

PRESS RELEASE

12 December, 2012

The Oldest Family Businesses In Britain

Latest research identifies ten family businesses that have collectively been in business for over 4020 years

There is often a lack of recognition and respect for the successful contribution that family businesses have made to the UK economy over the years. Family Business United has undertaken extensive research to identify some of the true bastions of family business success and is proud to identify some of the oldest businesses that have successfully passed down the generations.

It is pleasing to note that the oldest family business identified dates back to 1420 and spans the reigns of twenty-seven English monarchs. In fact, the ten oldest family businesses have been in business collectively for 4027 years so on average over 400 years each which is an incredible achievement.

The contribution that these firms have made over the years in terms of revenue generation, employment, contributions to GDP and tax revenues, not to mention their support of the communities in which they operate should not go unnoticed.

Rank	Family Firm	Founded
1	Whitechapel Bell Foundry	1420
2	R J Balson and Son	1535
3	John Brooke and Sons Holdings Ltd	1541
4	R Durtnell & Sons Limited	1591
5	Tissimans	1601
6	C Hoare & Co	1672
7	Morning Foods	1675
8	James Lock & Co Ltd	1676
9	Toye & Co	1685
10	Folkes Group Plc	1697

In the current climate especially, things are tough, but the one thing that the oldest family businesses in Britain have in common is that they have been around long enough that

they have seen it all before and have adapted and changed over time and remained in business as it passes from generation to generation.

As Paul Andrews, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Family Business United explains, “Taking responsibility for a firm that has been in the family for so many generations is not an easy role to take on, and given the current economic climate, has added pressures to bear too. Many family business leaders in the position of those leading these oldest family businesses in the UK admit to feeling a burden of responsibility and not wanting to be the generation that fails to pass it on to the next, whilst they readily admit that they feel a certain duty to act as stewards of the family business for the next generation too.”

“All too often we hear stories of families that have fallen out and family businesses that have been sold, so to achieve an average of over 400 years as a family business is a significant achievement. Each one of them will have stories to tell about their past but one thing that they all have in common is that they are a family business, have survived many more transitions than most and have naturally had to evolve and develop to take into account the significant industrial and economic developments that they have been a part of, in order to still be in business today.”

“These organisations are true bastions of the British economy and should be recognised for the contribution that they have made collectively over more than 4000 years.”

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About the Family Businesses

Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1420

Whitechapel Bell Foundry supplies bells to suit most types of precision clock. Always having been a family business, the Whitechapel Bell Foundry has not always been in the same family. The Hughes family became associated with the company in 1884 when Arthur Hughes arrived as Manager, subsequently purchasing the business in 1904. Currently owned by Alan and Kathryn Hughes who are the 4th generation of the same family.

R J Balson and Son, 1535

R J Balson and Son, Britain's oldest family butchers. The Balson family have been butchers since 1535 and deal in only the finest meat, poultry and game.

John Brooke and Sons Holdings Ltd, 1541

A diversified property business which historically was based around the mills.

R Durtnell & Sons Limited, 1591

Founded over 400 years ago, R Durtnell & Sons has been trading continuously ever since, making the firm by far the oldest building contractor in Britain. It is also unique in

that it has been handed down as a private company, father-to-son, for fourteen generations.

Tissimans, 1601

Tissimans was established in 1601 as a tailor, draper and undertaker, in the historic building opposite St. Michael's Church in Bishop's Stortford.

C Hoare & Co, 1672

The United Kingdom's leading independent private bank. Founded in 1672, remaining wholly owned by the Hoare family and continuing to be guided and led by the descendants of the bank's founder.

Morning Foods, 1675

With Oat Milling expertise dating back to 1675, Morning Foods is Europe's premier Oatmiller. Based in Cheshire, in the heart of the United Kingdom, strategically placed to source the finest Oats from the best farmers & growers.

James Lock & Co Ltd, 1676

Founded in 1676 Lock & Co. is a family owned business providing ladies' and gentlemen's quality headwear and a high standard of personal service developed from over 300 years of experience.

Toye & Co, 1685

Toye craftsmen have created exceptional identity products for civil and military markets since 1685. The firm has grown and diversified but the original values are unchanged - superb craft skills, quality and service.

Folkes Group Plc, 1697

Folkes Holdings, which has been under family control since 1697 specialises in commercial property development and investment in the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Africa.