

# FLYING THE FLAG

They caused a stir when they vowed to only buy British for a year but, two years on from their challenge, how has life changed for the **Bradshaw** family from **Westerham**?

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Until a couple of years ago, the Bradshaws were just a normal family who didn't really think too much about where the things they were buying came from. But their decision in 2013 to spend a year buying only British produce and products gained them international recognition. The project, which was born out of a frustration over the way huge companies like Amazon were dealing with their taxes, began as a New Year's resolution for James, 36, Emily, 30, Lucan, four and Patch the cat, but soon led to something much bigger.

"We just wandered into it thinking it would be a cool thing to try and see if we could do," explains James. "We decided we'd try and put all of our money into the local economy and businesses that we could have a direct relationship with."

On January 1 the family embarked on their new venture, first spending a whole day trawling supermarkets to find British produce. Although initially they found it difficult to track down items made in the UK, they soon discovered a whole new world, in which they could buy everything from clothes to computers – all made in Britain.

"We actually managed to save about 20% on our weekly shop," says James. "The biggest challenge was buying clothes – some big retailers would announce a new 'British range' only to then reveal they'd only made 100 suits or were only selling through one flagship store. That's not supporting British manufacturing at all."

When they began, they had no idea how big their project would become, but it was soon apparent that they were attracting interest from across the globe.



"For the full 12 months it was manic – we were on the front page of the *Daily Express*, we were on Chinese National TV in front of a billion people – it just took over our lives," says James. "For a year I suppose we felt a little bit of what it would be like if we were famous because people started recognising us. Actually, fame is awful!"

Despite the publicity, the family have used their recognition to raise awareness of the British manufacturing industry, by blogging about their finds and also by hosting the British Family Fair, an annual charity event where UK exhibitors sell their produce.

"The only perk of doing all of this is the opportunities it's given us," says James. "Now I get asked to give talks to everyone from the WI to the Change conference, so I've had the chance to get involved in a lot of things I wouldn't ordinarily."

Over the year the family faced many challenges, including James losing his job halfway through, but they managed to complete their task. So, the question is, at the end of the year did they go straight back to the way they were?

"We came to the conclusion that there were certain things about our year that we would never go back on, especially buying seasonal, locally produced food," says James. "We really missed citrus fruits, so the first thing we bought when the year was up was oranges and lemons. We still look for a British

solution before we buy anything though." Though he admits they enjoyed their venture, James confesses he wouldn't suggest it to anyone else.

"While it is possible it probably isn't recommended!" he says with a laugh. "There are simple things like lightbulbs and matches you can't buy and I became one of those people who rings the helplines on the back of products to find out where they're really made. I didn't know people really phoned those numbers!"

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