

The Company was founded in 1986 by father & sons team Jim, Dougal & Donald Chalmers as JTC Furniture Group.

## JTC Furniture Group Origins



After many years in industry as a craftsman Jim Chalmers decided on his 65th birthday to invest his pension in a new venture and to rely on his sons and some trusted colleagues to help him build a family business of renown in his adopted home town of Dundee.

As an ex-Marine Commando, Jim Chalmers understood the need to build an organisation based on mutual respect and trust which above all recognised the need to build strong relationships both with customers and indeed with the employees that gradually took over the running of the business which gives employment today to over 400 people.

**Camperdown Works, the Head Office of JTC Furniture Group was built in 1946, specifically for the Timex Corporation which was then known as 'UK Time'; a branch of the United States Time Corporation, founded in 1854.**

Camperdown Works lies to the North of the City, positioned at the top of a hill on Harrison Road, with its picturesque lawns, stunning views of the City of Dundee, adjacent to the famous Kingsway motorway and with easy access to the motorway network. This was and still is one of Dundee's most prominent and sought after buildings. Still often referenced as the "auld" Timex Building the property is Grade 2 listed.



History was made in these premises when UK Time introduced a new wristwatch

called the Timex, which made its first appearance in 1950. After successfully surviving a series of torture tests, UK Time quickly adopted the caption; "takes a licking & keeps on ticking".



This started a significant marketing campaign after thousands of viewers wrote in with their own personal suggestions for future torture tests and the rest as they say is history.



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The Timex Corporation was firmly established and Timex became almost a generic brand and certainly a household name. By the end of the 1950's one out of every three watches bought in the States was a Timex, and as you may guess the proportion was even higher in the Dundee area!

The introduction of mass production line methods from America to Dundee ensured the city's position in the manufacturing industry, which saw the Timex becoming the largest supplier of watches in the UK. Almost 90% of all watch products were exported, thus encouraging further international investment and by the 1970's, Timex in Dundee employed in the region of 5,000 workers, most of which were women.



During the late 1970's and early 1980's watch technology began radical development culminating in the perfection and possibility to mass manufacture quartz workings and digital displays. This spelled future disaster for the Timex Company and as a reaction they decided to develop their potential in the assembly of electronic equipment; namely with one of the pioneers of computing equipment Clive Sinclair.

Camperdown Works subsequently was witness to the early computer boom and if history had not dealt a blow to their economic development plans Dundee may have been at the heart of the about to blossom computer industry.

The first production of the Sinclair ZX Spectrum Home Computer started in March 1981 and although this meant an initial vast reduction in employee numbers there was hope of future high technology development.

However the plant limped from crisis to crisis and with problems worldwide, this was the beginning of the end for Timex in Dundee. In August 1993, following an acrimonious six month industrial dispute Timex ended its 47 year association with the City of Dundee.

The 147,000 square foot factory lay empty for over a year until in October 1994 when JTC Furniture Group purchased the building from Scottish Enterprise Tayside.

JTC was already a successful furniture company located in Baxter Street, Dundee in premises they were quickly outgrowing. After a number of repairs and modifications, the company moved into Camperdown Works in May 1995 and the manufacture of Fitted Kitchen, Bedrooms and Bathrooms commenced with other more specialised products to follow as they moved into fitted furniture contracts for the Healthcare and Education markets.

In 2004, JTC was expanding even more rapidly and that was when new investments were made in new plant and factory area to allow for the upsurge in sales and the increased complexity in products that were supplied.

A further factory was opened in Dundee, at Manhattan Works, Dundonald Road which was to specialise in large scale contract furniture which often involved genuine craftsmanship in producing large counters for healthcare and education often with wood veneers and specialist composite materials.

A new materials store was built to allow sufficient stock to be held to keep up with the throughput in the factory and the high capacity of the new computer controlled saws and edge banding machinery.



Once this reorganisation was complete, total manufacturing space increased to a current 270,000 square feet or 25,000 sq metres, with a production output of one typical kitchen every two minutes!

The future for JTC Furniture Group and Camperdown Works is as promising as ever! New and exciting activity is taking place to increase dominance in the kitchen market with new partnerships with councils 'Building Decent Homes', with Housing Associations who have vast numbers of properties to refurbish. House Builders are tasked with targets to greatly increase the numbers of homes built. Health Authorities are also investing heavily in new and renovated Hospitals and Care Centres. Not to mention the 'Building Schools for the Future' Government initiative which determines that the majority of schools throughout the UK can make new investments in their infrastructure!

The future for JTC Furniture Group looks rather exciting and as the company moves forward in its position as an industry leader in the manufacture of fitted furniture ... watch this space!

