

Company History



JohnMason
International Movers

Mary Mason outside 87 High Street, Wavertree



1884 - 1989

The year 1884 saw England safe and peaceful under the rule of Queen Victoria. Liverpool was well established as a port with a thriving and expanding world trade.

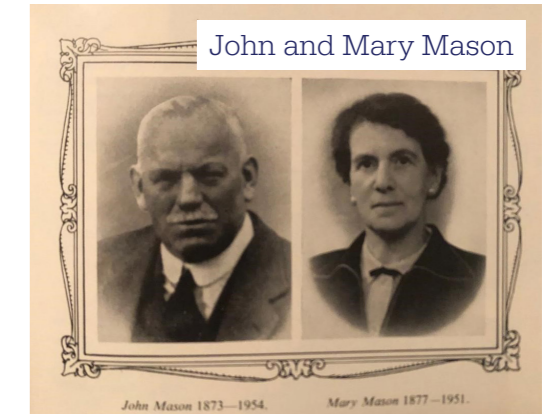
In Wavertree, then a township on the outskirts of Liverpool, Mrs Mary Mason, started a business as a coal merchant. Before starting out on her own Mary Mason had earlier helped her husband John in his carting business. At the age of 14 years old, Mary's son, also named John, began assisting his mother by delivering coal with a pony and cart and by 1887 coal deliveries became the main activity.

The business which had started in a humble way achieved an important point in its history when it was taken over John Mason in 1890 at the age of 17 years. He soon saw the need for a general carrying service and although he had only the pony and cart at first he expanded the business by offering to carry anything-anywhere!

The early records of the firm show that a wide variety of goods were carried including laundry to and from the big houses of the wealthy merchants who lived in the then residential districts of Wavertree and Woolton.

One of the early contracts was to carry laundry for the Liverpool School for the Blind between its Wavertree and Liverpool establishments. It is interesting to note, and says much for the confidence which exist between Mason's and its clients, that this contract was held until 1958 when the city establishment was closed.

Due to the enterprise of John Mason the business grew steadily in these early days. In 1887 he married Mary Hannah Baker who assisted her husband with the clerical and book keeping work. She would later continue to do this for her sons in their turn. To meet the increasing demands the number of the firm's vehicles was increased with Furniture vans were built to John Mason's requirement and heavier horses were purchased to transport these.



The business was carried on from the Masons' residence at 85 High Street, Wavertree and as the business grew a warehouse was acquired opposite in Wavertree High Street. The activities of the firm had extended to include journeys not only in Liverpool but to Manchester, many parts of Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales. It must be remembered that at that time all conveying was done by horse-drawn vehicles although the longer distances of over 50 miles or so were covered by rail.

Personal service and attention have always been an inflexible rule of the company and John Mason's enterprise ensured a share of the commercial and industrial expansion which took place in Liverpool around the turn of the century.

Many well known companies were numbered among their clients and the records show contracts with the Anglo American Oil Company which would become Esso, the Cheshire Lines Railway Company and the English Margarine Works.

1900 - 1925

When work started on the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral in 1904 the aptly named John Mason carried much of the carved stonework and woodwork for Morrisons Limited who were entrusted with building the Cathedral.

The city of Liverpool was growing and as new districts were being developed contracts were obtained from the City Corporation to carry material to and from the new roads being constructed around the rapidly expanding city.

The picture we have of the personality of John Mason, the virtual founder of the firm, is one of great industry and enterprise involving long hours of work and, when the need arose, completely around the clock. He had a great love of horses and his only hobby was buying and selling horses for himself and for others. His judgement was so much respected that he performed this service for a number of the principal dock cartage contractors and Lord Sefton often entrusted him with commissions to buy horses on his behalf. He would regularly spend a day a month judging at Craven Arms Horse Repository. John Mason also took a keen interest in entering horses for Agricultural Shows at which he won many prizes.

The outbreak of the first world war in 1914 saw a thriving business largely engaged in coal retailing, general haulage and household removals. During the war the activities of the firm were restricted by the requisition of horses for the war effort. However, contracts were received from the Government for cartage which helped to maintain the business at a steady level.

Leslie Mason, the eldest son of the marriage of John and Mary Mason, was already beginning to show an interest in the business at the age of twelve and was helping by driving a pony and waggon as his father had done before him. At sixteen he was capable of driving a team of horses which he continued to do, thus helping to overcome the wartime manpower shortage and enabling him to learn the business from a practical point of view.

As conditions began to return to normal after the war, trade again expanded and in 1917 the business moved to 127, High Street, Wavertree gaining more space for both warehousing and stabling for the firm's horses.

A milestone in the history of the firm was reached in 1921, when the first motor vehicle was acquired, an Albion, it had solid tyres and a chain drive. With this acquisition longer journeys were undertaken.

With the increasing help of Leslie Mason, the business developed and the reputation of the firm for good workmanship and the personal attention and courtesy of its employees became widely known. Although the first motor vehicle had been added to the fleet and further motor vehicles would be added steadily, horse transport would still be the main method of transport for some time, and more horses continued to be bought for many years. It would not be until almost the outbreak of the second world war that all horse-drawn vehicles would be replaced by motor vans, platform vehicles and lift vans.

Leslie Mason



1921 - The first motor vehicle

Moving the largest piano in the world



Shipping a car belonging to Queen Elizabeth II



1926 - 1958

By 1926 the first lift vans for rail were bought and overseas removals agents were appointed to look after the firm's interests abroad. A year before the outbreak of the second world war in 1938 John Mason's second son Stanley joined the business. Born in 1921 Stanley would play a major role in developing the company but his practical training involving driving and packing was interrupted in 1941 by him being called up to serve in the Merchant Navy for the duration of the war.

The outbreak of World War 2 soon saw the company doing vital work in evacuating schools, institutions, government departments, commercial and industrial concerns and private residences. Munitions and other war equipment were carried, whilst to meet the call for decentralisation extra warehouses were acquired on the outskirts of the city and at Penmaenmawr, in North Wales, for furniture storage. As with the first world war domestic moves were much reduced, though contracts gained from the government helped keep the business going despite both a manpower shortage and petrol rationing.

During the intense bombing of Liverpool the Mason team played its part with Mason vehicles reported for duty at Civil Defence and Fire Posts every evening.

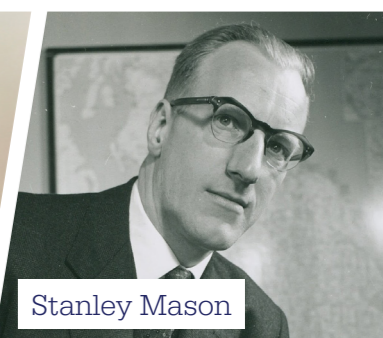
One of the many interesting jobs undertaken was the continuous removal of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's instruments around the country enabling it to continue to give regular performances. The orchestra gave many concerts to troops and civilians during the war years; Mason's driver William Clarke was never late for a concert even though he had to contend with all the hazards of the black out and enemy bombing.

When peace came, Leslie, who had carried the main responsibility throughout the war was joined by his brother Stanley and together they carried on the business. This enable John Mason to retire from the active day-to-day running of the firm although he remained in the background to five the benefit of his vast and valuable experience.

In 1948 the business had grown to such an extent that the private limited company of John Mason (Wavertree) Ltd was formed with John and Mason and the brothers Leslie and Stanley as Directors.



Loading the QE2



Stanley Mason

1926 - 1958 cont..

The end of the war brought with it the enormous problems of rebuilding after the destruction of the blitz. Industry and commerce had to be reorganised and adjusted to meet the needs of the post-war world. The Mason brothers, saw in this situation a chance to serve the community and due to their hard work foresight great progress was made. Large office removals were undertaken and a considerable contribution made to the transport services required by the vast rebuilding programme which would take place. Weeks of pre-planning were necessary in some cases for the removals of private and government offices to ensure the minimum disruption of office routine, and several had to be undertaken at weekends. Many hundreds of tons of files, papers and office equipment were involved in one of the largest moves during which the Inland Revenue, Ministry of Food and other Ministerial offices were moved from Llandudno to London.

Reliability is, and always has been, one of the principal features of Mason service. To ensure reliability all vehicles had always to be kept in first class condition so that delivery promises could be honoured. Now the fleet and equipment would be kept constantly up to date by the purchase of new vehicles. Steady expansion of Mason's service was made to cover the whole of the United Kingdom.

In 1948 a daily removal service from Liverpool to London was started; London depot facilities would be eventually acquired from FL Pettman Ltd to facilitate distribution in the London area and return loading.

During 1955 a daily removal service to Ireland using the Preston/Larne Roll on-Roll off ferry commenced and, combined with the daily Liverpool/London service, offered the quickest route available from the capital to Ireland. Mason's would be one of the first removal firms to use the ferry service from Preston, and at the time the only firm in the north west offering an almost daily service to Ireland. This trailer-ferry service has become increasingly popular due to its savings in packing and handling costs. Due to the 'drive-on drive-off' method of loading all cramage is eliminated, thus avoiding the danger of damage and speeding up delivery.

The overseas service had become more and more popular and quickly started to expand. Improved methods of packing for shipments were established to ensure safe transit and economy to the client. Connections in Europe, America and the Commonwealth continued to strengthen and 1950 the company became one of the founder members of FIDI – the Worldwide Federation of International Furniture Removers.

To give a more local service in Cheshire in 1955 Leslie and Stanley became directors of B Dudley & Sons Ltd Removers of Bebington, a firm established in 1869 and both companies worked in close association. In 1959 Dudley's would be taken over completely by Masons. By the closing years of the 1950s Masons, in association with four reputable South of England firms, had also established a network of distribution routes serving the Midlands, the South West, the South East and the South of England as well as many parts of Wales, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Office removal, Drury Lane





Paul, Vivien, Simon and Caroline Mason

1959 - 2020

In 1959 a new 16,000 sq. ft warehouse was opened in Wavertree, built to the company's specifications and specially designed and constructed to store customers' effects with the highest possible degree of safety. By 1962 the continued growth of the company resulted in the purchase of a 36,000 sq. ft warehouse in Kirkby. The company launched into the antique shipping business which required large consolidation and storage facilities. By 1967 a further 2,000 sq. ft warehouse was acquired bringing the company's total Merseyside facilities to 72,000 sq.ft.

The following year, in April 1983, Stanley Mason died and his son Paul now joined his mother Jean as a director of the company. Paul later married Vivien who joined him working in the company. Paul and Vivien would welcome two children into the world, Simon and Caroline.

More than a century of successful trading has been achieved not only through the hard work of the directors but very much because the company has always enjoyed a completely loyal and hard working staff. Their contribution above all else has played the central role in the growth and development of the business. It was in that spirit that the firm entered its second century in 1984.

Stanley Mason was elected President of the Overseas Division of the British Association of Removers in 1965.

Sadly 1971 began with Leslie Mason's death, following which Stanley's wife, Jean, joined her husband as a director; they were joined in 1972 by their eldest son Paul.

In 1989 all the company's local activities were transferred to Wilson Road, Huyton whilst a new warehouse and offices were opened in Croydon.

In 1974 the company joined Eurovan, a consortium of around 180 mainly privately owned international removals companies and by 1977 a record volume of antique shipping was recorded – some 250 ISO containers were packed and despatched from the company's warehouses. By 1982 that success was consolidated with a record year for inter-continental removals: over 400 containers were exported winning the company the Eurovan 'Biggest Booker' award.



Household removal



Jean Mason



2020 - Current

Over the years the company have moved people from all walks of lives, from members of the Royal family, Hollywood film stars, Rock and roll singers and sports mega stars. With the company strengths direction focused more and more on international moving, the company slowly reduced the amount of domestic and European moving services.

Like many generations of their family Paul and Vivien Mason's children Simon and Caroline helped out in the company from a young age. Simon Mason worked with the company during the school holidays from the age of 14 starting in the warehouse then, at 16, progressed to working with the packing crews. In his 17th summer he worked on the European trucks to expand his horizons further.

Paul Mason died suddenly in 2009 at the age of just 58. His wife Vivien then became director, and the fifth generation of the family, Simon and Caroline joined the business in the same year. Simon Mason deciding to spend some time working in the moving and relocation industry overseas to gain experience of how companies in other cultures operate. In 2009 Simon went off to work with Crown Worldwide Moving and Storage in San Francisco. There he was engaged in an intensive 18-month internship looking at all aspects of the industry. From there, Simon moved on to Graebel in Chicago as a manager within the International Sales Department. There he learned much about the latest sales techniques and gained experience in employee relocation services.

Simon's globe trotting finished in June 2012. Caroline learned about the business in both Liverpool and London, focusing on customer service and employee culture.

In late 2015, the company had outgrown its southern based premises and moved to Hemel Hempstead. Hemel Hempstead provided the company with much improved transport links and better placed to serve trade customers across the south.

In April 2016, John Mason International launched a pet relocation service, as part of its comprehensive offering. This was followed up with the launch of an FX currency service and cost effective baggage shipping service, ideal for customers who are only moving a small quantity of items. 2016 also saw the company become one of the first in the world to offer video surveys to its customers.

In 2017 Vivien Mason retired and Simon and Caroline Mason became sole owners of John Mason International Ltd.

Over the next few years the current generation of the Mason family increasingly stepped away from any day-to-day involvement, with their priorities focusing on family and their own careers. Noel Briscoe, Managing Director, Ken Crane, Finance Director and Simon Hood, Sales and Marketing Director continued to steer the ship in their absence. However it became apparent that ultimately for the business to thrive in the future it would need long term ownership that was much more engaged and hands on thus the Mason family started to explore options to exit and sell the company.

In late March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the company hard, resulting in the company temporarily closing the doors as the company was put into a national lockdown. The majority of the staff were furloughed, with just the Import department remaining working. Slowly as the country came out of national lockdown the company started to kick start again with its export department opening up fully in June 2020 and staff starting to return to work, with many working from home.

In February 2021, a new family took ownership of the company with a passion for excellent customer service. Simon Hood who had joined the company in 2016, purchased the company in a Management Buy Out from the Mason Family.



Simon Hood with daughter Poppy aged 1



Caroline Mason, Ken Crane, Noel Briscoe

Packaging crew



“

We value being part of your new start and look forward to making your move with John Mason International the best decision you've ever made.

Wherever you go, you're at the centre of our world.

”

JohnMason
International Movers

Moving the world for you

PACK 2
CONTENTS

LABEL

PACKER

NAME

GENERAL	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOUNGE	<input type="checkbox"/>
DINING ROOM	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEDROOM 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEDROOM 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEDROOM 3	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEDROOM 4	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATHROOM	<input type="checkbox"/>
KITCHEN	<input type="checkbox"/>



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you're at the centre of ours'*

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