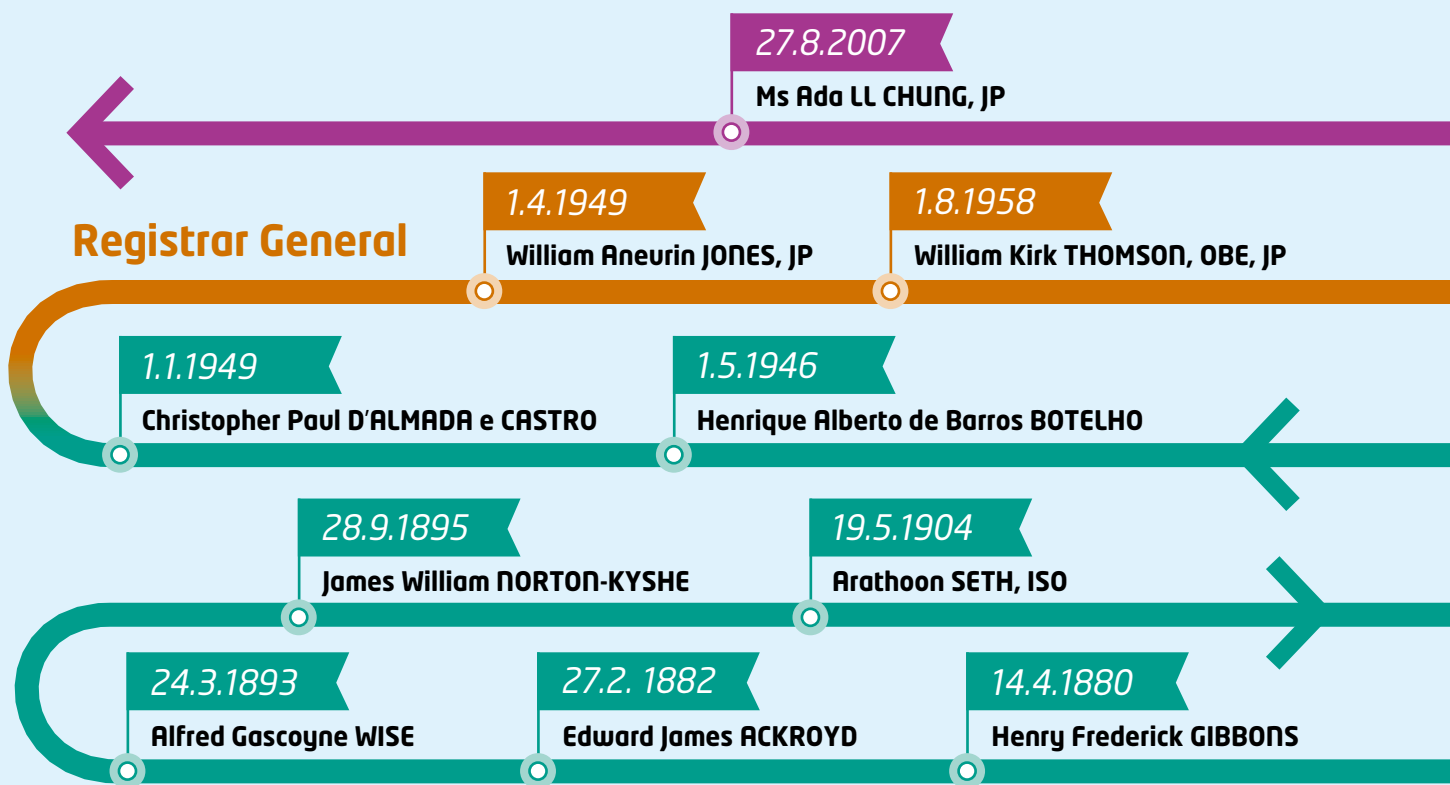


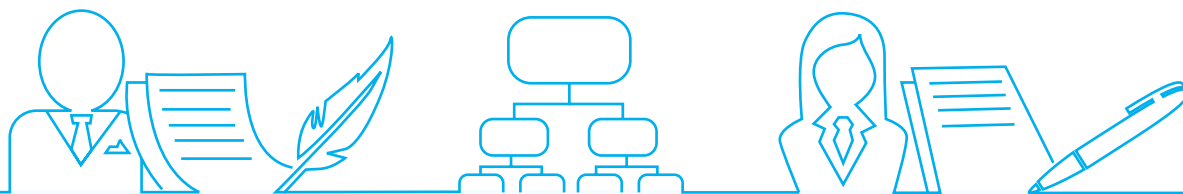
Authorities or departments responsible for the administration of the Companies Ordinance and the registration of companies and documents

The administration of the registration of companies in Hong Kong dates back to 1865 when the first Companies Ordinance was enacted. According to Part VI of the Companies Ordinance 1865, the Governor could from time to time appoint a Registrar and such other officers and servants for the registration of companies under this Ordinance. But as the number of newly incorporated companies was very small in the early years and continued to be small (below 100 per year) until 1946, the Registrar of Companies was a position held also by the Registrar of the Supreme Court. On 29 April 1865, William Hastings Alexander,²² as Registrar of the Supreme Court, was gazetted the first Registrar of Companies under Ordinance No. 1 of 1865. Simultaneously, a Companies Registry was also established under the Companies Ordinance 1865 and administered by the

Registrar of the Supreme Court assisted by a Deputy Registrar. This continued to be the case until 1949, when the office of the Registrar General, situated in the Supreme Court building, was established by the Registrar General (Establishment) Ordinance (Chapter 100 of the Laws of Hong Kong). The new department was responsible for a number of other types of registration, e.g. birth, death and marriage, as well as the functions of the Companies Registry which was transferred from the Supreme Court. The ordinance authorised a Registrar General *ex officio* to exercise all of the powers, privileges and discretions from time to time vested in, and to discharge the duties from time to time required to be performed by, the Registrar of Companies. Also, deputies may be appointed to assist the Registrar General in the performance of his duties. William Aneurin Jones, JP



²² However, in Norton-Kyshe's History of Laws and Courts of Hong Kong, it is said that on 28 April 1865, Mr. Frederick Sowley Huffam was gazetted as Registrar of Companies (Vol II, p 82).



was appointed as the first Registrar General in 1949. The Companies Registry was then a department established under the Registrar General and was composed of two assistant registrar clerks. A re-organisation of the Registrar General's department in 1969 created three divisions: the Commercial and Personal Division included the Companies Registry. The Department was again restructured in 1983 into the Land Office, Commercial Division, Insurance Division, and the Official Receiver's Office.

Following enactment of the Registrar General (Establishment) (Transfer of Functions and Repeal) Ordinance, the Companies Registry and Land Registry were created as independent agencies on 1 May 1993 and the Registrar General's Department ceased

to exist from that date. On 1 August 1993, the Companies Registry commenced business as a Trading Fund, one of the first two government departments to do so. The Companies Registry has been responsive to the rapid changes occurring in the commercial world. It is financially self-sufficient and commercially viable, although the Secretary for Financial Services (now the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury) continues to have policy responsibility for all aspects of the services provided by the Registry. Among other matters, the Registry is in charge of the primary function of providing arrangements to allow the promoters of companies, limited partnerships, and trust companies to easily incorporate their enterprises.

Below is a list of the Registrars of Companies since 1865:

