

A House of Trade

Commerce. Continuity. Character.



HERITAGE ROOTS 1864 / PAKISTAN 1949 / PAK SHAHEEN 1965

Before the company, there was a sailor.

CAPTAIN SAM BIRD

The Bird family were Suffolk yeomen. The centenary history records that the family settled at Earl Stonham, Suffolk, in 1638. From that English background came Sam Bird - a seafarer whose working life would carry the family story to India.

Bird became Freight Superintendent of the India Steam Navigation Company and in 1860 was sent to Allahabad as its agent. There, at the meeting point of river and railway, he saw an opportunity in the movement of goods.

In 1864 he secured labour for carrying grain while the Jumna bridge was being built, followed by a railway contract for loading and unloading wagons. The centenary history treats that year as the birth of Bird & Company.

CHAPTER I

In the Beginning

THE HOUSE OF BIRD & COMPANY was born in 1864 when Captain Bird secured a 'coolie' contract at Allahabad from the Eastern India Railway Company. Before taking up the story at that point, we shall sketch the leading character (the first of a succession) and the stage. What sort of man was Sam Bird, and what was the state of affairs in India at that time?

PORTRAIT OF A SAILOR

The Bird family were a yeoman family of Suffolk. This is an important fact which Bird brings into the story more than a memory of his childhood home. It makes a constant, provocative contrast with the hot sun, the luxuriance and poverty of India. It is also a part of his character.

The Eastern Counties of England. Flat pasture lands rescue the hungry sea by continual effort; sluggish rivers, reed-beds, meres, tidal mud flats. A few miles inland, some of the best country in the world. The men are tough and shrewd. They are accustomed to wide horizons and magnificent skies. The country's products include coarse fish and wildfowl, sheep, and root crops—and, some two hundred years ago, more than that of that outburst of new ideas which constituted the agricultural revolution. It bestows on the most favoured of its children a peculiar kind of creative gift, poetic and earthy at the same time, which finds its most famous expression in a long series of landscape paintings known by the names of John Crome, the Norwich school, and Constable.

Birds settled at Earl Stonham, Suffolk, in 1638 and became

One man. One contract. A house of trade.

Our story began before our name.

In 1864, the enterprise that would form the historical lineage of Pak Shaheen began with the practical business of moving trade. Bird & Company learned to receive cargo, transfer it between modes, store it, represent commercial interests and connect inland markets with ports.

Those disciplines remain visible in Pak Shaheen today. The equipment is modern. The scale is larger. The responsibility is familiar.

A legacy is most credible when it still has a purpose.

Movement was the first business.



Titaghur No. 1 mill with bamboo stocks in the foreground



Titaghur No. 1 mill - archival image from the Bird & Company centenary history.

From cargo handling and railway work, Bird & Company grew into a broad commercial house with interests spanning transport, shipping, storage, agency, jute, coal, engineering and trade.

188 miles. Every day.

BIRTH OF A BUSINESS



of one elephant having been bought for Rs 1,300 and another hired for Rs 200 a month.) At first the firm purchased bullocks, but it was noticed how closely their mortality followed the trend of the hide and bone market, after which beasts were hired from the bazaar.

Caravans were guarded by a *chupprassi* armed with a brass-bound *lathi*. There is no record of loss by robbery or violence.

The service continued for 14 years. Construction of the Darjeeling—Himalayan Railway, completed in 1881, was the writing on the wall which the brothers saw clearly enough. Paul Bird made valiant efforts to reach some mutual arrangement with the railway, but without success. There was nothing for it but to get out on the best terms possible. The godowns, depots and all appurtenances of the 'train' were sold to the railway for Rs 20,000 in

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The Sahibganj-Darjeeling "bullock train" was a scheduled freight system: daily movement in both directions, collection depots, covered carts, extra animals for gradients and elephants when the monsoon required them.

The machinery belongs to another age. The operating logic does not: staging, protection, contingency and dependable delivery.

The bullock became the truck.

Different times. Same responsibility.

BIRTH OF A BUSINESS



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THEN / BIRD & COMPANY

Railway cargo. Depots. Inland movement.

*Cargo handling / warehousing / shipping /
inland carriage / multimodal movement*

NOW / PAK SHAHEEN GROUP

Containers. CFS. Bonded transport.

*Container handling / bonded warehousing /
liner agency / sea-air-land logistics*

The equipment changed. The work endured.

Three addresses. One commercial lineage.

CALCUTTA

25 STRAND ROAD

Bird & Company established itself at 25 Strand Road in Calcutta, at the centre of the commercial world in which the house grew.

LONDON

108 CANNON STREET

The centenary history records the continuing London connection and refers in 1963 to the “old hands at 108 Cannon Street, London.”

KARACHI

23 TIMBER POND

In Pakistan, Timber Pond became the Group's home by the harbour - close to cargo, terminals and the working life of Karachi Port.

The addresses changed with the geography of trade.

A new country. A continuing house.

After Partition, Bird & Company (Pakistan) Limited took over the various sides of the business active in West and East Pakistan. The centenary history records offices in Lahore, Karachi, Chittagong and Narayanganj.

Pak Shaheen's own history records early agency affiliations including American President Lines and Jugolinija / Croatia Line. The enterprise had acquired a Pakistani home while retaining the commercial disciplines that had shaped it.

BIRD AND COMPANY OF CALCUTTA

...law's estate, his method had been to form two companies, Cable Limited and F. W. Heilgers and Company which then became the major partners in the respective. Now all that was required was for these two companies to transfer the individual partners' interests, Cable Limited first gave its name to Bird & Company Limited. Except for the holding an almost continuous succession of directors' and shareholders' meetings in the space of a week, the operation passed off perfectly smoothly. No doubt the passing of the partnership occasioned some sentimental tears; but it did not involve any change in policy or outlook. The restraint on capital expenditure course remained; and this made it impossible, at least for the time being, for the firms to contemplate any new ventures on their own account. Available finances were needed to keep the existing ones going; they were and to strengthen them against whatever future might have in store.

Two other companies were formed from what had been branches. On Burma's independence the Rangoon branch became a separate concern under the name of Heilgers and Company Limited; while after partition, in 1949, Bird & Company (Pakistan) Limited took over the various sides of the business active in West and East Pakistan. It had offices in Lahore, Chittagong and Narayanganj.

When Birds and Heilgers became limited companies in December, 1948, the final list of partners in both firms included the name of Sir Satyendra Nath Roy, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., who, N. Roy, had been in charge of anti-terrorist activities in Calcutta many years before. He had had a long and distinguished career in the Civil Service. During the war, as secretary of the Department of War Transport, he inevitably became acquainted with Tom Benthall, who, knowing a good man when he saw one, persuaded him in the end to join the firm. This was in 1947. So he became Birds' and Heilgers' first Indian partner. Following the change he was also the last; though two other patriots have since become directors of the limited company. 'Buro'—the name by which he was soon known by everyone—

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The geography changed. The vocation did not.

The Bird *became* the Shaheen.

Pak Shaheen's official chronology records 1965 as the year Pak Shaheen Trading began and Bird & Co. was acquired. It was more than a change of letterhead. A house with a century of commercial inheritance took a name belonging unmistakably to its Pakistani future.

Pak gave the house its place. Shaheen gave it its spirit.

A new name. Not a new beginning.



Pak. Shaheen.

PAK

Pakistan. Home. Identity.

SHAHEEN

Vision. Aspiration. Flight.

In Pakistan's cultural imagination, the Shaheen carries a resonance beyond the falcon itself. Through Allama Muhammad Iqbal, it became associated with self-respect, courage, independence, high aspiration and a refusal to accept a narrow horizon.

For the house, the symbolism is fitting without needing embellishment: "Pak" makes the identity unmistakably Pakistani; "Shaheen" gives it a language of ambition and flight.

Bird was the provenance. Pak Shaheen became the identity.

From godown to CFS.

Pak Shaheen Container Services marked a decisive modernisation of an old capability. The collection depot and godown belonged to an earlier age; the Container Freight Station belonged to the new one.

Pak Shaheen's corporate history records 1981 as the establishment of Pakistan's pioneering private-sector Off-Dock / CFS terminal. The house had moved from serving infrastructure to owning and operating it.

1981

The old activity, in modern form.

The house by the harbour.



Timber Pond, Karachi - contemporary Pak Shabeen operations.

Today, Timber Pond remains more than an address. It is a working expression of the Group's continuity: cargo, storage, handling, vehicles, equipment and the port itself within the same field of view.

23 Timber Pond, Karachi.



The Pak Shaheen building at Timber Pond - artwork from the Group collection.

Where the heritage lives beside the work.

The port was never the destination.

Trade must continue beyond the quay. Pak Shaheen's history records 1993 as the year of Pakistan's first private Customs bonded-carrier licence and the establishment of Multimodal Transport International.

The lineage is striking. Bird & Company once connected inland producing regions with transport nodes and markets. Pak Shaheen connected Pakistan's ports to dry ports and industry under Customs bond.

The road changed. The commercial purpose remained.

From an inland route to a national logistics corridor.

Many disciplines. One commercial instinct.

PORTS & TERMINALS

Off-Dock CFS, bonded warehousing, container yards and depot services.

SHIPPING

Liner and ship agency, husbandry, cargo coordination and documentation.

CARGO

Stevedoring, breakbulk, stuffing, stripping and vessel-side operations.

INLAND

Customs-bonded transport linking seaports, dry ports and industry.

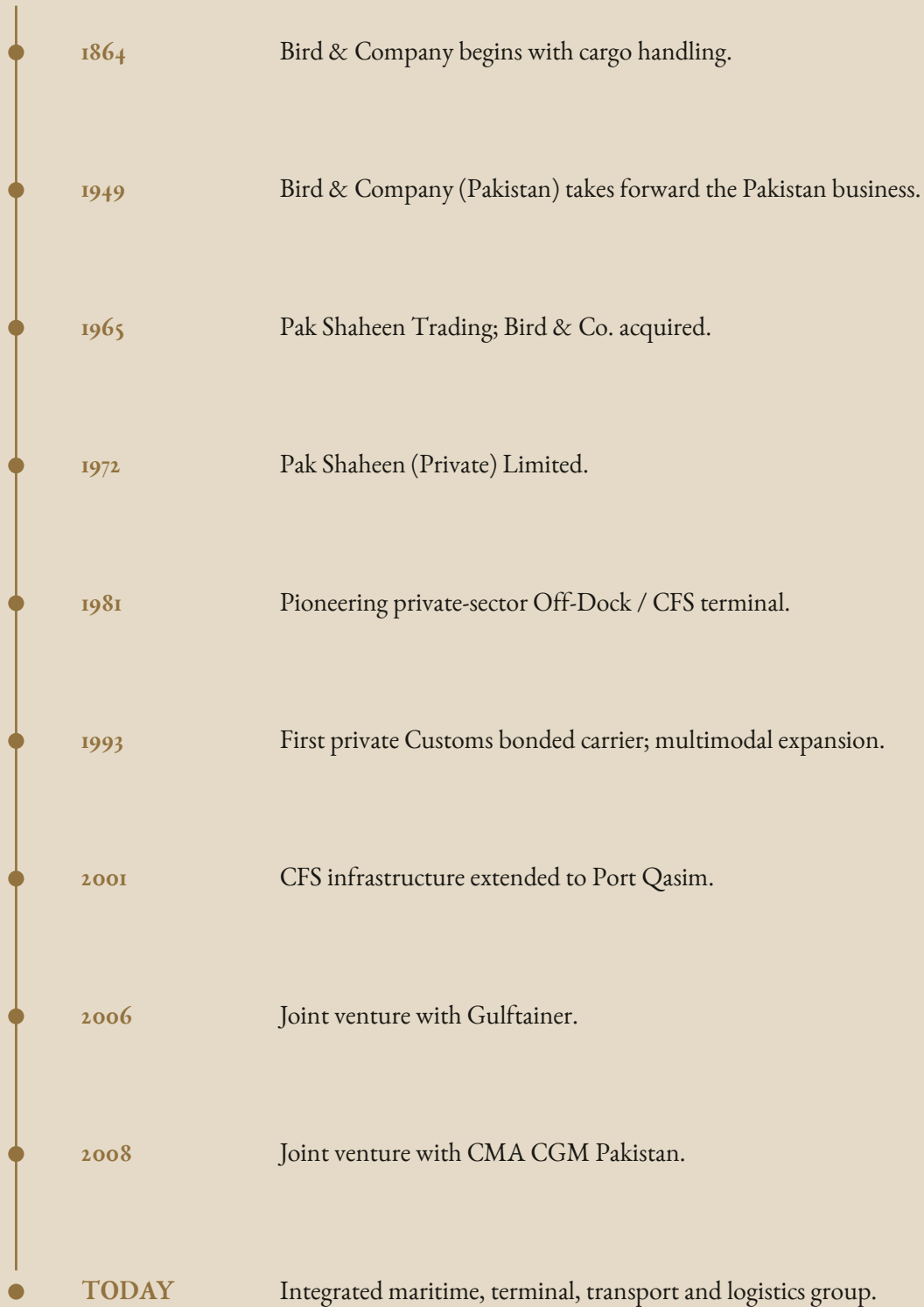
AIR

IATA- and FIATA-accredited freight and consolidation.

EQUIPMENT

Container-handling machinery, technical support, spares and industrial representation.

A chronology of continuity.



A legacy measured in movement.

There are businesses whose histories are a collection of dates. Pak Shaheen's is better understood as a collection of continuities.

In 1864, Bird & Company entered commerce through the practical work of cargo handling. It learned to connect railway, river and road; to create depots where trade required them; to represent shipping interests; and to make difficult movement dependable.

Pakistan changed the geography of that story. In 1949, Bird & Company (Pakistan) Limited took forward the enterprise in the new country. In 1965, the old Bird name yielded to Pak Shaheen - a name at once national and aspirational.

What followed was expansion without abandonment. Cargo handling became container handling. Depots became CFS terminals and empty-container yards. Inland carriage became bonded trucking. Shipping representation matured into liner and ship agency. The old habit of connecting modes became an integrated sea-air-land logistics network.

Today the Group works with machinery and systems its founders could never have imagined. But they would recognise the business immediately.

Move trade. Guard trust. Build for the long term.

PAK SHAHEEN GROUP

The work endured.

The horizon grew.



1864 / 1949 / 1965 / TODAY

COMMERCE / CONTINUITY / CHARACTER