

How Terry's left York

From the sweeties.net wiki

York was once home to three big confectioners: Rowntree's, Cravens and Terry's. Terry's was founded in 1767. For most of its life it was a York business, owned by a York family, making chocolate in a landmark factory with a clock tower. Then it was sold, and sold again, and the chocolate left town.

The long goodbye begins

The Terry family sold the business to the Forte group in 1963 for £4.25m. York's mayor, Mona Armitage, asked whether Terry's had been fortified or Fortes terrified. It was then sold to Colgate Palmolive in 1977, to United Biscuits in 1982, and in 1993 to Kraft Foods, then part of the tobacco giant Philip Morris, for £220m. The last member of the Terry family to work there, Peter Terry, left in 1985.

Kraft's promises

Under Kraft, the name changed from Terry's of York to plain Terry's in 2000, loosening the link with the city. Production in York was scaled back. Kraft told unions that work was being moved because the factory was not capable of handling it, and that it was looking for new sites in York.

In 2004 Kraft decided to close the York factory altogether, moving the remaining products, including the Chocolate Orange and All Gold, to factories in Belgium, Sweden, Poland and Slovakia. Terry's Chocolate Works closed on 30 September 2005, with the loss of 316 jobs. The main buildings had been given Grade II listed status just six months earlier.

Chocolate Orange on the move

The Chocolate Orange went to Poland in 2005. When Kraft split in 2012, Terry's went to its snacks business, Mondelez. In 2016 Mondelez sold the brand to the investment company Eurazeo, which made it part of the French confectioner Carambar and Co, and in 2018 production moved again, to Strasbourg in France. In 2025 the Italian group Ferrero bought Carambar and Co. A chocolate born in York is now made in France for an Italian owner.

Smaller, and dearer

On 29 May 2016, the UK Chocolate Orange shrank from 175 g to 157 g. Rather than making the orange smaller, the segments were reshaped to leave a gap between each one. The public was outraged, all the more because in some shops the price actually doubled. In 2025 it lost another 12 g, going down to 145 g. See [shrinkflation: why sweets keep getting smaller](#).

Is anything left in York?

Something is. The Chocolate Works, with its 135 foot clock tower, has been redeveloped as The Chocolate Works, a mix of homes, businesses and leisure. The old Terry's shop in St Helen's Square still has the family name carved on its front, and in 2017 York Civic Trust put up a blue plaque to Joseph Terry. Since 2019 there has been a Terry's Chocolate Company again in Britain, but it is a marketing business in London, not a factory in York.

The bigger picture

Terry's was not alone. Rowntree's of York was bought by Nestlé in 1988, and Smarties production left York for Germany in 2007. Cadbury was bought by Kraft in 2010. To see how the old names fit together now, read [who owns the famous British sweet makers now](#), and for the man who started it all, [Joseph Terry and the chocolate orange](#).

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