

Witherbys, the Oldest Independent Publisher in the English Speaking World

The oldest publishers in the English speaking world are:

Witherbys 1740 London

Witherbys is the oldest independent publisher in the English speaking world still operating under the name of its founder.

Witherbys started as a stationer in the City of London, 6 years after Lloyd's List, the oldest daily newspaper in the world, was first published in 1734. From the outset, Witherbys published and sold marine insurance clauses for the carriage of cargo by ship, which have been issued at approximately 4 yearly intervals since that time. The 77th Edition is to be published in 2013.

Since 2008, Witherbys has been based in Edinburgh.

John Murray 1768 London

In 2002, John Murray was sold to Hodder Headline, part of the W H Smith group, and in 2004 Hodder Headline was bought by Hachette Livre.

Schroedel 1792

Now part of the Westermann printing and publishing group

Constable & Co. 1795 Edinburgh

Became 'Constable & Robinson Ltd.' in 1999, now based in London.

John Wiley & Sons 1807 New York

Butterworths 1818 London

Butterworths was acquired by Reed Elsevier Plc in 1970

Chambers 1819 Edinburgh

Chambers was purchased by Harrap's in the early 1990s and is now part of The Hachette Book Group.

Pickering (& Chatto) 1820 London

Became 'Pickering & Chatto' in 1878

Hachette Livre 1826 France

Hachette Book Group was created when Hachette Livre, a global publishing company based in France, acquired Time Warner Book Group from Time Warner in 2006.

Houghton Mifflin 1832 USA

In 2007 Houghton Mifflin Company acquired Harcourt Education, which was founded in 1919.

Wolters Kluwer 1836 Netherlands

Wolters Kluwer was founded in the Netherlands by Æbele Kluwer and Jan-Berend Wolters.

Bonnier 1804 Copenhagen, now Sweden

The company was started in 1804 by the German Gerhard Bonnier in Denmark. Gerhard's sons later moved to Sweden.

Westermann Verlagsgruppe 1838

(Westermann Publishing) In 1986, the "Westermann Druck- und Verlagsgruppe", became part of Medien-Union based in Ludwigshafen.

Pearson 1844 initially established in the North of England, now based in London

Pearson's origins were in the construction business during the Industrial Revolution.

Schöningh 1847

Now part of the Westermann printing and publishing group

Brown Son (& Ferguson) 1850 Glasgow

Established as a retail stationery business. With visits from Ship's Captains to the stationery store, the company moved into publishing books directly for shipping, with Brown's Nautical Almanac first published in 1876, remaining in print to this day.

The first members of the Company were James Brown and his son Robert. Around 1939 another name entered the Company, with A. H. Ferguson joining to make it the company we know today as Brown, Son & Ferguson.

Diesterweg 1860

Now part of the Westermann printing and publishing group

Elsevier 1880 Amsterdam

Part of the Reed Elsevier group, with Elsevier being the largest journal publisher in the world.

Heinemann 1890 London

Heinemann was acquired by Reed Elsevier Plc in 1987

McGraw-Hill 1899 New York



WITHERBY & CO.
with which is incorporated
GREAVES PASS & CO.
LAW & GENERAL
STATIONERS PRINTERS
AND LITHOGRAPHERS
TYPEWRITING.

20th Century

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS,
"WITHERBY.LONDON"
WITHERBY & Co.
STATIONERS,
ACCOUNT BOOK & ENVELOPE
Manufacturers,
PRINTERS & LITHOGRAPHERS.

In 1902

WITHERBY & Co.
"VICTORIOUS"
LONDON E.C.

In 1889

The University Presses

Oxford University Press (OUP) 1478

The first book was printed in Oxford in 1478, only two years after Caxton set up the first printing press in England.

Cambridge University Press 1534

Founded by a royal charter granted to the University of Cambridge by King Henry VIII. It is the oldest printer and publisher in the world, having been operating continuously since 1584, and is one of the largest academic and professional publishers globally.

Liverpool University Press (LUP) 1899

Founded in 1899, Liverpool University Press (LUP) is the UK's third oldest university press.