

Highland toffee

From the sweeties.net wiki

Highland Toffee is a chewy Scottish toffee made for most of its history by McCowan's of Stenhousemuir, near Falkirk. Its story begins with a bottle of lemonade and a pint of beer.

From lemonade to toffee

McCowan's started out as a lemonade business, making aerated water, run by Andrew McCowan. His wife began selling toffee from the window of their house in Stenhousemuir to earn a little extra money. According to the company's history, the secret recipe was bought by McCowan in a pub, from a man who was selling the toffee for a pint. The toffee soon did better than the lemonade and became the family's main income.

Highland Toffee arrives

Within fifteen years, McCowan was making all sorts of sweets, including tablet, rock, snowballs, lollipops and macaroons. But it was in the 1920s that he began making the small toffee chews that became the company's flagship: McCowan's Highland Toffee. Andrew first worked from a shop in Church Street, and in 1924 he opened a factory on Tryst Road.

A century of owners

Andrew McCowan died in 1951 and his son Robert took over. In 1959 Robert accepted an offer from Nestlé, although McCowan's kept selling under its own name. In the 1980s the firm launched the Wham bar and, with the Irn Bru makers A.G. Barr, an Irn Bru bar. A management buyout made it independent again in 1989; a Dutch confectioner, Phideas, bought it in 1996; and it became independent once more in 2003. In 2005 it merged with John Millar and Sons to form Millar McCowan, which went into administration in 2006, and the successor company went into administration in 2011.

Where it is now

In October 2011 the Highland Toffee and Wham bar brands were bought by Tangerine Confectionery, now part of Valeo. The old McCowan's factory in Stenhousemuir closed that year.

A proper chew

Highland Toffee is a firm, chewy toffee bar. It is a very different thing from the hard, brittle [treacle toffee](#) of Bonfire Night. For McCowan's other invention, see [Wham bars](#), and for another Scottish sugar sweet, [Scottish tablet](#).

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