

Harrogate toffee

From the sweeties.net wiki

Harrogate, in Yorkshire, grew rich as a spa town. Visitors came to take its mineral waters at the Royal Pump Room, and the taste of those waters was something they were glad to be rid of. Harrogate toffee was invented to help.

A toffee to take the taste away

In 1840, Robert Hudson Swan, who ran a tea business in Harrogate, came up with a toffee recipe designed to take away the taste of the spa waters. Instead of a soft, chewy toffee, it was closer to a hard boiled sweet, with a taste like barley sugar and butterscotch. It was made with several kinds of sugar, butter and lemon flavouring.

The Farrah family

Swan's business was a family affair. Ann Farrah, a relative of his, was his assistant, and her son Joseph Farrah joined the shop in 1848 and was registered as a dealer for it. The company was officially registered at 2 Crescent Place, Harrogate, in 1873. By 1887 Joseph's son, John Farrah, owned it, and that year he registered Swan's recipe under the Farrah name.

John Farrah was quite a character. As well as running a grocery and confectionery business, he was a respected amateur botanist and meteorologist, a fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society, and a keen birdwatcher who was out in the fields by three in the morning before work. A species of mushroom was named after him.

Farrah's today

Since John Farrah's time the company has grown into Farrah's of Harrogate, and in 1998 it was visited by Queen Elizabeth II. Harrogate toffee is still sold in its distinctive tins, with 1840, the year of Swan's recipe, on the lid.

Toffee or butterscotch?

Harrogate toffee sits somewhere between toffee, butterscotch and barley sugar. Butterscotch is made from brown sugar and butter boiled to the soft crack stage, and barley sugar is a hard, golden boiled sweet. The lemon in Harrogate toffee gives it an extra brightness that sets it apart. For its Yorkshire cousin, see [Doncaster butterscotch](#), and for the family of hard, golden sweets, [barley sugar](#).

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