

## **It's not possible for a British family to live on only British, but...**

In January 2013 James (35), Emily (30) and their son Lucan (3) set themselves an unusual New Years resolution. Fed up with the slow economy, the lack of fair taxes being paid by large foreign businesses and a general 40 year neglect of the British manufacturing sector as a whole, they decided to see if it was possible to keep all of their money in the UK. They asked themselves the simple question can a normal British family survive on only British made goods?

12 months on and their year has not been without adversity, frustration and hard work. "The first 2-3 months were the hardest" James points out. "The research to find British made goods took over our lives and we would both be at a computer regularly until the early hours of the morning." They also had problems doing their normal weekly shopping and would often have to visit 2-3 supermarkets in a day to get the range of goods required to feed the family only British. The family found visiting the high streets and local shopping malls to be fruitless exercises when looking for British made clothing, electronics and other such items and all this this forced them to consider alternative life-style choices to complete their challenge.

The last time there was a necessity for families in the UK to survive on only British goods was during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War when it was nigh-on impossible for imports to reach the country. Initiatives such as 'make do and mend' and 'dig for victory' ultimately became the Bradshaw's inspiration. "We began buying our food more directly from the farmers, growing and preserving our own fruit and veg and seeing our clothing purchases as investments that needed to be properly maintained rather than disposed of" says Emily. But despite the extra effort, 12 months on and the Bradshaw's say that they have hit upon a new lifestyle that actually suits them better not least because they claim to now save up to 20% on their weekly shopping bills.

The last year also saw some high profile stories centred around foreign imports. The horse meat scandal raised questions about our foods supplies and the factories collapsing in Bangladesh killing over 1000 people made many think about where the things they buy were made. These issues have certainly made the Bradshaw's think "We began to understand our place as consumers and understand the 'real' cost of what we buy. If something is too cheap we perhaps need to ask ourselves why" says Emily. However, the family are keen not to be labelled as protectionist or against imports. "We are certainly not anti anything. We do not believe that supporting Britain should mean that any other country loses out. We just want to celebrate and be proud of what the UK does produce" says James.

The original question the Bradshaw's sought to answers was ' Is it possible for a normal British family to survive on just British goods?' The answer is no. Ultimately, there are certain things that are no longer made here in the UK; light bulbs, matches, batteries, children's toys, printers and ink to name but a few. However, James is keen to point out that it is not all bad news "British manufacturing is still alive and kicking. There are some great UK products out there but they need much more consumer support. It is down to us to seek out British made products and demand them from retailers. The family also claim to have unearthed a rich seam, great quality British made electronics, clothing and plastics items all at competitive prices and regularly review these in their [www.britishfamily.co.uk](http://www.britishfamily.co.uk) blog. They have even set up a dedicated website, called Britipedia, that seeks to connect consumers with British manufacturers.

By their own admission the family wandered quite naively in to their challenge, hoping perhaps to get some publicity for their cause locally, but were taken by surprise when the national and even international media began to call. "We are astounded, but immensely proud, that we have been able to bring some long overdue support to the manufacturers and farmers of Great Britain, and raise awareness of their hard-work on their behalf." says dad James. Their numerous interviews on TV, radio and in the press have meant that they have now become well known consumer champions for UK industry, known affectionately as The British Family, but Emily is keen to note "In a way it is a shame that it's us doing this. Promoting such an important part of our economy should not be left to a normal British family. Surly this should be the job of the Government, business leaders or maybe even celebrities." It is perhaps testament to the neglect manufacturing feels as a sector that they were so quick to look for a champion in this normal British family.

As their initial challenge draws to a close what is next for the Bradshaw family? Well, 2013 saw them organise the first British Family Fayre, an event which attracted over 4000 people, and they already have a date set for 2014 and plan to make this years' event even bigger and better. James is also on the committee of the new Made in Britain Campaign that have recently launched a kite-marque for British made goods. The family also have a number of other events lined up throughout the year with the sole intention of further celebrating British manufacturing and farming. But what about their challenge of buying British? James suggests they are keen to continue. "We would be silly to stop now. We have hit upon a lifestyle that suits us, that saves us money, that is ethical and socially conscious to boot. Buying British has now changed our lives forever and we have no intentions of ever going back."

It has truly been a remarkable year for a British family with a passion for all things British. Let's hope they continue to get the support they deserve in 2014.

-----ENDS-----