

John Cadbury and the first Cadbury shop

From the sweeties.net wiki

John Cadbury founded the company that became Cadbury, one of the biggest chocolate brands in the world. He started with a single shop in Birmingham, and his reasons for selling chocolate had as much to do with his beliefs as with business.

A Quaker in business

John Cadbury was born in Birmingham on 12 August 1801, into a wealthy Quaker family. His father, Richard Tapper Cadbury, was a linen draper. In those days Quakers did not go to university or join the army, so like many Quakers, John turned to business. In 1818 he was apprenticed to a tea dealer in Leeds.

The shop on Bull Street

In 1824 he opened a shop at 93 Bull Street, Birmingham. He sold tea, coffee, hops and mustard, and also cocoa and drinking chocolate that he prepared himself. In 1831 he began making chocolate commercially, in a warehouse in Crooked Lane, and by 1842 he was selling sixteen varieties of drinking chocolate and eleven varieties of cocoa.

In 1846 he went into partnership with his brother Benjamin as Cadbury Brothers, and the next year the firm moved to a new factory in Bridge Street.

Chocolate instead of beer

John Cadbury was a teetotaler for half a century and a leading figure in the temperance movement, which campaigned against alcohol. He saw drinking chocolate as an alternative to alcoholic drinks, a warming drink for working people that would not lead them into drunkenness. That belief is part of why a Quaker grocer put so much effort into cocoa.

A campaigner

He was a campaigner in other ways too. As a Poor Law guardian in the 1830s he spoke out against the use of climbing boys, the children forced to sweep chimneys. He worked to reduce pollution, starting with his own factory, opposed cruelty to animals including bull baiting, supported the Peace Society, and later backed hospitals, savings banks and help for the blind.

Handing over

John retired in 1861, after the death of his wife, and passed the business to his sons Richard and George. At the time it was struggling. They turned it round, and in 1879 moved it to a new factory in the countryside south of Birmingham, around which they built the model village of Bournville. See [George Cadbury and](#)

[Bournville.](#)

John Cadbury died at his home in Edgbaston on 11 May 1889 and was buried at Witton Cemetery. True to his beliefs, Bournville has been dry for more than a century, with no pubs; in 2007 its residents won a court battle to stop a supermarket selling alcohol there.

For what happened to his company in the 21st century, see [is Cadbury still British?](#)

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