Chesterfield Lyons: Where Does the Term Chesterfield Come From?

by Chesterfield Lyons

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As Britain's original Chesterfield company...

This is a question we are often asked; the answer is we're not sure! We have customers the world over who have their own ideas; our Canadian customers like to think that Chesterfield is a Canadian word although they refer to any sofa as a Chesterfield. We have done a little research and according to Robert Hendrickson in the Encyclopedia of word and phrase origins, the term chesterfield is commonly applied to a sofa in honour of Philip Stanhope, the forth Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773). However, Hendrickson points out that it is more likely that a latter Earl of Chesterfield invented them, which earl he does not know. At any rate, according to the OED (Oxford English Dictionary), it was used to refer to a couch in 1900.

According to Carver in American Regional Dialects the term appears to have come into use in Canada around 1903 and in Northern California about the same time. The Journal of the Canadian Linguistics Association notes chesterfield seems to be in general use throughout Canada, though the usual American sofa is also known and used . Almost everywhere in the U.S chesterfields are cigarettes and nothing more. Here in England, a davenport couch was sometimes referred to as a chesterfield but this is obsolete.

In present day England a Chesterfield is now generally accepted to mean a deep buttoned leather sofa with arms that are of the same height as the back of the couch.

Only the original chesterfield company makes chesterfields the old fashioned way, we don't cut corners and wherever possible use traditional methods in our factory.

We would like a definitive answer to the origins of the Chesterfield sofa, can you help?

If you have any ideas about the origins of the word 'Chesterfield' or if you have any interesting Chesterfield facts and we may give you a mention on the site.

Our Factory

Our factory only uses traditional methods to manufacture our fine leather furniture and all of our chesterfield sofas and chairs are made in the UK.

We have a comprehensive quality assurance process from initial order through to final delivery.

All stages throughout the manufacturing process are supervised by time served tradesmen and women with specialised knowledge of the individual skills involved in creating fine furniture.

Manufacture

We go to great lengths to make sure that all of our furniture not only looks good today but will still look good in years to come. All of our leather furniture is hand finished to the highest standard. Each spring is hand inserted into the seats and backs of our furniture with each spring working independently of the others. This ensures that our furniture keeps its form.Â

Leather

Only the finest quality leathers are used in the making of our furniture. All leather pieces are covered exclusively in select top grain leather procured from the finest tanneries. Unlike most of our competitors we do not use PU, splits or Bi-cast leather. These are passed off as the genuine article but are not suited to traditional Chesterfield furniture.

Real leather is a natural product. It breathes, is warm and has individual characteristics which make each hide unique. Leather will always bear the marks of its natural origin and these characteristics can show as healed scars, growth marks, areas of differing fibre density and hair pore structure. These hallmarks in no way detract from the wearing qualities of the leather. They are signs discerning owners cherish when buying leather. With the passing of time and use our leather develops a patina which enhances its beauty.

Every chesterfield sofa or chair we produce is totally unique due to the leather we use.

Most of compeitiors use a type of leather know as a "split" this is in essence re-constituted leather given an artificial top coat. At the Original Chesterfield Compnay we guarantee to only use the best UK sourced first class leather.

Frames

All our frames are constructed from hardwood,we use either English beech or English ash,which has been carefully dried, milled and processed to remove defects, which could cause structural weakness. All corners and structural stress points are reinforced with corner blocks that are firmly glued in place.

The construction of our frames as shown in the diagram gives an indication of the traditional methods our factory still uses.

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Chesterfield Lyons - About Author:
The Original Chesterfield Company is a proud British family firm with roots in the chesterfield tradition going back decades. We offer only British made chesterfields from our factories and ship our goods worldwide.

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