

BARLOW & COMPANY

Thomas Barlow (1825-1897) was the youngest of seven children of John Barlow, a Quaker of Alderley Edge in Cheshire, England. In 1848 he founded the firm Barlow & Co in Manchester, manufacturing and trading in textiles in the United Kingdom. From the mid-1850s the firm started importing cotton from America and began exporting textiles to India and the Far East. In 1864 he founded Thomas Barlow & Brother and during the 1870s and 1880s established his own trade agencies in Calcutta, Shanghai and Singapore to export goods from the United Kingdom, to import tea and coffee, and to acquire his own plantations in these regions. Thomas Barlow married in 1855 Mary Ann Emmott, the daughter of another Quaker entrepreneur at Disley near Stockport, and settled at Torkington Lodge in Hazel Grove, near Sandbach. Thomas left £124,583 in his will (£16.3m in 2020).



During the last two decades of the 19th century Thomas's eldest son **John Emmott Barlow** (1857-1932) began to steer the family firm away from textiles to develop its interests in agency work, in the export of iron and steel, and in tea and coffee, which led to the acquisition of a bonded tea warehouse in London. They had a presence in Manila from 1890 but did not appear to be successful and was short lived. In 1891 the Barlows took over the ailing textile importers Scott & Co in Singapore and began to extend their business to coffee estates. When the crop failed in the late 1890s, business was diverted to planting rubber trees. In 1906 a number of estates combined to form the Highlands and Lowlands Para Rubber Co, with Sir Frank Swettenham as chairman and the firm Barlow & Co as its agents in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, while the partnership of Thomas Barlow & Brother

acted as Secretaries in England. The inter-war years saw a further decline of the British textile business and increasing problems for tea plantations, due to the rise of Indian nationalism and civil war in China.

John Emmott Barlow's second son, **Thomas Bradwall Barlow** (1900-1988), spent his entire working life in the family firm. At the beginning of his career he spent six months in Kuala Lumpur before joining the London office, taking over the London office in the mid-1920s and was made partner in 1930. He developed a lasting interest in the rubber industry. This, and the depression of the 1930s, led to the closure of the Barlow agencies in Calcutta and Shanghai, leaving their interests concentrated on the Malay peninsula and in rubber, though fluctuations in the market led to experiments and diversification into other crops, such as copra and palm oil. The Japanese occupation of Malaya during the Second World War closed down the estates and scattered staff, many of whom perished during internment. Post-war reconstruction was made difficult by the communist insurgency of 1948 and the ensuing state of emergency. Nevertheless, rubber production resumed profitably, and the companies were able to invest in improved living quarters and facilities for staff and labourers. During the 1950s the Barlows also diversified their business by ventures in Africa, investing in a tea company in Nyasaland and in a saw mill and rubber trading in Nigeria. He remained with the business up to 1975 when the partnership was dissolved.

British Malaya became independent in 1957, and in 1963 the Federation of Malaysia was formed. In the meantime many small rubber plantations, which had suffered in the Emergency period, were amalgamated with larger ones. Thomas Bradwell Barlow, now chairman of Highlands and Lowlands Para Rubber Co Ltd from 1946 to 1976, led the way by strengthening the company through mergers and expansion; by 1961 it had become one of the largest plantation companies in the world, with 24 estates and 60,000 acres of rubber and oil palm plantations. Having pioneered the production of oil palms, it also became a pioneer in scientific research and in the training of its local workforce. At the same time, Barlow & Co had developed into the fifth biggest agency house in Malaysia; in 1965 it became one of the three largest by merging with one of its rivals, Bousteads. In 1970 the Malaysian government established its 'Outline Perspective Plan', leading to the 'New Economic Plan' setting out its aim of increasing national participation in all companies and fields of economic activity. The Barlow companies co-operated with this policy, so that by 1973 40% of Highlands and Lowlands managers were of Malaysian origin, and in 1974 its taxation and exchange control residence was transferred to Malaysia. Half its board of directors resigned and made way for Malaysian appointments. Two years later it was re-registered as Highlands and Lowlands Bhd, a Malaysian company. By about 1981 the process of 'Malaysianisation' was completed, leaving Barlow Holdings and Majedie Investments as purely investment companies.

BARLOW & COMPANY

KEY DATES AND TIMELINES (19TH CENTURY)

1885 – Shanghai - Barlow & Co, merchants, Peking Road. Staff: D A Darling (merchant), W McDonald (merchant), J S Pollitt (merchant).

1888 – Shanghai - Barlow & Co, merchants, 2 Canton Road. Staff: D A Darling (merchant), J S Pollitt (merchant), W McDonald (merchant), M de Souza (clerk).

1889 – Shanghai - Barlow & Co, merchants, 5 Kiukiang Road. Staff: W Gilbert (merchant, Foochow), W McDonald (merchant, Shanghai and Hankow), W G Moore (merchant, Shanghai), J S Pollitt (merchant, Shanghai).

1890 – Philippines - Barlow & Co, merchants, Anloague 3, Manila. Staff: Bruce Woodhouse (merchant), T B Stevenson (merchant), E B Gaskell (merchant).

Shanghai - Barlow & Co, merchants, 5 Kiukiang Road. Staff: W McDonald (merchant, Shanghai and Hankow), W G Moore (merchant, Shanghai), W Gilbert (merchant, Foochow), M de Souza (clerk).

1892 – No further entries for Barlow & Co, Manila.

Shanghai - Barlow & Co, merchants, 5 Kiukang Road. Staff: W McDonald (merchant, Shanghai and Hankow), W G Moore (merchant, Shanghai), M de Souza (clerk), W Gilbert (merchant, Foochow). Agencies for Union Assurance Society and Union Marine Insurance, Liverpool.

Singapore - Barlow and Co, Collyer Quay. Staff: J M Allinson (signs per pro), D E Fulton, William R Scott. Agencies for Imperial Fire Insurance Company Ltd and International Marine Insurance Company Ltd.

1894 – Shanghai - Barlow & Co, merchants, 5 Kiukang Road. Staff: W McDonald (merchant, Shanghai and Hankow), W G Moore (merchant), R S Freeman (clerk, Shanghai and Hankow), G V T Marshall, M de Souza (clerk). Agencies for Union Assurance Society and Union Marine Insurance, Liverpool.

Singapore - Barlow & Co, merchants, Collyer Quay. Staff: J M Allinson (clerk, signs per pro), E Bramall (clerk), G H Duder (clerk), G V Hansen (clerk), A W Morison (clerk), A R de Souza (clerk). Agencies for Imperial Fire Insurance Company Ltd and International Marine Insurance Company Ltd.

1895 – Shanghai - Barlow & Co, merchants, 5 Kiukang Road.. Staff: W G Moore (merchant), R S Freeman (clerk), G V T Marshall (clerk), M de Souza (clerk). Agencies for Union Assurance Society and Union Marine Insurance, Liverpool. **Hankow**. Staff: W McDonald (merchant), R S Freeman (clerk).

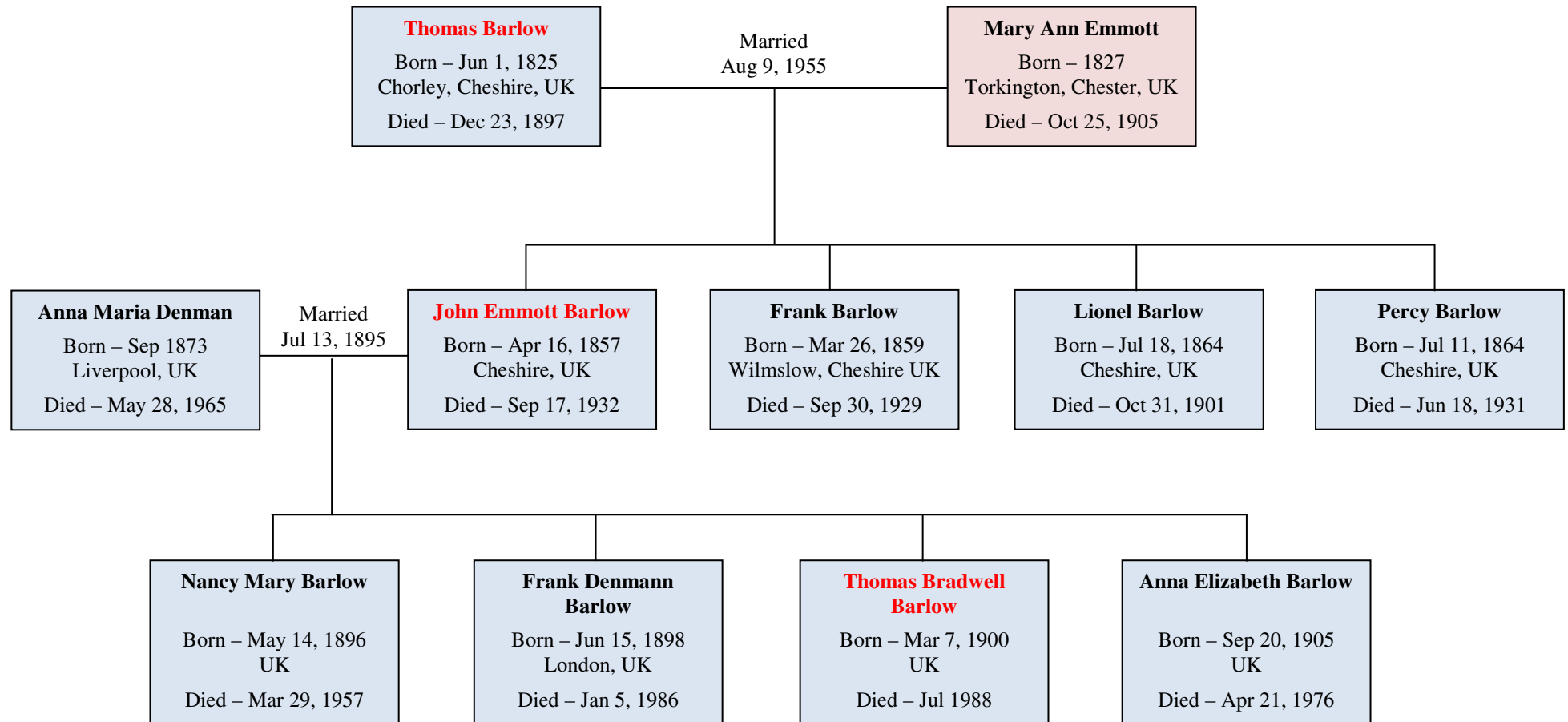
Singapore - Barlow & Co, merchants, Collyer Quay. Staff: J M Allinson (manager), H Bateman (clerk).

1898 – Shanghai - Barlow & Co, merchants, 5 Kiukang Road. Staff: R S Freeman (merchant, Shanghai and Hankow), W J Tyack (assistant), C H Ryde (assistant, Shanghai and Hankow), G V T Marshall, M de Souza (clerk). Agencies for Union Assurance Society and Union Marine Insurance, Liverpool.

Singapore - Barlow & Co, merchants, Collyer Quay. Staff: J M Allinson (manager), E Bramall (assistant), Arthur Booth (assistant), Thos Black, Frank Dennys (assistant), G V Hansen, A R de Souza (clerk), G J Pereira, H Bateman (clerk), C N Desker (assistant), T A Pestanna (clerk), Koh Kiong, Kow Tiam Chuan (cashier), Tiam Hock (storekeeper). Agencies for National Bank of China Ltd, Imperial Fire Insurance Company Ltd, Union Marine Insurance Company Ltd, Port Dickson Coffee Company Ltd, and Straits Coffee Planting Company Ltd.

BARLOW & COMPANY

FAMILY TREE



BARLOW & COMPANY

BUSINESS HANDSTAMPS

BH1: DOUBLE OUTER AND SINGLE INNER LINED OVAL HANDSTAMP



**BARLOW & CO. on Top
Blank Centre, Cross Emblem on Either side
MANILA on Bottom**



Scott #167 (Matched Pair)
(1890)
