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JOHN GEORGE BARTHOLOMEW A CENTENARY

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Scotland has a long and distinguished tradition in the making of maps, as is evidenced by such illustrious names as Timothy Pont, Gordon, Adair, Ainslie, Lizars, Lothian, Johnston, Kirkwood, Thomson and Bartholomew. John Ogilvie and George Philip are another two Scottish cartographers, who spent most of their working lives south of the Border. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Edinburgh was very much the centre of Scottish printing, and probably on that account map-making and map-publishing became a notable activity of the Capital and have remained so ever since.

In March 1960, it was appropriate to look back with interest on a cartographic centenary, for on the 22nd of March, 1860, there was born in Edinburgh John George Bartholomew. Although his family had for three generations established its name in the devising and production of maps, this young man was destined to play a very noteworthy part in raising the standards and increasing the public appreciation of not only cartography but also geography, to which maps are so essential. The earliest association of the name Bartholomew with map-making was with George Bartholomew (1784-1871) who, at the age of thirteen, started his apprenticeship as a map engraver with the Edinburgh firm of W. & D. Lizars. John Bartholomew (1805-1861) followed in his father's footsteps and ultimately set up his own engraving business, into which he brought his son in turn, another John (1831-1893), first as a trainee and later as a partner when, in 1860, the new business title of John Bartholomew & Son was created, with offices at 4A North Bridge and the printing works round the corner in Carrubber's Close. In 1870 the business premises were removed to 17 Brown Square, where the Dental College now stands. From there the next removal was to 31 Chambers Street in 1879, where, shortly after, John George (1860-1920) following an education at the

Royal High School and the University of Edinburgh, joined his father in the trade that had by that time become a family tradition. In less than ten years, in 1888, at the early age of twenty-eight, he succeeded his father in the entire management of the business, and a year later moved his charge to Park Road and named it "The Edinburgh Geographical Institute".

From 1888, John George was in partnership with Thomas Nelson, until the latter died in 1892, and from 1893 until 1919 his cousin Andrew G. Scott was his partner and financial adviser. During the period of these two partnerships the firm was known as John Bartholomew and Co., but in 1919 it was registered as a private limited company, with the title so widely known today — John Bartholomew & Son Ltd. In 1911, a move was made to an entirely new building in Duncan Street, employing as its imposing facade the front of John George Bartholomew's residence, Falcon Hall.

John George Bartholomew was a man of wide erudition and he initiated and carried forward projects of considerable magnitude. In 1895 *The Survey Atlas of Scotland*, uniting in one whole the sectional sheets on the scale of half an inch to the mile, which had achieved wide popularity and which had, since 1883, used layer-colouring to indicate altitude — a novelty first introduced in 1880, at his own suggestion, in the topographical maps included in Baddeley's *Guide to the English Lake District*. These half-inch maps thus had the distinction of being the first topographical series in any country to make use of the layer-coloured system, now so generally accepted. The year 1898 saw the appearance of *The Citizens' Atlas*, a large reference atlas of the world that long enjoyed a justly earned popularity in all kinds of settings.

In 1899 there appeared the first volume of the most important project ever planned by the Institute — a physical atlas on a scale of unparalleled magnitude. It was *The Atlas of Meteorology*, designed to be the third volume of a series of seven. The first volume was to deal with the extent of land and sea surveys, leading on to geological surveys; the second to orography, hydrography and oceanography; the fourth to botany, the fifth to zoology, the sixth to ethnography and the seventh to general cosmography. Although only two of the volumes were completed, (the second was *The Atlas of Zoogeography* in 1911) they gained world-wide recognition for their size, clarity, detail and artistry and were noteworthy for the many new features introduced under the stimulus of J. G. Bartholomew and the team of experts he gathered around him. Some of the maps specially designed for this series were subsequently incorporated in other text-books and atlases. One of his productions for schools, *The Comparative Atlas*, is still enjoying popularity sixty years after its appearance and has nearly achieved the two million copies mark.

An expanded edition of *The Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles* followed in 1904. As well as the large-scale maps, these atlases contained smaller-scale variants illustrating geology and meteorology, and included some showing density of population — another novelty now regarded as a necessity. Up-to-date examples of them were specially prepared by Bartholomew, for reproduction in *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, incorporating the results of the censuses of 1901 and 1911 in Scotland. Other notable publications were *The Survey Atlas of England and Wales* in 1903, *The Atlas of the World's Commerce* in 1907, employing material accumulated for Vol. VI of the major series, *The Imperial Atlas of India* in 1909 and *The Historical Atlas of the Holy Land* in 1915. From him came also the superb maps and charts for Sir John Murray's famous *Bathymetrical Survey of Scottish Freshwater Lochs*. His latest work, in 1920, was the preparation of nearly all the plates for the monumental *The Times Survey Atlas of the World*, published in 1922 and a standard work for a generation or more.

Outside the Geographical Institute, J. G. Bartholomew's enthusiasm found yet other causes to espouse, and one of the first and naturally near to his heart was the founding of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 1884. He was one of its most active protagonists and did yeoman service in overcoming the many and far from insignificant difficulties that beset the path of the pioneers. From its inception until his death, he was one of its honorary secretaries, and he contributed both maps and articles to its magazine. His was the driving force behind the fine production of the Edinburgh number produced in 1919. ^[1] He also took a leading part in the establishment of the first Lectureship in Geography at the University of Edinburgh, though he would have liked it to be a Chair, and was among its earliest and most generous benefactors, both to the post and to the equipment of the department which followed. His eminence in his subject and his devoted public work gained for him honorary membership and medals of a variety of geographical societies, both at home and abroad, and in 1909 his old university bestowed upon him the honorary degree of LL.D. For the leading part he played in placing cartography in this country on a thoroughly scientific basis, and his distinguished services to geography, he was appointed Geographer and Cartographer to H.M. King George V.

In his later years he had to maintain a continuous battle with ill health and it was not an uncommon thing for him to send invaluable advice to the Society's council from his sick bed. It may have solaced him a little that in his search for better health he embarked on travels which gave him glimpses of the other lands he had known so intimately, but from maps only. On one of those trips, to Portugal, he died at Cintra, in 1920.

From the end of World War I, in which he served with distinction and gained the M.C., John Bartholomew (1890-), the eldest son, took over the management of the business, and to his aid as the years passed came three of his sons, the eldest appropriately bearing the family name of John. To John Bartholomew M.C., fell the task, among others, of editing the second edition of *The Times Atlas of the World* in five volumes between 1955 and 1960. On the other hand, he has had to cater for an entirely new generation of map users—motoring and travel organisations, shipping companies, air lines and Youth Hostel Associations. He has seen produced *The British Isles Pocket Atlas* 1918, *The London Pocket Atlas* 1922, *The World Pocket Atlas* 1923, *The Handy Reference Atlas* 1923, *The Graphic Atlas* 1932, *The Road Atlas of Great Britain* 1943, *The Compact Atlas* 1943, *The Regional Atlas* 1948, *The Columbus Atlas* 1953, *The Edinburgh World Atlas* 1954 and *The Road-master Atlas of Great Britain* 1958.

Again in the family tradition, he served as a Joint Honorary Secretary of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society from 1920 till 1950 and as its President from 1950 to 1954. Medals and honorary memberships, too, have inevitably come his way for devoted and far-sighted service, and Edinburgh University awarded him an honorary LL.D., in 1956. In 1960 he was appointed Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. In turn, his son John C. Bartholomew is now one of the two Joint Honorary Secretaries of the Society, after war-service mapping in the Middle East. Service to the Society, in many forms, and generosity sometimes most carefully concealed, are the key-notes of the Bartholomew family, from fathers to sons.

This brief resumé on the extent and variety of the publications of the Bartholomew firm would be incomplete as a record of achievement without some reference to the advances made in methods and materials, in which, from the first, they have been among the pioneers. Early maps were produced from engraving on steel and copper plates. Then came lithography and a variety of other work, ranging from cheque books to drawings for an early Forth Bridge and Gladstone's election literature in 1880. By 1888 the work was exclusively cartographical and atlases were being issued in languages other than English—there were, in the nineteen-thirties, no less than six variants for India. Colour lithography followed, and then photo-lithography. Now the newest plastics serve as the basis of 'negatives' in map printing. Mechanisation has in its turn speeded up the processes, but speed has to be geared to secure the highest degree of accuracy. Lastly, the search for a paper which will retain its size and colour under the widest range of climatic vagaries is ever being prosecuted.

[1] *S.C.M.*, 1919, Vol. XXXV, No. 8.