

STRIDE TREGLOWN

BOURNVILLE GARDEN SUBURB
A BRIEF HISTORY
HISTORY



History and story of Cadbury



John Cadbury 1801-1889

The Cadbury story is a fascinating study of industrial and social developments covering well over a century and a half.

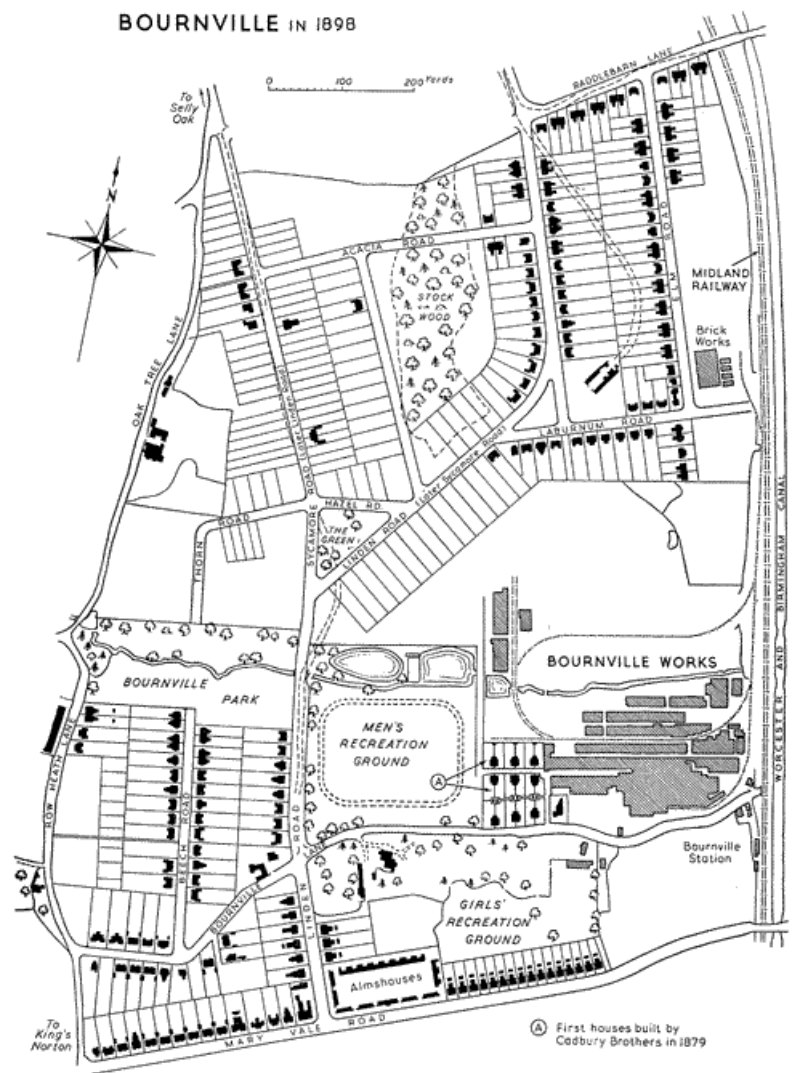
Cadbury has been the 'first name in chocolate' since John Cadbury opened his first shop in the centre of Birmingham in 1824, trading as a coffee and tea dealer. Soon a new sideline was introduced - cocoa and drinking chocolate, which he prepared himself using a mortar and pestle. It was his lifelong involvement with the Temperance Society that led to John Cadbury providing tea, coffee and cocoa as an alternative to alcohol, believed to be one of the causes of so much misery and deprivation amongst working people in Britain at that time.

However, the actual founding of the Cadbury business, as it is known today, dates back to 1831 when John Cadbury first made cocoa products on a factory scale in an old malthouse in Crooked Lane, Birmingham.

In 1847 the business moved to larger premises in Bridge Street, which had its own private canal spur linking the factory via the Birmingham Navigation Canal to the major ports of Britain.

Business continued at the Bridge Street site for 32 years and by 1878 the workforce had expanded to 200, so more space was needed. This heralded the move to Bournville and the building of what is now one of the largest chocolate factories in the world.

John Cadbury retired in 1861 handing over the business to his eldest sons Richard and George. It is to their leadership that the success of the enterprise is owed as the company prospered. It is John's sons who established Bournville Village.





Early image of Bournville

Bournville Village and its Trust

Established by Richard and George Cadbury, two Victorian businessmen with industrial and social vision far beyond their time, the story of Bournville is one of industrial organisation and community planning covering well over a century. It embraces the building of a factory in a pleasant 'green' environment in stark contrast to the oppressive conditions of the Victorian industrial scene; the enhancement of working conditions and overall quality of life for employees and the creation of a village community with a balanced residential mix.

The Cadbury family were all members of the Society of Friends or Quakers and the Quaker ideals had a major influence on the building of the business and the Bournville community.

Working and housing conditions in the centre of Birmingham in the 19th century were very poor and caused great hardship for the working classes leading to high mortality rates. Through his work with the Quaker Adult School Movement, George Cadbury was well aware of these problems.

When the time came to move the Cadbury Brothers' factory from its central Birmingham location a green field site was chosen. It was the move to Bournville that opened up opportunities for the Bournville village development.

In 1900 George Cadbury decided that the time had come to preserve the Bournville village for future generations, securing its rural aspect and so the Bournville Village Trust was formed.

The Bournville Trust today remains at the forefront of improving housing conditions in this country, maintaining the ideals of the founder.

In 2016 Stride Treglown acquired Bournville Architects from the Bournville Village Trust. Ian Tipton, the office lead, introduced us to this fascinating history lesson. We read the 1901 Garden Cities programme and the Shaping Future Places Symposium was born.

19th Century Birmingham



Richard Cadbury



George Cadbury

In common with the central areas of most cities and large towns in the Victorian era, housing and working conditions for the working classes in Birmingham were poor.

People lived in slum areas in 'back-to-back' houses. Most of them had a living kitchen area of about 130-160 square feet that opened directly from the street, with a bedroom above and over that an attic with a low ceiling. The houses were built in double rows, each surrounded on three sides, with other blocks at right angles forming courts. These courtyards were often behind shops, with factories and numerous private slaughterhouses crowded amongst them.

Poor ventilation and limited daylight resulted in a complete lack of washing and sanitary facilities; the atmosphere was heavily polluted and gutters were in a putrid state, reeking with the contents of water closets.

Crimes and other social problems were the result of these awful conditions.

A Royal Commissioners' report in the 1840s showed that nearly one quarter of Birmingham's population of 220,000 lived in 2,000 undrained streets, many of which were quagmires.

Most of Birmingham's water came from wells or watercarts from which it was sold by the gallon. It was often so dirty that it was only fit for washing and scouring. Deaths were twice that of the suburb of Edgbaston, a few miles from the centre of Birmingham.

Through his devotion to the Adult School Movement, George Cadbury often visited his pupils and their families.

He quickly got to know the poorer areas of Birmingham, learning about people's misery, poor health and suffering caused by the appalling housing conditions.

When the Bridge Street factory became too small and it was time to move, George Cadbury had a new vision of the future, shared with his brother Richard.

'Why should an industrial area be squalid and depressing?'

Why should the industrial worker not enjoy country air and occupations without being separated from his work?'

If the country is a good place to live in, why not work in?'

The move to Bournville

On 18 June 1878, the ideal site was found; fourteen and a half acres of land between the villages of Stirchley, King's Norton and Selly Oak, about four miles south of the centre of Birmingham.

This 'Greenfield site' was sloping meadow land with a trout stream, the Bourn, and a solitary building Bournbrook Cottage.

This was eventually pulled down, but the old pear tree from its garden proudly stands outside the main Cadbury reception at the Bournville factory to this day.

The factory in a garden

When the workers arrived at Bournville they found many new innovations; a field adjoining the factory where the men were encouraged to play cricket and football; a garden and playground, just inside the entrance to the works for the girls, and a kitchen where workers could heat up their dinners, which was a forerunner of the staff dining rooms.

Conscious of the need to transport workers from their homes in the centre of Birmingham to the new Bournville factory, the Cadbury brothers negotiated special workmen's fares to the Stirchley Station before building began.

Sixteen houses were built on the site for foremen and senior employees. These were mostly semi-detached and spaced out with an ample garden.

The factory was a mile from the nearest goods station so raw materials could not be delivered by canal barge or narrow boat. The Cadbury products had to be transported by horse and cart to Lifford Station.

Before long Bournville's own railway sidings were built to transport the ever increasing output from the factory. Within 10 years of the move to Bournville, the number of employees had risen from 230 to 1,200; by 1899 the number was 2,700 and it had risen to 7,500 by 1919.

Every element of cocoa and chocolate production, from the roasting of the beans to the production of the packaging materials, took place at the Bournville factory, handled by Cadbury employees. The new site could be said to be 'many factories within a large factory.'

By 1889 the original area of the factory buildings had doubled and then trebled by 1899. While the Cadbury business prospered, it was for the advances in working conditions and social benefits for its workforce that the company became famous.

Bournville development

George Cadbury was a housing reformer deeply interested in improving people's lives by providing a community of decent homes for working men and their families. When the factory was established, George Cadbury began to devote more of his spare time to these ideals. A Building Estate was established, open to anyone who wanted to live there; it would be a model of

good planning open to all, not just 'tied' houses for Cadbury workers.

George Cadbury wanted to create a mixed community in terms of both class and occupation. In this aspect, the Bournville village differed from other communities built by industrial reformers such as Port Sunlight built for Lever Bros' employees.

A village in the garden

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury was involved in the original planning of Bournville with her husband George. Extracts from her memoirs tell us how these plans became reality.

'When I first came to Birmingham we were living at Woodbrooke. Morning after morning I would walk across the fields and farmland between our home and the Works, planning how a village could be developed, where the roads should run and the type of cottages and buildings.

Gradually this dream became reality and houses arose. Many of the first tenants were men in Mr Cadbury's Adult School Class, who met every Sunday at 8.00am in Bristol Street. They had previously lived in the city centre and had never had a garden, while workers in the factory also became tenants.

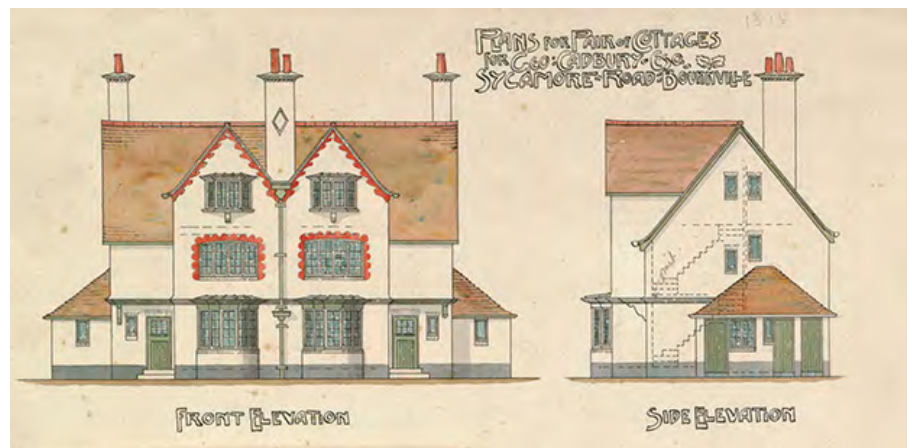
They too enjoyed their homes in the healthy surroundings, cultivating their gardens, rewarded in many instances by splendid crops of apples from the belt of apple trees which each tenant found at the bottom of their garden.'

Housing designs

By the time the building of Bournville was started, the 'tunnel-back' house had become the basic type of house built in Midland towns. Developed to provide cheap, large scale housing in compliance with the Public Health Acts that had condemned the 'back-to-back' housing, they were built in long rows with entrance to the back through common passages, built over on upper floors.

For Bournville, George Cadbury chose a rectangular cottage style similar to country dwellings, all with a large garden. As a private individual he purchased 140 acres adjoining the factory and in 1895 143 cottages were built. The first houses were built in straight rows with no more than four houses in a terrace, but this soon gave way to more interesting layouts.

While benefits were achieved with improved accommodation, some argued that the resulting landscape was endless rows of dreary monotonous housing.



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Dame Elizabeth Cadbury

Design principles

Bournville was developed on 'garden village' lines with the guiding principles being:

- Cottages grouped in pairs or threes, sometimes fours.
- Groups were set back from tree lined roads with each house having its own front garden and vegetable garden with fruit trees at the back.
- All cottages were well built with light, airy rooms and good sanitation.
- A typical cottage would consist of a parlour, living room and kitchen downstairs and three bedrooms upstairs. Initially some early houses lacked a bathroom but this was easily added later.
- None of the houses should cost less than £150 to build, as they were to house 'honest, sober, thrifty workmen, rather than the destitute or very poor.'
- Building was restricted on each plot to prevent gardens being overshadowed and to retain the rural aspect.
- The first houses were designed to be sold on leases of 999 years to maintain control of the rural appearance of the district; mortgages were available for would-be purchasers.



Garden suburb

Quality housing created by Cadbury and the Bournville Village Trust in the early 1900s



More land was purchased for building houses for rent as it was recognised that there would always be those who could not or did not want to buy their own house. The Bournville Estate developed during the 1890s with cottages of various sizes and types being built to suit different needs. It attracted great interest for housing reformers everywhere, not least from the Garden City Association.

The Garden City Movement was something that George Cadbury was instrumental in developing with other reformers, in particular the father of modern town planning, Sir Ebenezer Howard, who founded the Association in 1900. He once said that Bournville had given him the needed impetus for carrying out his ideas.

The first Garden City, Letchworth, began in 1902. This was followed in later years by the foundation of Hampstead Garden Suburb, New Earlswick and Welwyn Garden City.

There is, however, one important difference between Bournville and the two English garden cities, Letchworth and Welwyn, which are self-contained satellite towns.

Bournville was included within the boundary of the city of Birmingham in 1911 as other housing sites were developed around it. Therefore, as a 'garden suburb', Bournville approximates more closely in type to the Hampstead Garden Suburb in London.

It was about then that George Cadbury decided the time was right to preserve his works for future generations and to perpetuate the rural aspect of the village, protecting it from speculators. The City of Birmingham had not yet pushed its boundaries beyond Edgbaston, which was four miles away, but to the north of Bournville. Selly Oak was developing fast, and to the east and south Stirchley and King's Norton were spreading.

He therefore decided to turn his Bournville Building Estate into a Charitable Trust.

The Bournville Village Trust

On 14 December 1900 The Bournville Village Trust was created. George Cadbury's aims as founder were re-affirmed in a recently refined Statement of Purpose for the Trust.

'To provide high quality housing developments, distinctive in architecture, landscape and environment, in socially mixed communities, using best management practices to promote ways to improve the quality of life for those living in such communities.'

The Trust was the creation of George Cadbury and not the company: its existence has always been entirely separate from that of Cadbury Limited.

Original trustees were all members of the Founder's family but later this was extended to include participation by the City of Birmingham, the University of Birmingham and the Society of Friends.

When George Cadbury died in 1922, his widow Dame Elizabeth Cadbury succeeded him as Chairman until she died in 1935. George Cadbury Junior then became Chairman. One of the original trustees, he played a leading role in developing the Trust for 50 years until his younger half-brother Laurence succeeded him in the Chairman's role in 1954. There is still a strong Cadbury family link with the Trust and several members of the family are trustees.

Healthy community

The creation of a community was foremost in the mind of George Cadbury. The Deed of Foundation clearly provided for both land and buildings for community purposes, covering a wide range of activities; not only spiritual welfare but also physical and educational needs. Parks and open spaces were also of prime importance in the Bournville planning scheme.

From 1900-1914 there was major activity, with Bournville developing into a lively community with its own shops,

schools, places of worship, children's playgrounds, allotments, village hall, the Selly Oak colleges and various recreational areas.

Improvements in living conditions did succeed in enhancing public health, much to George Cadbury's delight. Twenty years after the foundation of the village 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.

Model of social welfare

Following the Quaker ethic, Cadbury Brothers developed social and industrial reforms, which led the way towards modern industrial relations. A piecework system relating pay to output was introduced; small rewards were given

for punctuality; Cadbury was the first company to introduce the weekly half-day holiday with its five and a half day week and the company was a pioneer in closing the factory on Bank Holidays.

Worker education schemes

The company also pioneered the idea of workers continuing their education while working at Bournville. The Day Continuation School was first set up for workers to carry on studying subjects such as arithmetic and geography. Attendance was compulsory for Bournville workers and there was even a 'uniform' for pupils. Some workers thought the programme was too much like school so subjects like woodwork, modelling, surveying and household repairs were introduced.

When the site was enlarged in 1895 with the purchase of the Bournbrook Estate, recreational facilities were also enlarged. A swimming pool was built and young employees were encouraged to play games, while works outings to the country were organised. Medical and dental departments were established and in 1906 the pension fund was begun with a capital gift from the company.

Expansion elsewhere

From 1935 onwards the Trustees devoted attention to securing the 'greenbelt' on the southwest side of Birmingham, in co-operation with the City of Birmingham, the National Trust and other bodies. The area known as the Lickey Hills, an attractive rural area to the south west of Birmingham had been secured by Birmingham Corporation in the early 1920s.

In the 1930s The Bournville Village Trust purchased several estates close to the Lickey Hills for preservation in their agricultural state. These remain agricultural land amounting to 3,000 acres, administered by the Agricultural Estates division.

Open spaces

At least one tenth of the estate was reserved for public open space.

Parks and open spaces have continued to be an integral part of the overall plan. Main open spaces are linked together by parkways, two of which cross the Estate.

Most of the early community projects were concentrated around the triangular village green.

Laid out along the side of streams on low-lying land unsuited for building, these parkways bring the countryside almost to the front door of the houses.

Existing trees have been preserved and many new trees and shrubs have been planted over the years; planning and planting of flowerbeds and borders all over the village has always been important.

Bournville Care Village, Phase 1 opened in 2017



Bournville Trust today



Development has continued through the decades with research into new building methods and amenities being carried out. Special needs housing for the elderly, single people, unsupported mothers, children in care and the mentally handicapped is included in the planning mix. Today there are 12 different types of special needs schemes on the Estate, from bungalows for the elderly to sheltered housing schemes, a hostel for people with learning difficulties, to ninety shared ownership homes for first time buyers and self-contained flats for single people. Self-build' co-partnerships, where practically all the work is done by the membership itself under the direction of an experienced foreman, have successfully built 400 homes.

Over a hundred years since the first houses in the Bournville Village Estate were built, the Bournville Village Trust continues to keep faith with the aims of the Founder George Cadbury.

The mission statement of this highly professional charitable housing trust is as follows:

- Promoting social housing of good quality which enhances the environment
- Managing all housing and estates to the highest standards for all residents
- Encourage those residents to share in the decisions affecting their communities

Today the Bournville Estate covers 1,000 acres containing 7,600 dwellings, of which 3,861 are secure or assured tenancies, 50 are co-ownership dwellings, 2,234 leasehold properties and 1,466 freehold homes. The Trust also manages some 400 houses and flats in Telford Shropshire. In addition, it has been involved in many housing, planning and environmentally related projects over the years, all aimed at improving housing conditions in this country.



Bournville today

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