

Victory V lozenges

From the sweeties.net wiki

Victory V is a British brand of liquorice flavoured lozenges with a scent and taste unlike anything else in the sweet shop. The reason lies in a Victorian recipe that would never be allowed today.

A Victorian cure

Victory V lozenges were devised in 1864 in Nelson, Lancashire, by Thomas Fryer and a doctor, Edward Smith. They were meant as a remedy, and at first they were made by hand to make sure that each lozenge contained the right amount of its therapeutic ingredients.

Those ingredients were ether, liquorice and chlorodyne. Chlorodyne was a popular Victorian patent medicine, and its recipe included laudanum, which is opium dissolved in alcohol, as well as cannabis and chloroform.

In the 19th century, the line between a sweet and a medicine was blurry. Chemists sold lozenges and pastilles for coughs and sore throats, and sugar was a way of making strong medicines easier to take. Victory V was part of that world.

The factory in Nelson

For many years the lozenges were made at the Victory V factory in Nelson. In 1959 a company called Red Rose Films made a documentary, *The Story of Victory V*, showing how the lozenges and the factory's other sweets were made. In the 1960s the firm bought a Yorkshire sweet maker, A. Talbot and Son of Alverthorpe.

What is in them now

Modern Victory V lozenges no longer contain chloroform or ether, and certainly no opium or cannabis. But the makers have kept the flavour: the distinctive smell of ether is recreated with artificial flavourings, so the lozenges still taste much as they always did.

Today they are made by Ernest Jackson and Co in Crediton, Devon, and sold in specialist sweet shops and online.

A family of fiery lozenges

Victory V belongs to a very British tradition of strong lozenges that are halfway between a sweet and a remedy. A close cousin is [Fisherman's Friend](#), made in Fleetwood, Lancashire, since the 1860s. Liquorice lozenges also have a long history in Yorkshire, where [Pontefract cakes](#) began as a medicine too.

If you want to know more about other sweets with a shady past, see [sweets that were banned](#).

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