

150 Years of John Taylors

In 1859 Big Ben's clock tower was completed and the great bell chimed for the first time, Charles Darwin at the age of fifty published his controversial "On the Origin of Species" and work began on the Suez Canal. In the same year a family firm of surveyors and auctioneers was founded in Louth. So John Taylors is celebrating 150 years of success in the local property business this year and is still going from strength to strength



Founder of John Taylors (1832-1902)

Although there are many factors in the success of a small business, the family element of this particular company has been a real asset right from its foundation. The company was founded in 1859 by a Mr John Taylor who was later joined by his son John Taylor Junior. The company is now run by the Laverack family, the three Directors Ann Laverack and her two sons Robert and James each specialising in different fields of antiques, surveying and valuing, estate agency and auctioneering along with the sons partners Kathryn Motley and Tessa Macklam specialising in marketing and fine art auctioneering respectively. The company now has offices in Louth and Market Rasen with the Woolmart Auction Rooms

The business moved to its main offices in the Cornmarket of Louth at the turn of the twentieth century when the company was being run by John Taylor Junior. Photographs taken around the time of the firm's 50th anniversary show John Taylor and his staff in front of the offices and it is quite clear that the premises have retained the charm and professionalism evident at the turn of the century. The family of course is different. The involvement of the Taylor family continued until the death of John Taylor in the late 1930s. The company was then run by George Bland as John Taylor Son & Bland and then amalgamated with Stevenson & Sowerby to become John Taylor Stevenson & Sowerby after the second World War. The Laverack family involvement began when the late Jim Laverack joined as partner in 1962. The name John Taylors was



50th Anniversary at Cornmarket Offices

reinstated by the Laveracks in the 1970s after the death of the partners Stevenson and Sowerby.

From a business point of view the firm has always offered the professional services of valuing, surveying and the sale of residential and agricultural property. In the 1940s when Stevenson became a partner the residential sales really began to develop. At that time in the region of 90% of properties sold by the company were sold by auction and John Taylor, Stevenson and Sowerby handled a large part of property sales in the area including some prestigious town and country houses such as Thorpe Hall in Louth. Today, residential property sales are even more important to the business along with the related surveying and letting services.

The company thrived through the 60s and 70s and weathered the upheaval of the property market in the 1980s. As property agents the firm had often dealt with auctions of antiques and chattels but only on an adhoc basis but with the involvement of Jim's wife Ann Laverack in the mid 1980s the antique auctions became a more important sector of the business culminating in the establishment of monthly auctions at the old Woolmart in Louth in September 1987. The auction rooms have continued to thrive handling many estate sales including the contents of the late John Bourne of The Manor House, Eastgate, Louth, the contents of the Louth Gentleman's Club and the Estate of Diana Dixon in 1998 featuring a record price achieved for the artist Federico Del Campo with a Venice scene selling for a final hammer price of £94,000. In September last year the firm celebrated 20 years of antique auctions in which time Ann Laverack has built up the auctions from sales of 200 lots to ten catalogued antique auctions each year now regularly reaching up to 800 lots with a specialist evening auction of antique silver and jewellery held each December. Ann still takes an active role in the management of the company and auction rooms.

The property side of the business was expanded in 1999 with the opening of a new surveying and estate agency branch in Market Rasen. James Laverack the eldest son joined the business in 1991. James completed his degree in Land Economy at Aberdeen University and subsequently qualified as a Chartered Surveyor. As a Director James now manages the Market Rasen Office covering residential and commercial sales and lettings. This office has recently relocated



20th Anniversary for Woolmart Auction Rooms Tessa Macklam, Robert Laverack, Ann Laverack, James Laverack, Kathryn Motley

to premises purchased by the company in 2007 and will be celebrating its 10th anniversary this summer

Robert Laverack , after graduating in Land Management at De Montfort University Leicester, spent two years at the Valuation Office in Grimsby then part of the Inland Revenue before joining the family firm in 1995 and the following year qualified as a Chartered Surveyor. Robert, also a Director, manages the Louth Office and also specialises in residential & commercial surveying. You will also see Robert, his wife Tessa and brother James auctioneering at the monthly antique auctions at the Woolmart.

Kathryn Motley who also went to school in Louth before studying Hispanic Studies at Nottingham University and International Marketing at Staffordshire Polytechnic joined the company in 1999 from a career in international and corporate marketing. Kathryn is responsible for the company's marketing and recently launched a new company website and also co-manages the Auction Rooms with her sister-in-law Tessa Macklam.

Tessa Macklam, originally from Grimsby studied at Caistor Grammar, then with a degree in History of Art from Leicester University went on to study Fine Arts Valuation at Southampton Institute. Tessa joined the business in 1999 and is now an established auctioneer and co-manager of the auction rooms. Although Tessa has expertise in all areas of antiques she also has a special interest in art, antiquarian books, toys and local memorabilia.

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James Laverack

James Laverack said " Since I joined the company in the early nineties, the property markets have seen tremendous change. As a family business we all have our particular areas of expertise giving us a huge reservoir of knowledge and experience to draw on and we are now backed up by an excellent staff of ten full and part time employees. Also as a small business we have the flexibility to respond to market changes quickly and take advantage of new opportunities. We are still a traditional company which has its own appeal to our clients but we have kept our edge by becoming more customer focused and using the latest technology and marketing practices in all areas of the business. The original John Taylor was a professional and a successful business man and I think he would be proud to see the success the company has achieved 150 years on."