

Hayes & Finch

Respectfully supplying to the needs of the church



Hayes & Finch is a company with a proud history that stretches back more than 125 years, but it is also an organisation with its eyes firmly on the future.

Back in 1882, two men – Messrs William Hayes and James Finch – had a dream. Namely, to respectfully supply the churches within the local area. This ambition meant manufacturing and supplying these churches with reverential beeswax candles.

Now in 2008, that is still the company's ethos. However, the company has extended this aspiration in line with the expansion of the business over the years.

This is Hayes & Finch's first catalogue in the US market. Therefore, we thought that this would be the perfect opportunity to detail what exactly has made the company what it is today – a truly special fourth generation family business, committed to supplying quality products to the church worldwide.

Hayes & Finch began trading in Liverpool, England, in 1882. Initially, the manufacturing process was arduous. Deliveries had to be made with a wooden hand cart which was pushed around the cobbled streets in the port of Liverpool to service the local churches. Even so, business prospered. So much so that by the mid 1890s the manufacturing operation had to be moved into new premises: the then aspiring city centre.

Sadly though, James Finch died just prior to the move, leaving his son Thomas Finch working as general manager alongside Mr Hayes. Thomas would have made his father proud as he committed himself to developing the company his father had started and ensuring a legacy was left for his own six sons. Over time, Hayes & Finch gained an almost unrivalled reputation for supplying quality products and outstanding customer service. Consequently, more regional sales and distribution centres had to be opened in London, Glasgow, Manchester and Newcastle, along with an additional factory in Dublin to support the sales in Ireland.

When Mr Hayes died in 1923, Thomas bought the business from his widow and, with the support of his sons, he continued to successfully expand the company until the onset of World War II. The War had an inevitable impact on the firm. Like all able-bodied men, Thomas's sons were called to fight combined with the lack of raw materials and the complete deterioration in communications at this time, the company had to close the Dublin factory and suspend most of its UK production.

However, despite Liverpool being subject to some of the heaviest bombing attacks, the factory remained standing and Thomas's six sons, and many of the staff, returned from the war relatively

unscathed. Trading began once again and the company was busier than ever. This gave Hayes & Finch the opportunity to successfully rekindle its expansion plans and further sales offices were opened in Birmingham, Gateshead and Dublin.

By the 1960s, Hayes & Finch was not just a business that manufactured candles. Rather, Hayes & Finch was a company that was able to produce silverware, brassware, clerical garments, ornate vestments and fine church furniture to meet all the needs of the church community. However, this once again meant that another move was necessary! The factory had to move from Liverpool city centre to a single-storey purpose-built factory in Aintree, a developing suburb of the city, and the site of the present day factory. Some would think that UK success was enough for this family-run business. It wasn't though, and Hayes & Finch set its sights for expansion across the pond.

In 2003, Charles Finch – the great grandson of James Finch – and two other Hayes & Finch managers visited various regions in the US to meet prospective customers, study the market, and assess the feasibility of expanding the Hayes & Finch brand into this new market. This process took months of research, but it was undoubtedly worthwhile and the company decided to establish an outlet in Pennsylvania. This was the company's first overseas branch and a great milestone in its extensive history.

In 2004 Mr Andrew Welsh, having worked for Hayes & Finch in Liverpool for six years, said farewell to the UK and relocated to Pennsylvania to manage the US arm of the company. The business's entry to the US market has been supported by many well-respected, established dealers throughout the country. Additionally, its acceptance as a member of the National Church Goods Association (NCGA) has seen its authorised-dealership network rapidly spread across each of the US states.

Hayes & Finch has grown and prospered since it was founded all those years ago thanks not only to its two enterprising creators, but the wealth of employees that have passed through Hayes & Finch's doors.

Each developing chapter in the history of this fourth generation family business would undoubtedly make its founding fathers proud.

We look forward to working with you in the future.



Skyline of the historic port of Liverpool, home of Hayes & Finch