



We are Lloyd's of remarkable history

When Lloyd's first began in the 17th Century, it had little resemblance to the global market it is today. In fact, it became a home for insurance almost by chance.

Ours is a fascinating story.

1688

We are Lloyd's of freshly ground coffee

The story of Lloyd's began in a rather unlikely place: a small coffee house in Tower Street, in the City of London – first mentioned in the London Gazette in February 1688. Coffee became a very popular drink in the 17th Century, and as a result, coffee houses were appearing all over London. Edward Lloyd's in particular grew to be a favourite meeting place among ships' captains, merchants and ship owners – thereby earning it a reputation as the place to go for trustworthy shipping news and, as time went on, for marine insurance.

1691

We are Lloyd's of booming business

Edward Lloyd's coffee house was enjoying an excellent trade. So much so, that in 1691, he was able to move to larger, more central premises at the corner of Lombard Street and Abchurch Lane, London. At the same time, Edward Lloyd was building up a network of correspondents at the main ports – both home and abroad – allowing him to gather news on the movement of various vessels quickly and accurately.

1769

We are Lloyd's of the end of an era

Edward Lloyd died in 1713, leaving the coffee-house to his son-in-law. Through the following years, Lloyd's then began to take on a life of its own. In 1769, a breakaway group of professional underwriters established New Lloyd's Coffee House in Pope's Head Alley. It was one of the first, and most important, steps to making Lloyd's what it is today.

1771

We are Lloyd's of new beginnings

While the new premises in Pope's Head Alley was a significant step forward, it became increasingly obvious that Lloyd's needed more than simply a convenient public place to meet. So, in 1771, 79 merchants, bankers, shipowners, underwriters and brokers subscribed £100 each towards a new building. For the first time, Lloyd's was the property not of one owner, but of several. Nine subscribers were elected into a new Committee, and from then on, Lloyd's was no longer the coffee house it had been.

1774**We are Lloyd's of the Royal Exchange**

Progress continued when Lloyd's moved to the Royal Exchange in 1774. In 1796, the Committee resolved that two ordinary general meetings should be held each year, and that an annual report and accounts should also be presented.

1805**We are Lloyd's of naval battles**

Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805 is perhaps the best-known battle in this period of British history. From the moment war broke out, Lloyd's had been in continuous touch with the Admiralty, exchanging information and intelligence. To show their gratitude for Nelson's heroic achievements, the merchants at Lloyd's Coffee House raised funds to help the wounded and bereaved after each of the major naval battles. Indeed, the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, which was established in 1803, still provides support for ex-servicemen and women.

1838**We are Lloyd's of devastating fire**

On 10 January, 1838, the Royal Exchange was ravaged by fire, destroying many early Lloyd's records along with it. Reportedly, the flames could be seen as far away as Windsor. It took many years to rebuild the Royal Exchange, and Lloyd's was only able to move back in 1844.

1859**We are Lloyd's of sunken treasure**

The Lutine Bell, which now hangs in Lloyd's Underwriting Room, came originally from the French frigate, La Lutine "The Sprite" - which, after being captured by the British in 1793, became HMS Lutine. Six years later, it sank, along with many of the crew and a vast amount of gold bullion. The insurer was Lloyd's. After numerous salvage attempts, the ship's bell was recovered from the ocean bed in 1859 and brought to Lloyd's, where it was rung to herald news of overdue ships. These days, however, it's used only on ceremonial occasions.

1871**We are Lloyd's of it's official**

Lloyd's was incorporated in 1871 by an Act of Parliament. That made it illegal for anyone who was not a recognised underwriting member at Lloyd's to sign his name to a Lloyd's policy. To further cement this new status, from 1873 Lloyd's added a seal to every policy.

1880**We are Lloyd's of over the Atlantic**

In the 1880's, Cuthbert Heath, a prominent underwriter at Lloyd's, wrote the first Lloyd's reinsurance policy on American risks for a British company doing business in the US.

1887**We are Lloyd's of landlubbers**

Cuthbert Heath built on his reputation as an innovator by writing the first non-marine policies at Lloyd's, believed to be in 1887. Heath is credited with the market's first burglary policy, earthquake and hurricane insurance and even insuring against Zeppelins in the First World War. By 1903, the non-marine market became firmly established alongside Lloyd's marine business.

1904**We are Lloyd's of legendary innovation**

When Lloyd's was first asked to insure a motorcar, in 1904, no guidelines existed. Hence, the insurance documents produced – by marine underwriters – described the car as a “ship navigating on land”.

1906**We are Lloyd's of shuddering foundations**

Shortly past five 'clock on the morning of 18 April 1906, violent tremors ripped through San Francisco. Buildings were destroyed, lives were lost, and when the dust settled, the scene was one of devastation. It was clear that rebuilding the city would be a massive task. Lloyd's rose to that challenge admirably. In the event, we were praised for our swift response, and Cuthbert Heath's order to “pay all of our policy holders in full irrespective of the terms of their policies” stunned and impressed the insurance world in equal measure.

1911**We are Lloyd's of flying contraptions**

The first tentative forays into flight by the Wright brothers are much documented. But it was only in 1909 that the first official flight was recorded in the UK – and it lasted a mere four miles. It wasn't long, however, before Lloyd's was involved. In 1911, Lloyd's issued its very first aviation policy – in time for the famed London to Manchester prize flight that year.

1912**We are Lloyd's of fateful collisions**

In the spring of 1912, the 44,000-ton Titanic set sail from Southampton. Five days later, it had sunk beneath the waves of the Atlantic. When news reached Lloyd's, the Room was aghast at the tragedy. Yet, despite the enormous cost – both human and financial – not one of the underwriters found themselves unable to settle their claims.

1928**We are Lloyd's of royal gatherings**

Lloyd's moved to a new building in Leadenhall Street in 1928, opened with great ceremony by King George V and Queen Mary. Thirty years later, in 1958, Lloyd's moved again: this time, the building – only a few steps down the road from where Lloyd's is today – was opened by HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

1969**We are Lloyd's of new frontiers**

When Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin and Neil Armstrong set foot on the surface of the moon, in 1969, it marked the beginning of a whole new era for insurance. Today, space and satellite insurance is an area in which Lloyd's continues to pioneer.

1978**We are Lloyd's of new proposals**

In 1978, the members of Lloyd's held a general meeting and agreed to establish a working party to examine how Lloyd's could be self-regulated. In the following year, Sir Henry Fisher was appointed chairman of this working party, and in 1980, a draft Lloyd's Bill, based on Fisher's proposals, was approved. In 1982, the bill received Royal Assent and became the Lloyd's Act 1982. This led to the election of the first Council of Lloyd's, to replace the old Committee, and in 1983, the appointment of the first Chief Executive.

1986**We are Lloyd's of remarkable design**

Lloyd's moved into its current home at One Lime Street in 1986. Opened by Her Majesty the Queen and designed by Richard Rogers (now Lord Rogers), it is an extraordinary piece of architecture.

1988**We are Lloyd's of three hundred years**

In 1988, to mark our tercentenary, Lloyd's established the Lloyd's Tercentenary Foundation – a charitable trust set up to fund education and research in the fields of medicine, science, safety, the environment and engineering.

1994**We are Lloyd's of new members**

For the first time, in 1994, Lloyd's admitted corporate members, who commenced underwriting with a capacity of £1,595m. Whereas before, Lloyd's policies were underwritten by individual members, on an unlimited liability basis, Lloyd's now offered corporations and businesses the chance to provide capital.

1996**We are Lloyd's of renewed strength**

A wide-ranging, and complex, settlement agreement (known as Reconstruction and Renewal) was completed in 1996 when 95% of Lloyd's members agreed to proposals that drew a line under the market instability of the previous years.

1998**We are Lloyd's of a defining moment**

On 21 January, 1998, the Government announced that Lloyd's would be independently regulated by the Financial Services Authority – effective from midnight on 30 November 2001. Until this point, Lloyd's had regulated itself. However, with the benefit of this external analysis we were able to develop a more commercial relationship with the market.

2001**We are Lloyd's of unforeseen events**

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 sent shockwaves through the world. It also had a profound effect on the insurance industry. The level of claims following the atrocity was unprecedented, and claims teams and underwriters had to completely rethink how they go about insuring large-scale risks as a result. Lloyd's itself was praised by US Treasury Secretary John Snow for its response. In his words, Lloyd's "stepped up to the plate" in the face of the catastrophe.

2002**We are Lloyd's of modernisation**

In the early 21st Century, many measures were taken to transform Lloyd's into a modern, dynamic marketplace. In 2002, Lloyd's members approved the proposals laid out in the Chairman's Strategy Group. And, in 2003, Lloyd's introduced a Franchise Board and appointed its first ever Franchise Performance Director to make sure Lloyd's is a well-run, disciplined marketplace that works to the very highest standards.

2005**We are Lloyd's of devastating weather**

Hurricane Katrina was one of the largest insured disasters to hit this century. However, due to the strength of the insurance market, Lloyd's emerged with only a small overall loss in the year. What's more, Lloyd's was commended by key figures and businesses in Louisiana for its part in helping rebuild a devastated region.

2007**We are Lloyd's of Eastern promise**

2007 saw Lloyd's open an onshore reinsurance operation in Shanghai, allowing it to access one of the world's fastest-developing economies. This further built on an already impressive international presence: today, Lloyd's operates in over 200 countries and territories worldwide and is trusted by a huge and diverse range of businesses, organisations and institutions.