

Peter Bartholomew: Map Man

RONALD BANEL

THE story he relates is, to say the least, unusual and the listener can be excused for raising a quizzical eyebrow. Fully qualified chartered accountants who wind up delivering freshly baked bread to the canteen of an eminent former employer are, one could say with a measure of conviction, few and far between.

A member of the sixth generation in the distinguished Edinburgh map publishing house of John Bartholomew & Son, Peter Hugh Bartholomew, did not exactly rush headlong into the family business. He steered clear of it for a number of years before finally deciding to make it his career.

One, naturally, must always be interested in family affairs—but, while I always liked geography, my strength at school lay in mathematics. Chartered accountancy, I still think even now, is one of the finest background trainings for any job in industry.

As chairman of the company —he vacated the managing directorship last year—Peter Bartholomew is flanked by his brothers, John, a cartographer and trained geographer, and Robert, the production director.

After taking his final examinations, Peter Bartholomew did two years post-qualification work at the London offices of Thomson McLintock, a CA firm with strong Scottish connections.

There are some opportunities for C.A.s in Scotland now but I do not consider them very good. It is in fact a very good idea to do some work at the London offices of Thomson McLintock and the industrial experience. I can only say, however, that Peter with a Scottish background.

Next came a summer spent with the children's "Map Man" club. Peter Bartholomew, during which he was given his first taste of management. He ran a holiday for a while—a very pleasant one of about 500 children. I should like to say, however, I had been where other holiday camps were. I had seen and about taking and on one occasion even delivered bread to the Thomson McLintock canteen.

By 1959 Peter Bartholomew had decided and had secured his job with the American engineering firm—and what was more important than his to stay at the organization's new Scottish factory. That was the situation when, just as he



PETER BARTHOLOMEW: "We have now got a much more professional outlook in our management team. Our aim is to almost double our turnover within the next few years." Photos: Ian Porteous

was about to start his Map Man career, he was not too late, the necessary work to be done for him. Bartholomew drew back from making that American trip and decided to spend the weeks of his probation. He was general manager for about a year, before being

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Without hesitation, Peter Bartholomew means to keep at it. He has already had a fair amount of success in his new role. He has already had a fair amount of success in his new role. He has already had a fair amount of success in his new role.

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had to be required in the process of final final final. A Scottish map and production controller had to be required and a real success. One new wonder how we managed to function before all that. The company, he said, was the chairman of their career.

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The Financial Scotsman 3rd June 1979

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" There - are more opportunities for CAs in Scotland now but a CA just qualified must look for experience. He will never get it in Scotland unless he wants to go into investment trusts, finance, etc. For this, Edinburgh is as good a place as Landon—hut not for industrial experience. I am quite sure you increase your market value by saying you have two years London experience with a well-known firm."

Next came a four-year spell with the Garfield Weston Allied Bakeries group, during which he was given his first taste of management. He ran a bakery for a while—" a very nice-sized one of about 300 employees. I decided that. I was going to run this firm properly, I must learn what other people's jobs were. I found out about baking and on one occasion even delivered bread to the Thomson McLintock canteen."

By 1956, Peter Bartholomew had applied and been accepted for a job with an American engineering firm—a post which would subsequently place him in charge of the organisation's new Scottish factory. That was the situation when, just as he was about to pack his bags, a telegram arrived from his father.

It was not too late, the message said, to change his mind. Bartholomew drew back from making the American trip and decided to enter the world of map publishing. He was general manager for about a year before becoming managing director.

The John Bartholomew turn-over is currently around the £500,000 mark with an export market which averages between 10 and 15 per cent. Producers of maps and atlases since the eighteenth century, the company's cartographic skill have achieved international acceptance over a wide front ranging from global travel guides and motoring references to historical and pictorial maps, plus the production of a definitive atlas of the moon.

Introduced within the past two years, Bartholomew's facsimile reproductions of early maps from the seventeenth-century Atlas Novus — have generated much interest. Each map is printed on a specially selected antique cartridge paper.

Without hesitation, Peter Bartholomew points to 1968 as being his company's year of reckoning. That was when a firm of management consultants put up certain recommendations which resulted in an overall revamping of the house structure. "

They took a look at the financial side, etc. and then the whole management show was reorganised. I became chairman without being managing director—so another one had to be appointed, in the person of David Ross Stewart. A marketing man and production controller had to be appointed, and a cost accountant. One now wonders how we managed to function before all that!" The company, he adds, were " at the crossroads " of their career.

For a well-established family business, all of this represented momentous change. Consequently, the company have just completed a year in which overheads have been high without any undue increase in sales, but, and Peter Bartholomew argues the point strongly, " we have now got a much more professional outlook in our management team and current results show an encouraging trend. Already, our marketing man, Michael Chittleburgh, has travelled around Europe and visited North America. Our aim is to almost double our 'turnover within the next few years. For the first time we can go out on the ground and find out what people want."

The complex art of map compilation is subject to the vagaries of world opinion. Political upheavals can toss the map publishing houses around like so many corks in a storm at _sea. Mention Africa and Peter Bartholomew smiles forlornly. During the fifties and early sixties the face of this turbulent region had a habit of changing literally overnight. " We had to produce a new edition of the African continent every year up until only about three years ago. There was always some new republic jumping it. It was a nightmare."