcomed, and even as late as 1963, half-inch sheets carried the note 'By Appointment to his Late Majesty King George V' (repeat – *George V*).

John Christopher Bartholomew was born in Marchmont, Edinburgh, first

son of his parents John and Belgian-born Marie Antoinette Sarolea. Whimsically, they included 'Christopher' as his middle name to remember Columbus, and the young Bartholomew grew up both an academic and explorer. Educated for three years at St Trinian's (source of Ronald Searle's legendary 'St Trinian's') and Edinburgh Academy, he became a contemporary of Prince Philip at Gordonstoun under headmaster Kurt Hahn.

On one occasion, the future Duke of Edinburgh came down from Gordonstoun joining John to spend a weekend at the family home of the Manor House at Inveresk near Musselburgh, and was introduced by John's late sister Ailie to golf.

Tall, slim with a white beard, Bartholomew cut an imposing if slightly ascetic figure. A geography graduate of Edinburgh University, he held a fascination for the natural sciences that lasted throughout his life. Astronomy, meteorology, geology, oceanography formed for him the wider bounds of his beloved geography. Modest and quiet spoken, he loved to converse, and ranged easily across social scales. As president of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society like his father and grandfather before him, he shared the company of such as astronaut Neil Armstrong and naturalist Sir David Attenborough.

His personal exploration cut across lands, libraries and faith. He travelled in six of the world's seven continents, his final expedition being a rugged camping trek at the age of 68 to Patagonia in January 1991 – after a hip replacement operation. He failed only in a lifelong ambition to reach Antarctica; indeed, he intended to apply to the British Antarctic Survey after graduating, but his father suffering increasingly from arthritis, and required his talents in the company.

Commissioned into the Royal Engineers at the outbreak of war, Bartholomew served in Palestine and Africa – mapping and surveying of course. On one occasion, driving his colonel, he unceremoniously halted, and to the astonishment of his companions, had the

temerity to order his commanding officer out of the vehicle and some paces ahead. Warily, the officer moved out. “You are now standing, sir, exactly on the Equator” came Captain Bartholomew’s explanation.

His huge collection of books – almost all non-fiction and covering travel, earth and space sciences – was a source of constant reference. He’d sit on the balcony of his Braids home, referring to a book while scanning the night sky for a comet, or noctilucent cloud, the bright cloudlike atmospheric phenomena visible in deep twilight, forming bright colours in the mesosphere 50 miles above the surface of the earth.

His faith meant much. A spiritual man born into the Kirk, he was deeply knowledgeable of Christian Science and for a period was active in Moral Re-Armament before in 1954 being accepted into Roman Catholicism. To the end of his life, he remained motivated by matters ecumenical.

The family through the company created an extensive reference library, with source information on atlases, maps and gazetteers of their own as well as those from rival UK and foreign publishers. This John Bartholomew Collection included an unrivalled collection of antiquarian atlases, dating from 1525 built up over generations. In 1995, some 36 items in 53 volumes were donated by the family in memory of John Bartholomew (1890–1962), (John’s father). The Bartholomew Collection now runs to some 40 metres of shelf space.

He took active roles in a great many societies and organisations, and he retained interest in the John Bartholomew Award for Small-Scale Mapping. Now sponsored by Collins Bartholomew, he played an active role in the judging almost to the end of his life.

His own collecting habits reflected his abilities as a communicator. He lectured and gave talks throughout his life, and was in demand pundit on cartography. In addition to his books, he leaves behind a minor mountain of newspaper cuttings, pamphlets, photocopies, handwritten notes and personally hand-drawn maps. His papers include details of one of his first projects – a map of Edinburgh Zoo that became part of the official guide to the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland. He also produced at no cost countless maps for private interest groups and organisations.

He bequeathed three physical legacies – an indicator for the summit of 612-ft Berwick Law; with retired solicitor George Russell the initiation of a 360-degree hill indicator for the Braids, a two-ton piece of local basalt topped by a full-colour guide; and a sundial in Hermitage of Braid, next door to his home below the Pentlands.

Bartholomew died in Edinburgh the day after his 85th birthday, and is survived by his wife Ginette née Achard-James; sons John Eric, Philip, Christopher, Patrick and Ivon; and 11 grandchildren.

GORDON CASELY