

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Bartholomew family (*per.* 1805-1986), *map publishers*

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Bartholomew family (*per.* 1805–1986), map publishers, were Edinburgh geographers of international renown. The founder of the business was **George Bartholomew** (1784–1871), who was born on 9 January 1784, perhaps in Dunfermline, the eldest (natural) son of John Bartholomew (1754–1817) of Baldrige, Dunfermline, and Margaret Aitken (1758–1808). George, though as much a general engraver as a specialist map-engraver, was the direct ancestor of the Edinburgh family of map makers John Bartholomew & Son Ltd. He was brought up by his mother alone in humble circumstances on the south side of Edinburgh's Old Town (off Richmond Street).

George Bartholomew showed early promise by the neatness of his copperplate script, so that in 1797 he was apprenticed to the well-known engraver Daniel Lizars (1754–1812), at the Parliamentary Backstairs, and under whose watchful eye he succeeded to the tradition handed down from Andrew Bell (1726–1809), proprietor of the original *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and before him from Richard Cooper, founder of the school of map engravers in Edinburgh. Bartholomew undertook a variety of engraving commissions, including business prospectuses, visiting cards, ornamental titling and the occasional presentation watch, all of which demonstrated his excellence in lettering.

In 1805 or 1806, a few years after the completion of his apprenticeship, Bartholomew set up on his own as an independent engraver, trading from East Richmond Street, though he continued to work for Lizars. After William Home Lizars (1788–1859) and his brother Daniel succeeded to the business on the death of their father in 1812, and moved to larger premises at 3 St James Square, Bartholomew widened his skills to take in map-engraving on both copper and steel plates.

On 15 May 1815 at St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh, Bartholomew married Anne McGregor (1791–1849) from Gladsmuir, a few miles to the east of Edinburgh. They had four sons and six daughters, of whom the eldest son, John [see below], was born on 26 April 1805, some ten years before the marriage. Following his marriage George continued to be listed in

Edinburgh's trade directories as an independent engraver, usually based in East Richmond Street until the 1820s and then at 6 Leopold Place until the 1840s, as well as at addresses in Gayfield Place. He was identified with John Lothian's 'Plan of the City of Edinburgh' (1825, 1829), and Lothian's 'Plan of the Town of Leith and its Vicinity' (1826), which also appears in John Wood's *Atlas of Scottish Towns* (1828), which established his reputation with local publishers.

Since George's work was essentially carried out in the name of his employer, W. H. Lizars, it is hard to identify his contribution to the firm's output; however, enough evidence survives to show his involvement in county maps of Scotland and other general maps used for a sequence of atlases, such as Lothian's *County Atlas of Scotland* (1827), J. Thomson's *Atlas of Scotland* (1831), W. H. Lizars's *Edinburgh Geographical General Atlas* (1840), and Blackwood's *Atlas of Scotland* (1840). He continued to work, on occasion, for his son John, and indeed outlived the latter by a decade. He died of cancer of the cheek at 6 Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, on 23 October 1871. His family memorial is on the west wall of Warriston cemetery, Edinburgh.

About 1820 George's son **John Bartholomew** (1805-1861) was apprenticed to W. H. Lizars, where he developed his pictorial engraving skills. It is from this date that the family enterprise has traditionally taken its foundation. Bartholomew's work records demonstrate that he was probably trained in map-engraving by his father, by then Lizars's senior map-engraver. After completing his apprenticeship in 1826 John set up on his own account as an engraver, working during his early years from 4 East St James Street. Lizars continued to support him with orders for an increasing number of maps, his earliest being a 'Plan of Edinburgh for the General Post Office Directory' (1826). His brother William (1819–1881) followed a similar training, and worked for his father and in the Ordnance Survey office before succumbing to mental illness. From the mid- 1850s he was permanently resident in the Crichton Royal Institute in Dumfries, then in the late 1870s was transferred to the Royal Edinburgh Asylum. Nevertheless, some remarkable full-size pen-and-ink drawings by him survive from the time that he was institutionalized which show patients suffering from a wide range of medical conditions.

On 25 May 1829 John Bartholomew married Margaret (1796–1864), the daughter of William McGregor (d. 1821), a farmer's servant of Gladsmuir. They had five children, of whom John (1831–1893) [see below] and Henry (1834–1899) became engravers; a daughter, Anne, survived him. John Bartholomew's first commercial premises were in 1859 at 4 North Bridge, which he shared with the publishers Adam and Charles Black, and which had the advantage of a printing works in an adjacent building, Spottiswood House. He prepared many maps for Black's publications, including travel

guidebooks and also the eighth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in twenty-one volumes, which Adam Black had purchased from Constable in 1827. The close association between the two firms was to continue for more than forty years. John's work for Blacks and for atlases such as Lizars's *Edinburgh Geographical General Atlas* (1836) was of very high quality in the true tradition of Edinburgh engraving. In 1855 three generations of Bartholomews—John, his father, and his sons—shared the work in premises at 59 York Place. John retired in 1859 and moved to Grangebank Cottage, Morningside, Edinburgh, where he died on 9 April 1861.

John and Margaret's son **John Bartholomew** (1831-1893) was born on 25 December 1831, probably at 4 East St James Street, Edinburgh. He was trained as a geographical draughtsman and engraver and spent two years with the noted German geographer Augustus Petermann in the London offices of Justus Perthes of Gotha. He travelled widely to obtain new work and introduced a programme of improvements, including the installation of lithographic printing, which brought considerable economies. On 5 July 1859 John married Annie (1836—1872), the daughter of John McGregor (1788—1863), a smith of Greenock. He moved into new premises in 1870 at 31 Chambers Street. Following his first wife's death, on 4 March 1874 he married Anne Cumming (1837—1908), the daughter of Primrose Nimmo, a master brassfounder of Edinburgh, and his wife, Anne Philip, who was related to George Philip, the founder of the Liverpool map makers, who in 1879 suggested the idea of a merger between the two companies. John rejected the idea, preferring to retain his independence and to continue working in his native Scotland.

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a time of exploration and colonial expansion, and maps were in demand to illustrate and exploit the changes that were taking place. John Bartholomew benefited from these opportunities by receiving requests for large numbers of maps and many new atlases, many from Edinburgh or Scottish publishers such as Fullarton, Nelson, Chambers, and Collins. In addition to regular work, he undertook special commissions such as engraving medical and botanical illustrations and the map of Treasure Island for Robert Louis Stevenson's famous novel. New quarter-inch maps of Scotland (1862) and England and Wales (1866) produced for A. and C. Black were followed by a set of thirty regional maps of Scotland (1875—86) at the half-inch to 1 mile scale. Land relief was shown by hachuring, a shading of short lines to imitate shadow cast by slopes: however, John experimented with the new technique of showing relief by layer colouring, where each height layer is represented in a different colour, graduating from light green through increasing shades of brown to white for mountain tops. This system was used for their now famous half-inch to 1 mile

Reduced Ordnance Maps of Scotland (1890–95) and England and Wales (1897–1903), which, with their subsequent editions, have become a trademark for Bartholomew. John had a reserved nature, which made him unwilling to enter fully into public life, but he took great interest in the reformation of the Scottish Rights of Way and Recreation Society (1880) and was elected a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1857. Among his sponsors were the publisher W. G. Blackie and the surveyor and geographer George Everest. John retired in 1888 and died in London on 30 March 1893.

John Bartholomew's elder son from his first marriage, **John George Bartholomew** (1860–1920), geographer and cartographer, was born on 22 March 1860 at 10 Comely Green Place, Edinburgh. He was educated at the Royal High School and Edinburgh University but did not take his degree. About 1880 he started work at his father's firm, but in his early twenties he developed a severe tubercular condition, which, despite a recuperative eight-month sea voyage to Australia, troubled him throughout his life.

John George entered actively into the work of the business and perfected the intricate skills of map compilations and production under the guidance of his father. He saw through the press the first examples of contour layer coloured maps used for Baddeley's *Lake District Guide* in 1880, and showed a keen interest and sensitivity in developing the best colour gradations for the new half-inch maps. On his father's retirement John George, although only twenty-eight years old, took full control of the business. On 23 April 1889 he married Janet, known as Jennie (1857–1936), the daughter of Alexander Sinclair Macdonald, JP, of Sydera Hall, near Dornoch, Sutherland, with whom he had two daughters and three sons, including John (Ian) [see below], who succeeded him as head of the company.

In the year that he took control of the company, John George formed a partnership with the publisher Thomas Nelson, and in 1889 they moved into their new premises in Park Road, adjacent to Holyrood Park. After Nelson's death in 1892 he took as his partner his cousin Andrew G. Scott (1861–1938), and in 1911 he realized his ambitious plan for purpose-built offices and printing works at 12 Duncan Street, Newington.

It was as a result of John George's flair and energy that the business prospered. The company changed from producing maps solely for specific customers to the status of a fully fledged publishing house with its own list. John George introduced new popular titles that were revised at frequent intervals over the following years. They included the *Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles* (1887; eighteen editions to 1972), *Citizen's Atlas of the World* (1898; ten editions to 1952), and *Handy Reference Atlas of London* (1907; thirteen editions to 1968), plus commercial reference maps of the world and plans of

major cities. Print runs increased; the firm produced half a million plans of London for the 1897 jubilee celebrations for Newnes, 60,000 cycling maps, 225,000 timetable maps for The London and North West Railway, and 40,000 road maps for the Automobile Association, as well as a plethora of individual maps and diagrams for books and encyclopaedias, and ephemera such as circular maps for the pottery of McIntyre of Burslem.

John George was reserved and studious, and his insistence on accuracy and quality in all his work made him a strict and exacting employer. He was also a benevolent one, however, who organized recreational activities and an innovatory company profit-sharing scheme for his staff. His friend Dr George Chisholm noted that, despite his infirm health, he was 'singularly, though quietly, happy, a natural result of the qualities in him which inspired confidence and affection among those who came into intimate contact with him.' He was an elder at the United Free Church of St George, Edinburgh.

Throughout his life John George never lost his enthusiasm for accepting new challenges and furthering his interest in the geographical sciences. He enjoyed close acquaintance with many leading academics and travellers of the day, such as the explorers Sir Ernest Shackleton, Dr William Bruce, H. M. Stanley, and Cecil Rhodes. These friendships led him into collaboration with many of them to represent their work and discoveries in map form. To reflect the academic aspect of his work he gave his company premises the title of the Edinburgh Geographical Institute, the equal of the Perthes Geographical Institute in Gotha. The title proudly adorned the Palladian frontage of his new building, which had been taken from Falcon Hall in Morningside, where the family had lived from 1899 to 1907 before it was demolished.

John George's interest in the development of the geographical sciences led him with others to found in 1884 the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, of which he was honorary secretary until his death. He also compiled the detailed travellers' maps for the society's *Scottish Geographical Magazine* from its inception. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1887) and of the Royal Geographical Society of London (1888), receiving the latter institution's Victoria medal in 1905. In 1904 he was awarded the prestigious grand prix at the St Louis International Exhibition. He (unsuccessfully) championed the cause of a chair in geography at Edinburgh University, from which he received an honorary doctorate of laws in 1909, being described in his citation as 'a very Prince of Cartographers [who] had done more than any other man to elevate and improve the standards and methods of cartographical workmanship'. His portrait by Edward Arthur Walton commemorating the event is now in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. In 1910 he was honoured by appointment as geographer and cartographer to George V. He was an honorary member of various overseas geographical

societies, including those of Paris, Portugal, Budapest, and Chicago, and in 1918 was awarded the Geographical Society of Chicago's Helen Carver medal.

John George's skill in depicting complex distributions clearly in map form was evident in a range of important maps and atlases, among them Sir Archibald Geikie's 'Geological Map of Scotland' (1892), 'The Naturalist's Map of Scotland' (1893), and 'Botanical Map of Scotland' (1907). The *Survey Atlas of Scotland* (1895) offered, in addition to thematic maps, complete coverage of Scotland on the half-inch to 1 mile scale. It was followed by the volume for England and Wales (1903), the *Climatological Atlas of India* (1906), and the *Atlas of World's Commerce* (1907). However, John George's grand scheme of representing the current state of knowledge of the natural sciences in a major five-volume physical atlas to rival the renowned *Physikalischer Atlas* by Berghaus foundered; the project was too large for a single publisher, and only the *Meteorology* (1899) and *Zoogeography* (1911) volumes were published. He successfully prepared Sir John Murray's 'Bathymetrical Survey of the Scottish Freshwater Lochs' (1910), using the newly developed layer colouring to great effect, and mapped the scientific findings of the *Challenger* oceanographic expedition of 1872–6, which included the newly discovered Bartholomew Deep, a 25,000 foot trench off Antofagasta in Chile, which Murray named in honour of his friend.

John George began working on *The Times Survey Atlas of the World* (1922), a very detailed portrayal of the world and Europe after the changes of the First World War, with a sequence of specially prepared thematic maps. He did not live to see it completed, however, since he had to travel to Estoril in Portugal with his wife and daughters to regain his health. Despite moving to the healthier hills around Sintra, he died on 14 April 1920, and his remains were buried there. The first and subsequent editions of *The Times* atlas made it one of the most important and respected atlases of the later twentieth century and a fitting memorial to John George's illustrious career.

John George's eldest son, **John [known as Ian] Bartholomew** (1890–1962), who took over the firm on his father's death, was born at 12 Blacket Place, Edinburgh, on 12 February 1890. He was educated at Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh and studied cartography at the universities of Leipzig and Paris before taking an MA at Edinburgh University. In 1914 he was commissioned into the Gordon Highlanders and served in France and Flanders; he was awarded the MC in 1915 and later served on Haig's staff. His younger brother Hugh was killed in the war. On 22 May 1920 he married Marie Antoinette (1898–1972), the third daughter of Dr Georges Leon Hyacinthe Sarolea (1864–1928), a physician of Hasselt, Belgium, and his wife, Marie Félicité Goetsbloets (1871–1898). They had four sons and two

daughters, one of whom died young. Also in 1920 he succeeded to the management of the family business. Ian continued many of his father's cartographic ventures, notably the association with *The Times*, and began new ones, such as the production of road maps to satisfy the demand of an expanding motoring market. He took an interest in the whole spectrum of the business from technical and cartographical aspects, including improvements to inks and papers and the introduction of rotary offset printing machines, to the design of new map projections for the age of global air travel. In 1921 he was appointed cartographer to George V. Ian Bartholomew was very active in geographical circles, being a member of the permanent committee of geographical names from 1926, a member of the national committee on geography based at the Royal Society from 1941, and honorary secretary of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society from 1920, acting as president in 1950–54; he was also instrumental in establishing the chair in geography at the University of Edinburgh, completing a project his father had begun. He was deeply attached to Scotland and was a trustee of the National Library of Scotland and active in the National Trust for Scotland. A shy man, he received various honours, notably the founder's medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1961. That same year he was appointed CBE. He died in Edinburgh 0119 February 1962, having become severely disabled by arthritis in his later years, and was survived by his wife, who died on 14 January 1972.

Following service in the Second World War, three of Ian's sons joined the firm: John Christopher (b. 1923) became cartographic director in 1953, Robert Gordon (b. 1927) was production director from 1954 to 1986, and Peter Hugh (1924–1987) became chairman in 1956. John assisted his father in editing the plates of the mid-century edition of *The Times Atlas of the World* to reflect post-war changes and was later responsible for a number of new specialist atlases, among them *the Atlas of Europe* (1974) and *Family Atlas of the World* (1983).

In 1980 the company was sold to the Reader's Digest Corporation and in 1985 it passed to Rupert Murdoch's News International Corporation. It was then amalgamated with a sister News Corporation company, Harper Collins publishers in Glasgow, and continued to produce Bartholomew maps and atlases under the name Harper Collins Cartographic.

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Likenesses E. A. Walton, oils, c.1910 (John George Bartholomew), Scot. NPG · E. A. Walton, study, c. 1910 (John George Bartholomew), Royal Society of Edinburgh

Wealth at death £784 15s. 7d.—John Bartholomew: 9 April 1861, NA Scot., SC 70/1/110 pp. 310—4 · John Bartholomew: confirmation, 1893 · £28,016 16s. 4d.—John George Bartholomew: confirmation, 9 June 1920, NA Scot · £63,698 15s.—John [Ian] Bartholomew: 18 May 1962, NA Scot., SC 70/1/1502 p.95—102/

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