



FACTSHEET

Guinness Book of Records

The Guinness Book of Records was first published in 1955 and is the best selling copyright book of all time. The idea for the Guinness Book of Records came from Sir Hugh Beaver, the Managing Director of Guinness in the 1950s. On 10 November 1951, Sir Hugh was out with a shooting party in County Wexford when some golden plover flew overhead. Sir Hugh aimed and missed. Later that evening, a discussion followed as to which game bird flew the fastest. This gave Sir Hugh the idea of compiling a 'fact' book, which would serve as a definitive reference book to settle nightly debates in the 81,400 pubs in Britain and Ireland.

Sir Hugh took his idea to Norris and Ross McWhirter, who ran a fact-finding agency in London. This led to the publication of the first 'Guinness Book of Records' in August 1955. Interestingly, in the very first edition there was no mention of the fastest flying game bird, even though this was the debate that inspired the whole publication in the first place. However, the omission was noted and the details were given in the second edition.

The 'Guinness Book of Records' was published by a sister company of Guinness, initially named Guinness Superlatives, later Guinness Publishing. Guinness Superlatives also published a range of 'fact' book including various editions of the 'Guinness Book of Answers', 'The Guinness Book of British Hit Singles', 'The Guinness Book of Olympic Facts and Feats', 'The Guinness book of Golfing' among others.

Guinness World Records was sold by Guinness in 2001 to Gullane Entertainment. By then, the publication was on sale in over 77 different countries and was being translated into 38 different languages.

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If you have any further questions about the history of Guinness, please contact the Guinness Archive, Guinness Storehouse, St. James's Gate, Dublin 8. Email:
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