

Clarks
SOMERSET
TO THE **WORLD**

CLARKS CELEBRATES 200 YEARS
OF INNOVATION, CRAFTSMANSHIP
AND COMFORT

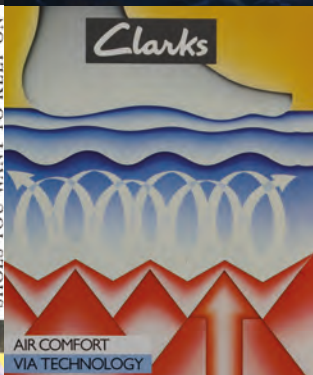
200
YEARS
OF COMFORT

1st January, 2025 – For two centuries, Clarks has redefined shoemaking, evolving from a humble workshop in Street, Somerset, into a global cultural iconic brand. In 2025, Clarks proudly commemorates this milestone with a series of celebrations that showcase its legacy of craftsmanship, innovation, and impact globally.

Kicking off this historic year, Clarks will unveil a must-see documentary film produced in partnership with Set Free Richardson and his New York-based agency, Compound. Launching in February 2025, the film takes audiences on a thrilling journey through Clarks' 200-year evolution – from the sheepskin slipper that started it all to the brand's world-renowned influence. It will also spotlight Clarks' timeless designs and legendary cultural collaborations.

The documentary features an impressive cast of Clarks ambassadors, including Ghostface Killah from Wu-Tang Clan, Oasis icon Liam Gallagher, artist Eric Haze, British and Jamaican designer Martine Rose, and Tim Crumplin, the Shoemakers Museum Archivist. The documentary brings to life the brand's incredible reach and cultural significance.

Complementing the film is a celebratory visually rich, limited-edition hardback book by Alexander Newman AKA Al Fingers, renowned for his Clarks in Jamaica book (2012). This book delves deep into Clarks' visual history, capturing iconic figures and subcultures – from New York hip-hop and Jamaican reggae and dancehall to British Mods and Japanese street fashion. Featuring vintage advertisements, stunning point-of-sale material and compelling historical imagery, the book will be released later in 2025.





A BRIEF HISTORY OF CLARKS

Two Brothers, One Vision

The Clarks story began in 1825 in Street, Somerset – UK, when Cyrus Clark opened tannery manufacturing leather goods. One day thereafter, his brother James joined the business and crafted a slipper from sheepskin offcuts – minimising waste, and maximising ingenuity. This ground-breaking idea combined innovation, conscientiousness and craftsmanship – core values that Clarks still stands by now.

From Somerset to The World

Clarks' global expansion took flight post-war, led by fourth-generation family members visionaries, like Bancroft Clark. Bancroft who joined the business in 1939 and was appointed Deputy Chair and Managing Director in 1942. What was meant to be a three-year stint in the role turned into twenty five years of success, where he worked with his cousins, Anthony Clark and Peter Clothier, who were accountable for Sales/Marketing and Manufacturing

By 1957, the brand had a flagship store on London's Regent Street and 15 new factories to meet demand. Clarks' signature designs and unmatched comfort made an indelible mark on the world.

Heritage Meets Innovation

For 200 years, Clarks has fused heritage with forward-thinking innovation. Whether developing new comfort technologies or driving social change, the brand continually shapes the future. "Comfort isn't something that we compromise; it's our DNA. We will always maintain that," says Dawn Porto, Clarks' Global Head of Product. "For 200 years, we've set the standard – and we're just getting started."



RADICAL SOMERSET: THE REBELS OF SOMERSET

Rooted in Somerset and close to the Glastonbury Tor, the Clarks headquarters remain the same today as it was in 1825. Cyrus and James were lifelong Quakers, and when William, James's son, took over the company he continued to follow the guiding principles of equality and community to look after his factory workers, even building them homes – many of which are still standing in Street.

William was more than just a shoemaker; he was a visionary. He embraced science and technology to keep the business moving, like using the Singer sewing machine – a revolutionary piece of technology at the time.

This passion continued into the 20th century and with Roger, John Bright and Alice Clark in charge, the company continued to grow with the opening of new factories, new stores in 1937 and the launch of Clarks very first press advertisement in 1936. There were new materials to use and trademark activities too, like Active Air™ – all of which helped Clarks become the world's most famous footwear brand.



VALUES AND PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS

The Clark family were notably involved in female equality, in early 1913, Alice Clark, the first female in the Clarks Board of Directors, served on the executive committee of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). They ran a six-week-long suffrage pilgrimage, ending in a large rally in Hyde Park. Alice carried a Street Women's Suffrage banner made by her sister Esther.

In line with the family's Quaker values, Clarks imprint was extended beyond the factory to benefit social initiatives in Street: a school was founded so that young men and women could combine working in the factory with continuing their education, a theatre was opened, a library was built, along with an open-air swimming pool and town hall. Playing fields were established for the benefit of all and low-cost housing was provided by the company for its employees.

Family philanthropy continues to this present day through the Shoemakers Museum, which is based in Somerset – UK, a project of The Alfred Gillett Trust to celebrate 200 years of shoemaking heritage. The museum will open doors to the public in Summer 2025.

"Clarks has always been more than a shoe company," says Tim Crumplin, Shoemakers Museum Archivist. ***"It's a legacy of people and community."***



Alice Clark

THE LEGACY OF CLARKS KIDS: A HERITAGE OF QUALITY, COMFORT AND IMAGINATION

In 1833, Clarks introduced its iconic kids' range, setting a new standard for children's footwear. By the 1940s, Clarks revolutionised kids' shoe fitting with the launch of the Clarks kids' foot gauge, a groundbreaking tool that prioritised foot health and proper shoe fit.

Following World War II, Clarks Kids became a key driver of growth, evolving into one of the brand's most significant and enduring business segments. The 1950s marked another milestone when Clarks debuted its first-ever television advertisement, focused on children's products. These early campaigns educated parents on the importance of foot health, but the brand soon discovered the power of engaging children directly. Targeted, playful advertising and product innovations captured young imaginations and cemented Clarks as a trusted name in children's footwear.

School shoes became a cultural staple in Britain, with generations of children growing up in Clarks. Most kids in the UK will have been subjected to the process of queuing to get a ticket at the end of the Summer to be fitted for school shoes and the Clarks Back-To-School campaigns have always been one of the most significant periods of trade.

Nostalgic collections like Clarks Commandos from the 1960s, Magic Steps and Hardware from the 1980s, remain cherished in the hearts of many. Commandos even had its place in popular culture, featured in Kit Carter comic book series.

Today, Clarks continues to captivate and entertain British children through imaginative collections and marketing initiatives. In 2023, Clarks re-launched the Cica silhouette on Roblox, introducing The Cicaverse game, which engaged kids in the metaverse. The excitement continued in 2024 with two collaborative collections inspired by Netflix's Stranger Things and a fresh iteration of the PlayPrints range, featuring playful Clarks characters.



CLARKS CLASSICS: ICONIC DESIGNS THAT MADE HISTORY

With over 22,000 styles, Clarks celebrates timeless classics like the Wallabee, Desert Boot, and Desert Trek. These designs have influenced generations and remain cultural staples. Raekwon of Wu-Tang Clan even headlined the first-ever Wallabee Day in 2024.

Nathan Clark's Desert Boot, launched in 1950, revolutionised casual footwear. Collaborations, like Drake's 2017 design, sold out in seconds, further affirming Clarks as a global fashion authority, recognised amongst a variety of subcultures.

Today, the Wallabee and Desert Boot are still among Clarks' best-selling designs. Other popular Clarks shoe is the first ever founded shoe, the iconic Brown Petersburg slipper from 1828, which was recreated and launched for Clarks 190 year anniversary, as well as the Torhill, which is inspired from the Clarks Originals Wallabee silhouette as well as the 80s Big Grippa archival profiles. Since launching in 2023, Clarks has sold 400,000+ Torhill pairs globally... and still counting.

ICONS AND COLLABORATIONS: WHERE HERITAGE MEETS THE FUTURE

From Mods and Britpop stars to Hip-Hop legends, Clarks has left its mark across every culture and generation. Famous fans include The Beatles, David Bowie, RUN D.M.C., LeBron James, and more.

Raekwon from the Wu-Tang Clan said, ***'We always idolized certain individuals who were from the West Indian culture who were fresh and fly and you look on their feet and it's like yo he got the ILL Clarks on you know'***.

Clarks continues to shape youth culture by collaborating with top musicians and artists.

Eric Haze, American artist reflects, ***"I don't remember a world without Clarks and Wallabees it was actually my father's go-to casual dress shoe and as a kid, you know that age where you're imitating your Pops, Wallabees became my go-to in the 70s... I always felt like Wallabees kind of hit this sweet spot between what's casual what's dressy"***.

THE FUTURE: LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT 200 YEARS

Clarks celebrates 200 years with a new collaboration with Liam Gallagher – who shared, ***'My favourite memory wearing Clarks is with the band Oasis, I wore Clarks all through the '90s. I was obsessed with them, and I still am'*** during an interview for the Clarks documentary film.

The brand celebrations kick off in January 2025 with an exclusive showcase at Men's Paris Fashion Week, including a preview of the documentary film before it officially launches in February 2025. The celebration continues with the opening of the Shoemakers Museum in Summer (Somerset) 2025, a tribute to the brand's enduring legacy.



Clarks has always pushed the boundaries of fashion and innovation in a fascinating story that continues to this day. Here are some of our highlights over the past 200 years...

1825

The Clarks story begins in Street, Somerset, England. Two brothers, one idea: slippers



1833

The Glastonbury canal opens allowing goods and materials to move more freely

1851

The Clarks brothers win two awards at The Great Exhibition

1856

Early Singer sewing machines are adopted to speed up production



1863

A recession hits business and William Clark takes over the company

1883

The Hygiene Range launches – shoes made according to the natural shape of the foot

1912

Strode Day Continuation School is financed to educate young factory workers

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1914

Launch of Street Belgian Refugees Home Fund

1937

The Clarks logo is born



1936

Launch of first Clarks press advert

1937

First chain of shops, Peter Lord opens

1947

JE MacKay invents the Self-Shortening Last

Clarks children's foot gauge is designed by director, JW Bostock

Princess Elizabeth is pictured wearing Clarks New York Sandals

1950

Nathan Clark's Desert Boot is the world's first dress casual shoe



1952

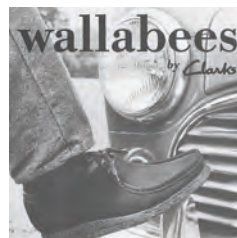
Expansion of the Street factory

1957

First flagship store open in Regent Street, London

1968

Lance Clark launches the Wallabee



1972

Clarks Desert Trek is created. Known for its central fore-foot seam, to the iconic crepe sole, and original suede colour

1982

Active Air™ launches – the first shoe technology to harness the power of air for maximum comfort

1993

Clarks Village opens in Street

2017

Collaboration with Drake on the OVO Desert Boot sells out in 11 seconds online

Clarks Originals stores in Japan

2022

Clarks takes the kids universe into the metaverse and launches 'The Cicaverse' on Roblox in the world of gaming

Clarks launches on Tiktok and hit *2million followers*



2023

Clarks wins a Webby for the first Metaverse concert by Fireboy



2023

Torhill is launched



Martine Rose is appointed as Guest Creative Director



2024

Clarks launches its inaugural Wallabee Day on 26th April in celebration of the world-famous shoe



Shoemakers Museum construction starts.

2025

Launch of the Clarks 200-year film

Launch of the Clarks 200-year book

Shoemakers Museum opens to the public