

# We're 125! But who's accounting? That'll be us!



1894 – 1904

1905 – 1918

1919 – 1926

1927 – 1937

1938 – 1954

1955 – 1966

1967 – 1973

1974 – 1981

1982 – 1992

1993 – 2003

2004 – 2014

2015 – 2019

1894: Creation of today's thriving Vale & West accountancy firm. Aged 20, London-born Henry Busby Vale founds 'H B Vale Accountant and Auditor' in Bridge Street, Caversham, Reading.



1895: The National Trust was founded.

1901: Queen Victoria died.



1905: Emmeline Pankhurst led suffragette protests at Westminster.



1910: Mr Vale takes on his first employee, Miss Florence Victoria Blackmur.

1914-18: World War I.



1914-18: Miss Blackmur ran the office while Mr Vale served in the army.

1919: After the war, Mr Vale moved his offices to Market Place, Reading.

1922: The BBC began its first radio service.

1923: Vale's office moves to King Edward Buildings, Station Road, Reading.

1924: Mr Harry Maurice West joins the firm – soon renamed Vale & West. "Senior partner 'Mossy' West was a cricket fan, always dressed smartly, formally and soberly, and liked things to be orderly and traditional." June James, former Partners' Secretary.



1926: Reading University chartered to grant its own degrees.

In the late 1920s, the Vieler brothers (sons of Mr Vale's cousin) become the first articulated clerks. Douglas Vieler left in 1937 to become Birmingham Water Board's Chartered Accountant. Elder brother, Geoffrey Vieler later became Managing Director of the Post Office and National Giro.

"My first job every morning was to fill the Partners' glass-topped ink wells – black, red, green and purple ink – from large bottles under the stairs." Len Ridgus, former clerk.

1931: UK driven off the gold standard as worldwide economic crisis The Great Depression begins to overwhelm Britain.

1932: The firm moves to 154-5 Friar Street, Reading – and remains there for 50 years!



1939-45: World War II.

1943: Reading town centre bombed by German air raid.

1945: John 'Jack' Evans, having qualified as a Chartered Accountant before the war, joins the firm. In the war, Jack was a 'Battle of Britain' RAF night-pilot and one of 'The Few' who flew to save the nation.



1946: Founder Henry Vale dies at the age of 72.

1948: The National Health Service was created.

1950: 'Jack' Evans is appointed a Partner.

1955: Elvis heralds the birth of modern music and an emerging youth culture.



1960: John James joins as an articulated clerk.

1962: Co-founder 'Mossy' West dies.

1965: Corporation Tax and Capital Gains Tax introduced.

1966: England won the FIFA World Cup.



1966: The Beatles release 'Taxman' in protest at 95% marginal rate of tax.

1967: John Campbell joins as a Partner. Living locally with his wife Morag and young family in Twyford, he had previously commuted to work in London.

1969: John James is appointed a Partner. John found his partner-for-life at Vale & West – his future wife June, who was Jack Evans' secretary. "We all got on very well at Vale & West and were always very happy."

1969: Neil Armstrong took a giant step for Mankind on the Moon.



1971: 15 February – Decimal Day – UK pound changes from 20 shillings to 100 pence.

1973: The UK joins the European Economic Community.

1974: "When I joined from school there was an unspoken hierarchy of desks, defined by technology: pens and staplers for general work; typewriters with long carriages; a huge black telephone system on the main desk." – Jan Griffiths, PA and Administrator

1974: Steve Sinnett joined as trainee; became a Partner in 1986.

1979: Jack Evans's son-in-law, David Tansley joined. He was appointed a Partner in 1982.

1979: Jack Evans dies. "He was a real character, serious when required, but lived life to the full." – Morag Campbell.

1979: Margaret Thatcher elected as the first female Prime Minister of the UK.



1980s: The introduction of computers brought a seminal workstyle change – no more dusty ledgers!

1982: Vale & West moves to its new and current home in Reading's Queen Victoria Street.

1982-83: John Campbell, a life-long football fan, was also a director of Reading FC. He helped the 'Royals' board fend off a bid by tycoon Robert Maxwell to merge the club with Oxford United FC.

1988: David Tansley and Steve Sinnett decide to break away leaving the 'Two Johns', Campbell and James, as known by Reading's professional community, to continue in partnership for 11 years.



John and Morag Campbell, June and John James.

1989: Jason Pyke joins the firm as a trainee accountant.

1990: Computer scientist, Tim Berners-Lee, invented the World Wide Web.

1990s: Former 'Beer, Bulbs and Biscuits' town Reading reinvents itself as a major UK business hub, attracting inward-investing multinationals, modern technology and service sector industries.

1996: Self-assessment taxation began in April.

1998: Lee Gardner joins the firm as a trainee accountant.

2000: Peter Ringrow joins the growing firm as a Partner, enabling the retirement of John Campbell, who continued as a consultant until his death in 2005.

2000: Jason Pyke appointed a Partner.



Peter and Jason.

2001: Vale & West's investment in technology continues with implementation of fully networked and Internet-enabled IT systems.

2008: Cutts and Co merges with the firm. Brian Cutts earned a well-deserved retirement, and Vale & West gained daughter Kathryn as a Partner.

2008: Poole & Co acquired from Raymond Poole, who in 1977 was key in helping save St Joseph's Convent School from closure. Today, St Joseph's College shares a 125-year history with Vale & West.



2008: John James retires but remains a consultant until his death in 2017. "John was a constant in our firm for over 50 years. Extremely well regarded by clients, staff and fellow professionals – like a stick of seaside rock, if you had cut him in half it would have read 'Vale & West!'" Jason Pyke.

2012: Peter Ringrow retires and partners Jason, Kathryn and Lee lead the business into its next chapter.

2015: Major reinvestment delivers IT systems upgrade and modernisation of the Queen Victoria Street offices.



2016: UK voted Brexit 'Yes'.

2018: Experienced accountant and tax adviser Terry Wright joins Vale & West as its fourth partner in the modern era.



Kathryn, Terry, Jason and Lee.

2019: Making Tax Digital heralds a revolution in business revenue reporting to HMRC.

2019: Vale & West proudly celebrates its 125th year of helping businesses succeed.