



Company History

Charles Stewart the great, great, great grandfather of the Company's present Managing Director, was a plants man of renown in the era of the great Scottish nurseries of the 18th century. His knowledge and professional skills were later to re-emerge in his eldest son John who, in 1835, transferred his father's nurseries to Broughty Ferry and continued their extensive seed business from premises in Dundee.

He traded under the name of John Stewart of Dundee having acquired the century old business of William Urquhart and Sons. Many documents survive which relate to his period of management to tell of his vast range of stock, of the thousands of millions of forest trees he grew and how he threw open his nursery grounds and plant houses for public enjoyment. "The grounds were beautiful in the extreme and afforded unalloyed delight to the crowds of visitors who were attracted to them".

John's two sons, William and David, followed in the tradition of their ancestors. William continued to manage the Scottish establishments whilst his younger brother travelled south in 1859 and started a branch nursery at Ferndown in Dorset. Here he was able to take advantage of the more mild climate for the growing of less hardy stock. Together, the brothers traded widely throughout Britain, the Continent and the U.S.A.

D Stewart & Son remained at Ferndown for a full century before vacating the site in favour of the rich farmland at Broomhill. Of David's four sons who followed in his footsteps, it was left to A.F. Martin Stewart to overcome the depressing period of the early 1900s. But overcome it he did and the firm continued as one of the largest producers of nursery stock in the country. They undertook major landscaping projects, massive tree moving, the laying of golf courses and tennis courts. Over the years they established branch nurseries at Deans Park and Strouden in Bournemouth, another at Milford-on-Sea, at Glastonbury in Somerset, Bosham in Sussex and nearer to their head office at Uddens, Parley, Longham and West Moors.

Perhaps the most dramatic phase in the firm's long history was more recently in the 1950s when container grown stock was introduced into Britain. An article in the Sunday Times (28th May 1972) acknowledges that it was Edward Stewart (only son of A.F. Martin Stewart) who should be credited with this initiative. Edward took full advantage of modern travel opportunities to keep in touch with horticultural developments overseas. His first garden centre created within adapted sheds at Ferndown was the forerunner of the first purpose-built centre in this country - Garden-Lands at Christchurch as we see it today.



Our Aim

‘To help People enjoy their Garden, Home and
Workplace’

Objectives required to achieve our aim:

- We must be profitable
- We must supply the needs of customers
- We must be fair and honest to staff, customers and suppliers
- We must be good value for money
- We must offer an inspiring range
- We must make it fun and different
- We must support local suppliers, fair trade initiatives and be organic if possible.