

Fact Sheet

Bournville Site

The Factory in a Garden

From its humble origins as a small shop in Birmingham, the Cadbury business was flourishing by the late 1870s and was beginning to outgrow the Bridge Street Factory from which it operated at that time. The workforce had risen to 200 and after 32 years at Bridge Street, the Cadbury Brothers started their search for a new site in 1878. Rather than take a factory in the recognised industrial quarter of Birmingham, they made the revolutionary decision to move their business to the country. It was their belief that if the country is a good place to live in and play in, why not to work in!

On June 18th 1878 the ideal site was found – the Bournbrook estate, 14.5 acres of land between the villages of Stirchley, King's Norton and Selly Oak, about four miles south of the centre of Birmingham. It adjoined a railway and the Worcester Canal, linking it with the Bristol dock where cocoa beans arrived. Bournbrook was situated between two main roads and had a good water supply – all essential facilities for a factory site.

The Birth of Bournville

A French sounding name, 'Bournville', was chosen for the site because at that time French chocolate enjoyed the highest reputation. The Bridge Street factory was closed in July 1879, having produced enough goods to last until the first trainload of 230 workers arrived at Bournville in the September.



The remainder of the Bournbrook estate was purchased in 1893 and parkland was set aside for recreational facilities for men and women. The 'Cadbury factory in a garden' was now well established, with ample space for extension to meet the ever increasing demands for Cadbury's chocolate in the worldwide market.

Pioneering Employee Welfare

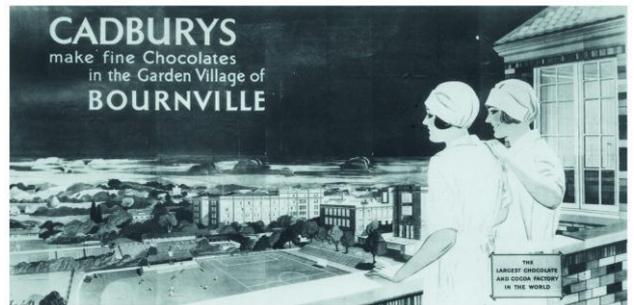
The Cadbury Brothers were pioneers in industrial relations and employee welfare, setting standards which other enlightened employers followed. As the company prospered new work practises were implemented and additional facilities were provided for the workforce. For example, young employees were encouraged to attend night classes, women's and men's swimming pools were built and every young boy and girl joining the Cadbury workforce were encouraged to become good swimmers. Work outings to the country and summer camps for the young boys were organised. Many of the facilities were simply unknown in Victorian times. The site had properly heated dressing rooms; kitchens for heating up food; separate gardens for women and men, plus extensive sports fields.



By 1899, the Bournville factory had trebled in size, with more than 2,600 employees. With the formation of the limited company in 1899, Bournville entered an era of scientific management, as the younger members of the board introduced new ideas – analytical laboratories, advertising and cost offices, a sales department, a works committee, a medical department, and education and training facilities for employees. The Bournville factory site became a series of 'factories within a factory' as everything needed for the business was produced on site. This policy continued until well after the second World War when the rationalisation of the business and the mainstreaming of activity led to the use of outside specialised suppliers.

Bournville Village

George Cadbury was a housing reformer interested in improving the living conditions of working people in addition to advancing working practises. Having built some houses for key workers, in 1895 he bought 120 acres near the works and began to build Bournville village. His motivation was two-fold. First, George Cadbury wanted to provide affordable housing in pleasant surrounding for wage earners. The second reason was that as the Bournville factory grew, local land increased in value and was ready to fall into hands of developers. The last thing that the Cadbury brothers wanted was for their 'factory in a garden' to be hemmed in by monotonous streets. The community was designed to be mixed in terms of both class and occupation and not just a village for Cadbury workers.



In 1900 George Cadbury handed over the land and houses to the Bournville Village Trust with the proviso that revenue should be devoted to the extension of the estate and the promotion of housing reform. The Trust has always been entirely separate from the Cadbury business, although members of the Cadbury family continue to act as Trustees, closely involved with the work.

Bournville Today

From 1900 onwards, Bournville developed into a lively community with its own shops, schools, places of worship, children's playgrounds, allotments, village hall, colleges and various recreational areas. To George Cadbury's delight, improvements in living conditions massively enhanced public health. Figures published in 1915 show that the general death rate and infant mortality for Bournville was significantly lower than that for Birmingham as a whole, compared over a five-year period.

The triangular village green was the focus for early community buildings. The meeting house of the Society of Friends was here, and two centuries-old black and white timber frame buildings were preserved. Selly Manor – dating back to the 14th century and purchased by George Cadbury – was dismantled and re-erected in Bournville between 1912 and 1916: today it's a popular museum. Minworth Greaves dates from the 13th and 14th centuries and was acquired in 1911 and re-erected between 1929 and 1932 – now it holds exhibitions.

In 2005, Cadbury committed to invest £40m into the CDM plant in Bournville. At the time it was the biggest single investment Cadbury had ever made. The new investment consisted of a new 20,000 tonne shell moulding and chocolate making plant, covering over 1km in length.



Bournville village is home to over 25,000 people and covers 1,000 acres. Today there are twelve different types of special needs schemes on the estate,

from bungalows for the elderly to sheltered housing schemes, and from a hostel for people with learning difficulties to 90 shared-ownership homes for first time buyers and self-contained flats for single people. Today, over a hundred years since the first house in the Bournville Village estate was built, Bournville continues to enshrine the aims of its founder, George Cadbury.