



Some of the travel bags in the range.



Classic small leather goods. CREDITS: WTP



Chair in kudu hide suede. CREDIT: TUSTING

Combining Heritage and Business

The Tusting family has a long and continuing association with the UK leather industry but, as the tanneries of England disappeared in recent decades, the family decided to use its heritage to develop a new business model.

A remote corner of England's Buckinghamshire is home to the Tannery Warehouse, designers and producers of elegant leather goods and fashionable leather furniture. The business is owned and managed by the Tusting family with an accumulated wealth of leather knowledge garnered over some 135 years. The present generation's great-great-grandfather founded a tannery in the little town of Harrold in Bedfordshire, only a few miles from the present business. Harrold in time became a major tanning centre and in 1922 a modern factory, involving the Tustings, was in operation. The local industry declined as elsewhere in the country and had disappeared by 1988.

Leather craft in this area was of course deeply engrained, based upon the proximity of the well established Northamptonshire shoe industry and the

many tanneries as well as dressers in the region. Even if almost all local leather making has now ceased the value of heritage and local leather affinity is recognised by the Tustings as making an important contribution to the success of their business.

The Tannery Warehouse, set up in 1980 currently employing 33 people and with a yearly turnover of the order of £2 million, is diversified. The core activity is in the design and manufacture of briefcases, bags and luggage. Leather sports articles are produced using tough bridle leather and chairs, sofas and footstools are made to order from existing designs or bespoke. Top quality leathers are sourced from tanneries in Spain, Italy, Holland and England. An extensive range of full grain leathers in a choice of colours for the articles in the Warehouse catalogue is available. Interestingly, in the soft suede

and nubuck fields a special Kudu hide (supplied by British tanner Steads) is part of the offer.

Styles of the leather goods produced range from vintage, through classic to modern and high fashion. Original grain face is left intact with natural defects such as insect bite marks. Even wire scratches are not disguised. Hand selected hides are used to form hand stitched furniture covers.

In the factory highly skilled operators cut, shape and sew components with others specialising in the assembly of the article. Small batch production and bespoke work is the pattern of this part of the operation.

Marketing activities and sales are worldwide. China is perceived as a market for the high quality articles developed by the business, so much so that a branch is being opened in Beijing. ☺



Cutting components on clicking press. CREDIT: WTP



Manufacturing wing of the Warehouse at Lavendon. CREDIT: WTP



Zip parts ready for fitting to travel bag. CREDIT: WTP



Tustings Gladstone Set. CREDIT: TUSTING