

George Cadbury and Bournville

From the sweeties.net wiki

George Cadbury, born in 1839, was the son of John Cadbury, who had founded the family's cocoa business in Birmingham. With his older brother Richard, he took a struggling firm and turned it into one of Britain's great chocolate makers. One of their creations was not a chocolate at all: it was a village.

Saving the business

George left school at fifteen and at sixteen was apprenticed to Joseph Rowntree in York to learn the grocery trade, the same Rowntree family that would become Cadbury's great rivals. He came home after his mother died in 1855, and in 1861 he and Richard took over Cadbury Brothers.

The firm was in trouble: staff numbers had fallen from 20 to 11 and it was losing money. The brothers worked long hours, lived frugally and used their mother's £4,000 inheritance to keep going. George went to Holland to see Coenraad van Houten, whose press removed much of the fat from cocoa to make a better drink, and the firm moved its focus from tea and coffee to quality chocolate. By 1866 it was making money again.

Richard and the Valentine's box

Richard Cadbury was an innovator too. In 1868 he produced a heart shaped box of chocolates for Valentine's Day, making Cadbury the first to connect chocolate and romance commercially.

The factory in a garden

In 1878 the brothers bought 14 acres of open country about four miles south of Birmingham and opened a new factory there in 1879. It became known as the factory in a garden. Around it they built a village, which they named Bournville after the nearby river, the Bourn, and the French word ville.

Bournville was designed as a model village, with well built cottages, large gardens and modern interiors, by the architect William Alexander Harvey. By 1900 there were 313 cottages and houses on 330 acres.

Unusually, the homes were not only for Cadbury workers, and they were kept affordable. That year the Bournville Village Trust was set up to run the estate independently of the family and the company.

A dry village

The Cadburys were temperance Quakers, so no pubs were built in Bournville, and there are still none today. In 2007 residents went to court to stop a Tesco store in the area selling alcohol, and won.

Looking after workers

The brothers built canteens and sports grounds, and George later introduced works committees, pensions, savings schemes and education for every employee. He founded Woodbrooke, a Quaker study centre, bought a newspaper to campaign for old age pensions and against the Boer War and sweatshop labour, and gave the Lickey Hills to the people of Birmingham.

George Cadbury died in 1922. Bournville is still Cadbury's home: see [is Cadbury still British?](#)

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