

Atkins, P.J. (1984) Arthur Saxby Barham (1869-1952) milk wholesaler and retailer, pp 156-57 in Jeremy, D.J. (Ed.) *Dictionary of Business Biography: a Biographical Dictionary of Business Leaders Active in Britain in the Period 1860-1980* vol. 1 London: Butterworths

Arthur Saxby Barham was born in Bloomsbury, London on 17 July 1869, the youngest son of George Barham (qv), the founder of Express Dairies Ltd, and Margaret née Rainey. He was educated at University College School and in 1885 joined his father's subsidiary enterprise, the Dairy Supply Co, which dealt in wholesale milk supplies, dairy utensils and machinery. He was appointed to the board in 1889 and became managing director in 1893 at the age of twenty-four. From this date George Barham relinquished control of the day-to-day running of his business and Arthur was responsible for one of the largest companies of its type in the world.

Arthur Barham was reputedly severe but just in the conduct of his business affairs. Under his stewardship the Dairy Supply Co increased its annual turnover from £161,000 in 1893 to £581,000 in 1914, a considerable achievement given the strongly competitive nature of the dairy trade at this time. In July 1915 he signed an agreement which ratified the establishment of United Dairies, an amalgamation of the Dairy Supply Co, Wilts United Dairies and Great Western & Metropolitan Dairies. This new company was a giant in the dairy trade, with an initial capital of £1 million. It was created in response to war conditions: both men and horses were being sent to the war effort and there was a perceived need to reduce the inefficiency of duplicated rounds. Initially United Dairies was largely concerned with wholesaling, but soon a retailing function was added. Arthur was a prime mover of this fundamental restructuring of the London milk trade and he became a director of the amalgamated board.

One consequence of Arthur Barham's decision to take the Dairy Supply Co into United Dairies was the loss for the Express Dairies of its wholesale milk supply. This caused some tension with his brother Titus (qv) who, as managing director, steadfastly refused to take the Express into the United Dairies combine. Nevertheless the Dairy Supply Co and the Express maintained their links, at least until Arthur retired from the board of United in 1923.

Arthur Barham served with 19th Middlesex (Bloomsbury) Volunteer Rifles, 1888-1908, and commanded that battalion, 1904-8. In September 1914 he enlisted in Queen Victoria's Rifles, and in February 1915 was appointed to command the 2/12th London (The Rangers). He served in France and Flanders and was mentioned in despatches. As a result he was awarded the CMG. He was a JP, a member of Kent County Council from 1925 to his death, and an alderman, 1937-49.

Barham was also a representative of the British Dairy Farmers Association at the inauguration of the National Milk Publicity Council in 1920. He was a director of Unigate Ltd, Sir George's Trust Ltd, and de Berhams Ltd.

His first wife Annie née Edwards, whom he married in 1893, died in 1939, and his second wife Anna Marie née Schaufelberger, died in 194 after one year of marriage. He died on 16 July 1952, and was survived by one of his two sons. He left £46,897 gross.

Sources:

Unpublished

Archival material in the possession of D G W Barham of Hole Park, Rolvenden, Kent.

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