

A Short History of the Greenbank Chocolate Factory



by John Penny

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The Short History of the Greenbank Chocolate Factory

1881 - 2006



In response to the increasing demand for delicious treats made with chocolate, a factory was purpose built in 1901 – 1902 to manufacture confectionary products. It was built on fields near the city centre of Bristol, in-between the Greenbank cemetery and the railway line.

In Bristol's city centre J. S. Fry and Sons, started in 1728, were present. They responded to demand by extending their manufacturing by encompassing the buildings in the city centre. Between 1860 and 1907 they opened seven new factories around central Bristol. In 1918 they merged with Cadbury's but they did not start to build their purpose built factory at Keynsham until 1923 and finally left the city centre in 1935.



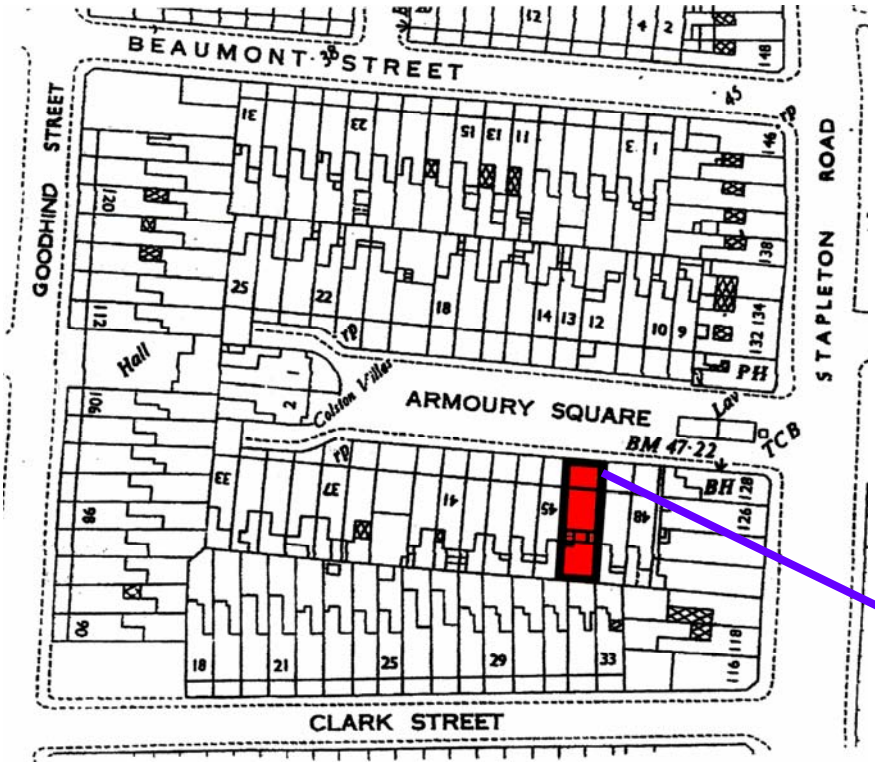
J.S. Fry & Sons Union Street Premises

Chapter 1
The Early Years H.J. Packer and Co.: 1881 - 1902

Edward Packer (1881 – 1985)
It appears that the Packer family were, at one time, successful butchers who conducted their business in the Bristol area just outside Lawford's Gate. As fellow Quakers they were friendly with the Fry family, proprietors of the Bristol chocolate manufacturers J. S. Fry & Sons Ltd., who later gave employment to the young Edward Packer.

In 1881, Edward then aged 32, left the company to establish a chocolate manufacturing concern of his own that in one form or another was to last for over 125 years. He lived at 11 Armoury Square, Stapleton Road, with his thirty year old wife Emma, their two sons Edward and Francis, aged eight and three years respectively, and Emma their one year old baby daughter. Edward set up 'Packer & Co.' at 47 Armoury Square, which in the population census of 1881 was described as, "a dwelling house now used as confectionary works".

To begin with the staff consisted just of Edward and his teenage nephew Joe Flook who began by mixing up the ingredients in buckets in the front room, but as the business quickly grew. Edward's brother and his sister Hannah Flook joined the concern, and the production moved into the unused half of the house. On March 14th thirteen year old Lily Brown began her employment with Packer & Co. her starting rate being 2/6d (two shillings and sixpence) a week, and her normal hours 8am to 6pm.





Edward Packer 32 yrs



46 Armoury Square 1881

Staff Responsibilities

At that time Edward was responsible for pouring the cream and making the flavours, while his brother boiled the sugar and made the cream, which was stirred with two stones. The women did the actual covering in the underground kitchen where the pan in which the chocolate was made could be found. It was worked by hand, a physically demanding process until the butter had been added. The butter itself was melted in two tin saucepans on the kitchen fire, and the chocolate kept warm in a wooden cupboard heated by a paraffin stove lamp. Another of Lily's jobs was to fetch the icing sugar, fourteen pounds at a time, from Redcliffe Street. The women were also expected to line the unlabeled boxes as they went along.

1883 The factory moves from Easton to St Pauls

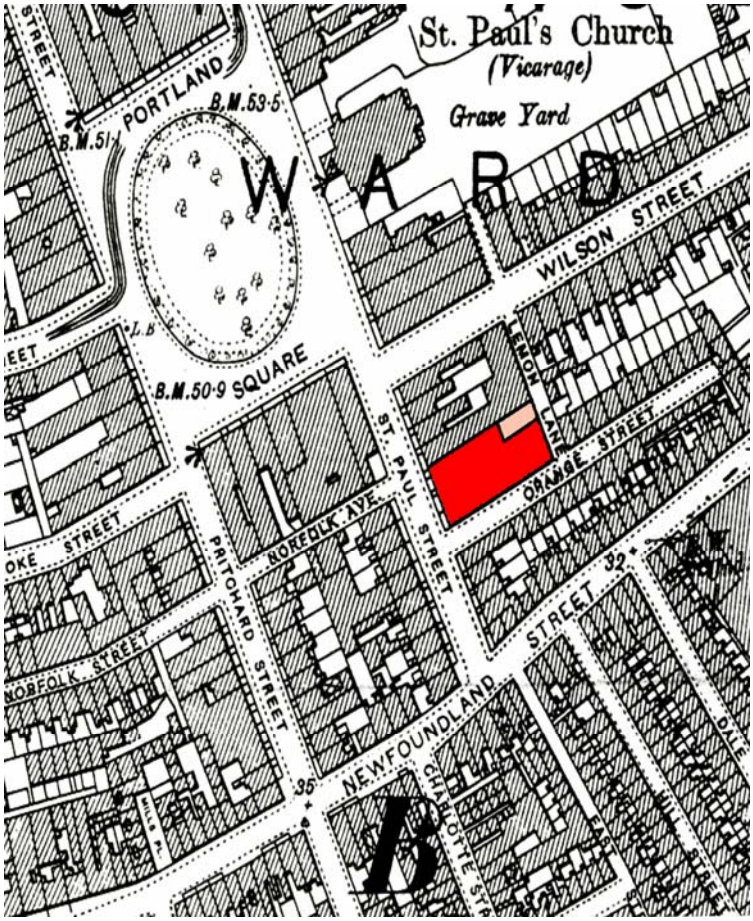
In early 1882 trade had increased to such an extent that it was necessary to utilise the whole of the house for production and to increase the staff to eight. Even then there was still not enough room, and so in 1883 Edward Packer transferred his business to a large old Georgian house which stood on the corner of St Paul Street and Orange Street in the nearby district of St Paul's.

In 1884 Edward entered into partnership with Mr H. J. Burrows, who at that time was living at 48 Armoury Square and had spent ten years working for J. S. Fry & Sons Ltd. His initials were incorporated into the firm's title, making it H. J. Packer & Co., but no sooner had this been done than trade fell off so dramatically that all the employees except for Packer's relatives had to be laid off. Consequently, in 1885 the partnership was dissolved leaving Burrows as sole proprietor.



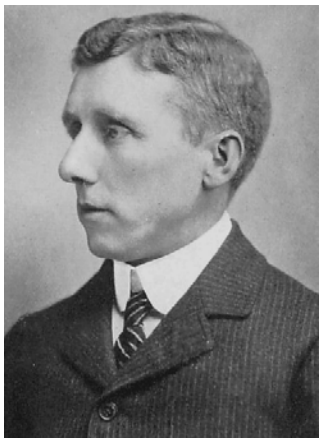


Orange Street 1990 and 1890



Bruce Cole (1886 -1912)

Trade then began to pick up so Lily Brown was re-employed and another man was taken on. In the following year Mr C. Bruce Cole of West Shrubbery, Clifton, then a 24 year old sales representative employed by John Shute & Co., came into contact with Mr Burrows while selling him the odd hundredweight bag of sugar. The young Bruce Cole was so impressed with the firm's potential that he wrote to his father on the 27th September 1886 asking for a loan of £1000 in order to purchase the business, and on the 29th November took possession of all the plant, stocks, book debts and goodwill for the sum of £950. To begin with he lived on the company's premises, where only two men, five girls and two boys were employed.



Bruce Cole

In the factory (1887 – 1892)

In September 1887 Stephen Flook joined the firm, his first job was to boil sugar with the aid of two small fires, and mix the cream on two large stone slabs. Each slab made about thirty pounds of cream and the firm used to get through about one bag of sugar a day. The usual run of cream making was about three days, and that would last Packers about a week, while a barrel of glucose would be enough for a month to six weeks. At that time there was relatively little mechanisation in the factory, and steam was used only to drive one small engine and heat the cocoa press.

As not enough work existed to keep the workers wholly employed for six days a week, it was not unusual for them to work just three days, being laid off for the other three. Bruce Cole for the first three years packed all the chocolate which was sent out, and when things were slack, he used to hire a pair of trucks for one penny an hour to enable the young Mr Flook to deliver the finished goods to the few outlets the company had in Bristol. Packers' products were not yet being distributed outside the local area. Nevertheless, in spite of poor trading conditions, during the summer of 1888 Bruce Cole treated his employees to a steamer excursion to Ilfracombe and gave each of them a few shillings spending money.

Mechanisation was also introduced during the 1890's the first machine was bought to coat Packers "Two Ounces a Penny" chocolates. So successful were these that by the end of the decade nearly forty machines were in use.

Mr Flook and another employee were detailed to look after the four horsepower steam engine, a valiant old piece fed by a small boiler about ten feet long and three feet in diameter. In addition to stoking it, as it was not always powerful enough to keep everything going, the men often had to pull on the flywheel while the other workers were waiting for chocolate. This engine was designed to pump its own cold water into the boiler from a well, but when the steam was particularly low, it was necessary to fix up a handle to pump in water by hand, and to repeat the process at regular intervals.

On Friday nights two people usually had to work late in order to roast the cocoa beans and press the chocolate, as the engine was not powerful enough to do this in addition to all the other tasks during a normal working day. However, sometimes the engine would break down completely, and as the company had no maintenance staff, Bruce Cole would send for John Rockett, an engineer employed by H. E. Kear & Co. of Redcross Street, who had acted as the firm's 'handy man' since 1884. Unfortunately chocolates had not yet become universally accepted by the public, and after five years of hard work and intensive effort the company was still making a trading loss.

Miss Kate Horner joined Packers in January 1890 at 4/6d (four shillings and sixpence) a week. At 4/6d the workers consider themselves to be well paid. She had a working day from 8am until 6pm. Her first job was to hand cover creams in a small upstairs room fitted with two tables and some domes for heating the chocolate. In one corner of the room was a small copper to keep the chocolate in, while outside the window was a lift. When work needed to be sent up to the room, those employed there would shake the ropes of the lift and call out their requirements.



Kate Horner

The ground floor was the domain of Mr Weber, who was responsible for making the fondant mixture for the chocolate creams. It was he who by 1913 had left the firm and established his own chocolate manufacturing concern in Lodge Causeway, Fishponds. He marketed a cheap range of chocolates under the name of Swann, in direct competition with Packers in the cheap end of the trade.

By 1892 the firm had expanded enough to be able to open a sales office in London, with two representatives being appointed.

To complement its two-ounces-a-penny chocolate creams the firm also launched a chocolate caramel which turned out to be very successful and went on to capture a large market share. Consequently, as trade improved it was sometimes necessary for the staff to work from 6am right through until 6pm. In 1893 John Rockett joined the company as it's first full-time engineer.



John Rockett

About this time the house next door to Packers' small factory was conveniently gutted by fire enabling Bruce Cole to purchase the land upon which it had stood to extend his works. A miniature warehouse was erected at the rear of the original premises, and by 1894 H. J. Packer & Co. was occupying 5 to 7 St Paul Street. Later he went onto purchase another adjoining house in Orange Street, so that the company's premises finally comprised of four houses with a small building at the back. In 1896 Bruce Cole was joined by his brother Horace, while William John Mansfield was engaged to supervise the factory.

William J. Mansfield

William J Mansfield was paid a small salary and a percentage of the profits which was never reduced, even when the business grew into proportions which no one could have foretold. Consequently, he left over £38,800 when he died in July 1912.

At the time when Horace Cole joined the firm several improvements took place, one of which involved the chimney which had to be made higher following complaints from the neighbours about the amount of soot that was being scattered!

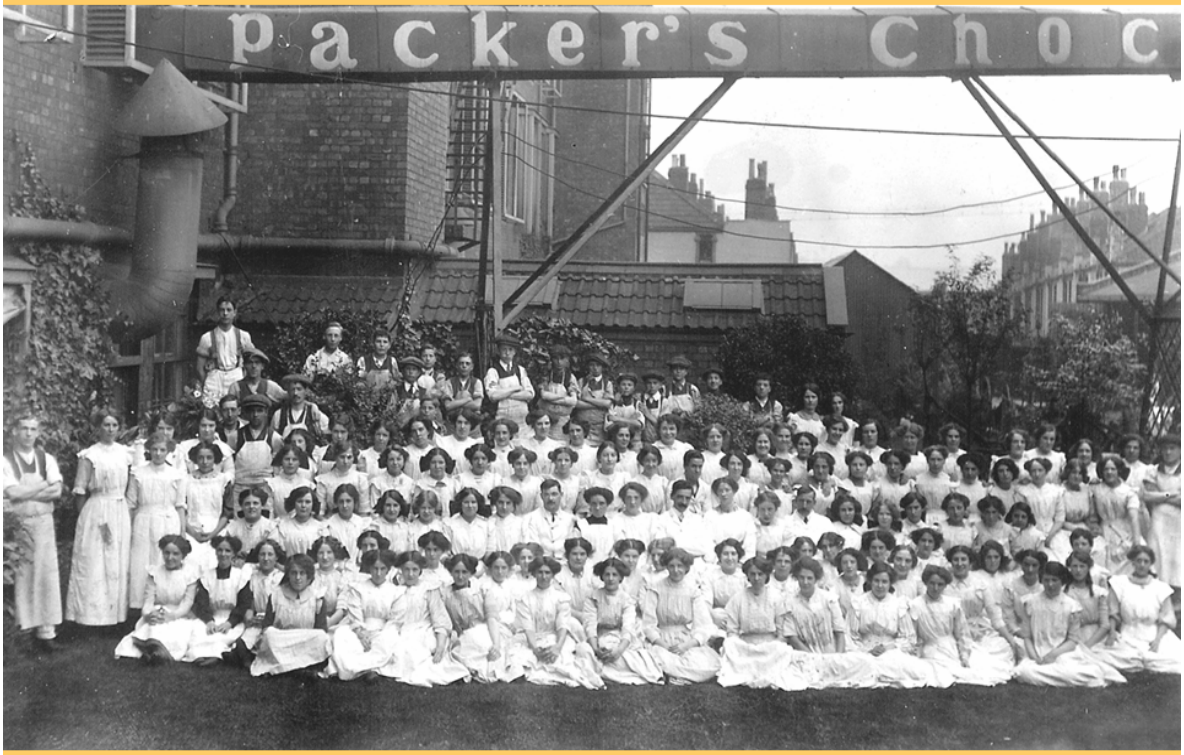
New machinery and more staff (1890's)

More hands were also taken on, two other fires built for boiling up the sugar, and a new boiling pan acquired from London. A new boiler was also purchased, and gradually the fires were done away with as the company turned to the use of steam for many of the factory processes. Soon larger engines became necessary to operate the machinery, and as a result a ten horse power Nonami was acquired, followed a little later by a second-hand, six horse power Crossley gas engine.

Shortly after John Rockett installed the first Holmes machine for coating Packer's two-ounces-a-penny chocolates which, at first, was operated exclusively by Kate Horner. This proved so successful that others were soon added, and by the turn of the century some 38 had been installed in the premises in St Paul's. Rockett was also responsible for upgrading the drop chocolate tables from hand to power working, and replacing the 9 x 6 inch wooden boxes which held the chocolates, with 15 x 12 inch iron boxes that took no more labour to work.

The next arrival in the way of machinery was a sugar mill, followed by a triple grinding mill, a cocoa press and a 24 horse power gas engine. Even then it was impossible to keep

pace with the power needed to run the factory, and so two more engines were acquired one a 7 horse power and the other a 12 horse power. Consequently, by 1900 the St Paul's works boasted seven small power plants, an increase from 4 to 80 horse power in less than ten years. As more steam was also required in the factory part of the warehouse wall had had to be cut away to accommodate the flues for the 18 foot Galloway boiler.



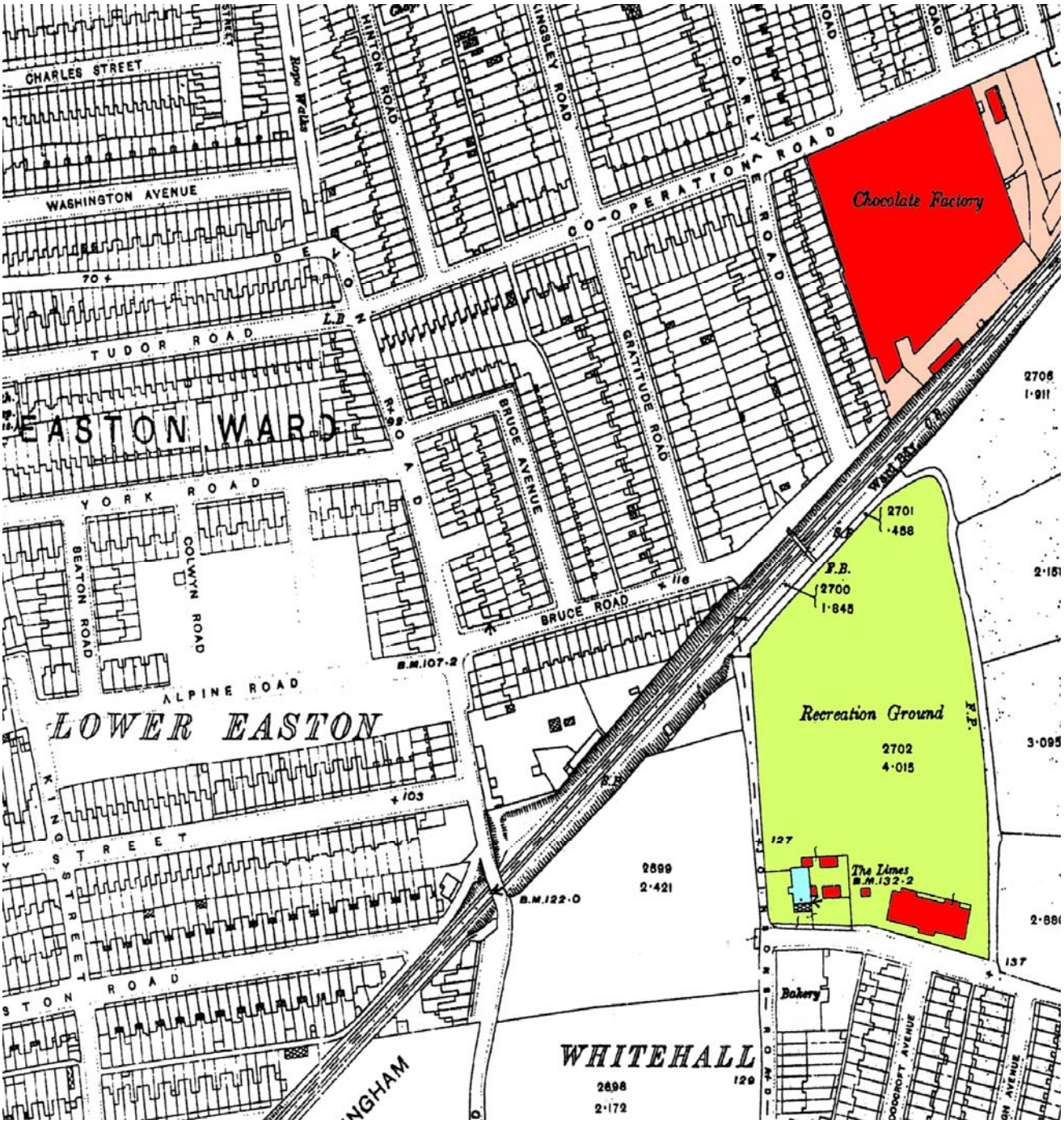
Workers at Packer's St Paul's Factory

Competitive products (1890's)

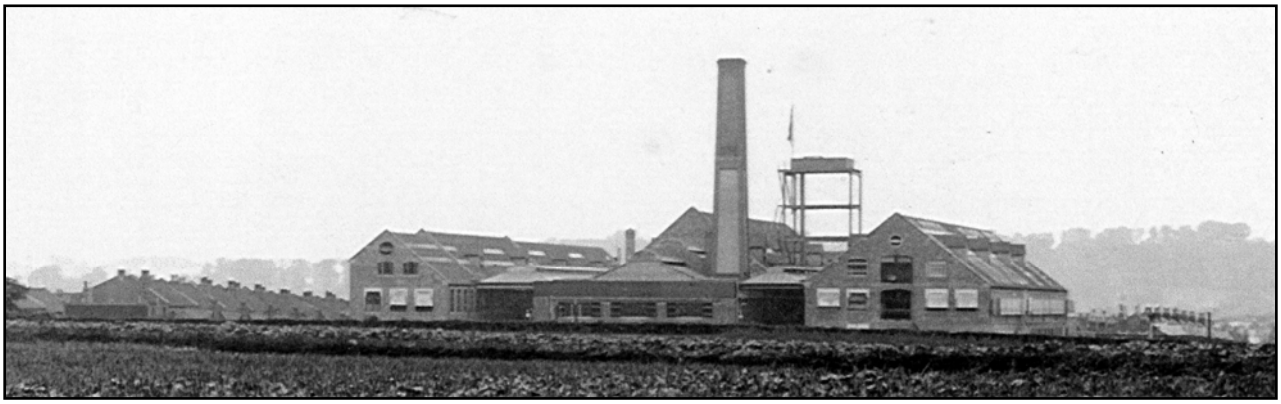
By the mid-1890's a good deal of competition had developed between several brands of chocolate cream bars, leading Packers to introduce one containing six divisions which retailed for a penny. In response, the Coral Company went one better with seven divisions, only to be topped by Packers who produced an eight division bar with the company's name stamped on it which still sold for a penny. This remained popular for the best part of fifteen years. Then came the launch of an eight-a-penny moulded caramel, in direct competition with Allem & Company's six-a-penny version, and Packers went on to capture a good market share particularly in the provinces. As a result of such buoyant trade, on many occasions the staff at St Paul's were required to work in shifts, with one section operating during the day and the other at night.

By the late 1890's accommodation was again found insufficient and there was no room for expansion around the St Paul's site, so in 1899 the decision was made to relocate. Land was purchased at Shortwood in Mangotsfield, but in view of its inaccessibility to employees resident in Bristol, another site in 1900 at Greenbank was acquired. The following year, after long consultations with

the Directors and various consulting engineers, the firm eventually reached a definite plan of operations and three blocks were erected at Greenbank.



Chapter 2
The new factory at Greenbank 1902 – 1914

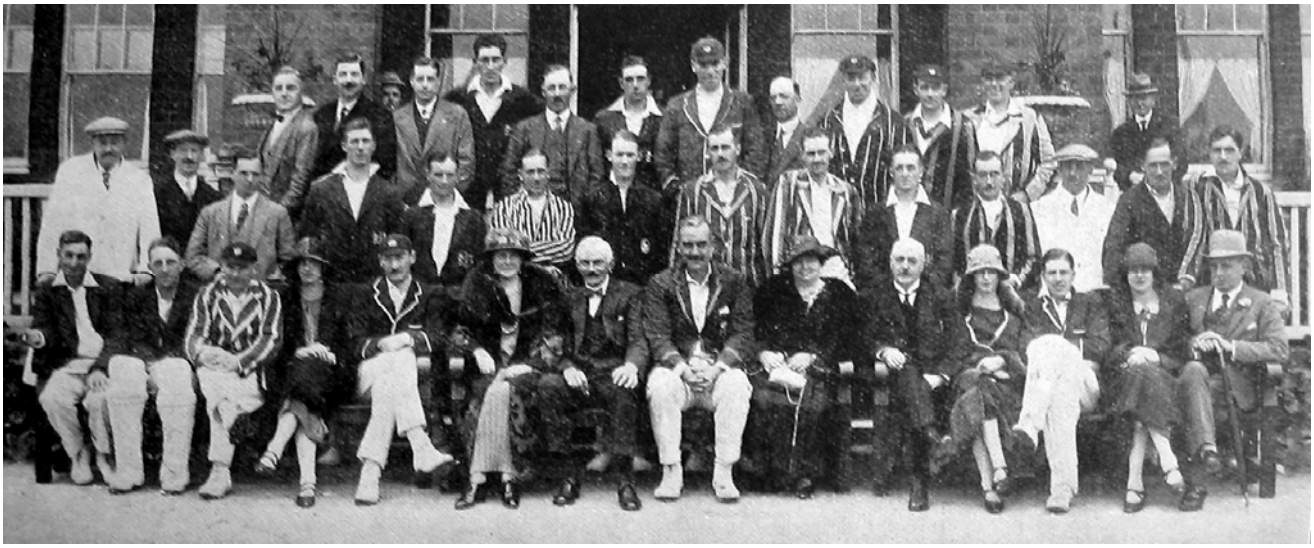


Moving to the new factory

The first engine used in the business was running at the new Greenbank Factory by November 1901, however it was December 29 1902 before Kate Horner, accompanied by ten girls went to work at Greenbank, but due to the intense cold they had to return to St Paul's until the new facility could be properly heated. On January 3rd 1903 the first coating machines were taken over to the new factory, and from then onwards girls and machines were transferred across until all the employees were settled in.

Just before the St Paul's premises were finally vacated Bruce Cole called a meeting of all the staff, and in closing announced that he was giving them all a week's holiday, something he had wanted to do for some eight years.

Throughout the time Bruce Cole was connected with the company he was universally admired and loved by the workforce as he was a man of his word, and had his employees' welfare as one of his chief considerations.



In March 1903 Horace Walker joined the firm, to be followed a month later by Mr W.S. Lockyer, both of whom went on to become chairmen of the company.

From 1903 onwards progress continued to fully justify Bruce Cole's conviction that there was a potential market for cheap chocolates of good quality at two ounces-a-penny, something that was within easy reach of a child's humble purchasing powers.

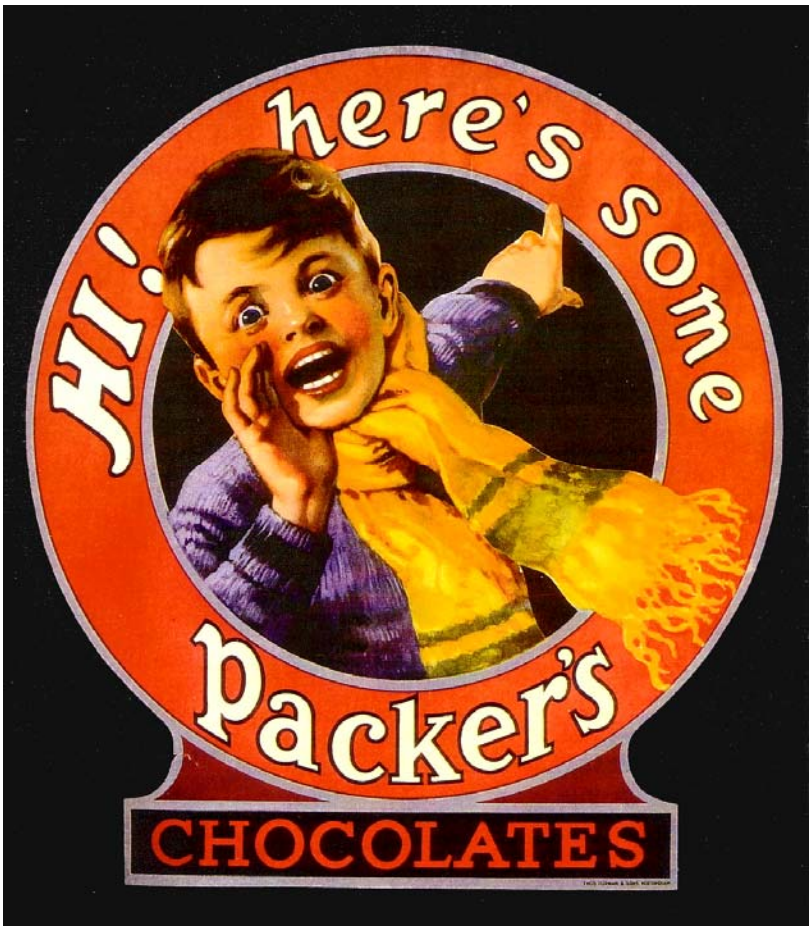


The undertaking was soon doing so well that a Grand Opening was held in September 1906, when Packer's invited every one of its wholesalers in Great Britain to visit the new factory as guests of the company. Not only were their railway fare and hotel expenses paid, but they were also provided with the three days of entertainment, including a special dinner at Bristol's Colston Hall.

In 1901 Packer's first London Depot had been opened, and in September 1910 some 1200 customers from the capital were entertained for a day each over a three day period. In addition to being given breakfast on the train they were treated to a visit to the Greenbank factory, followed by luncheon with speeches, a drive around Bristol, tea and refreshments on the homeward journey.

H.J. Packer became a Limited Company (1908)
In 1908 Packers become a limited company, instigated by the need for increased working capital to support the business which had sustained a sales 250% increase between 1903 and 1912. The firm were employing over a thousand people, producing in excess of 250 tons a week, and selling chocolates at a penny-an-ounce. The company was known as H.J. Packer until 1962.

In March 1908 John Rockett, the company's first Chief Engineer retired with pension, and was replaced by Hugh Clare



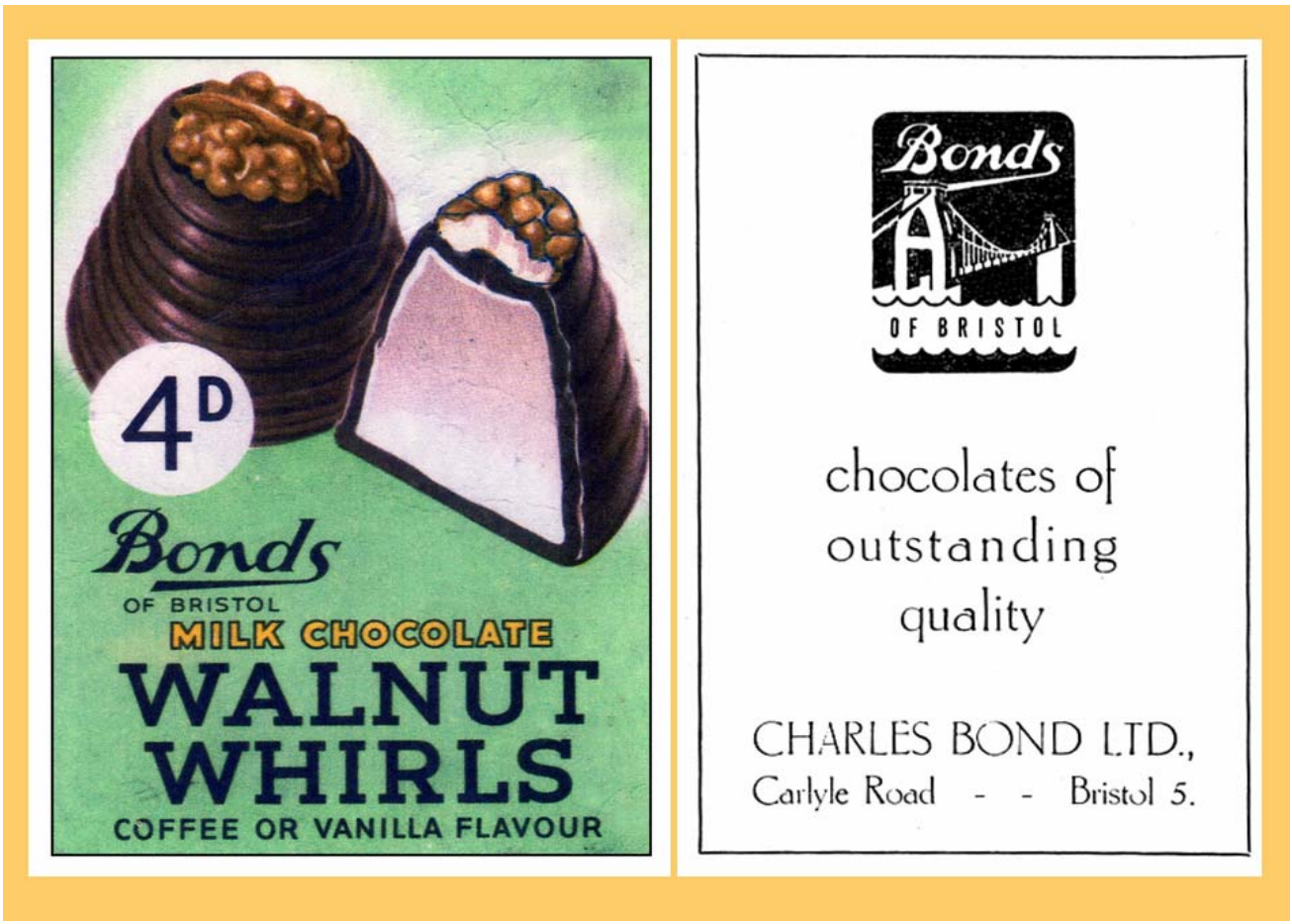
Bruce Cole dies (1912)
Sadly, 1912 not only saw the death of William Mansfield, the first employee taken on as supervisor in 1896, but also, at the early age of 49, Chairman of H.J. Packer & Co, Bruce Cole of 'Claremont', Westbury on Trym. He left an estate valued at £260,000.



Horace Walker was appointed Chairman and Managing Director.

Charles Bond Ltd – (1912-1966)

Although Packers continued to concentrate on products for the cheap end of the market, a subsidiary company was formed in 1912 with capital of £1000, to manufacture and supply high class chocolate products. It was called Charles Bond Ltd and had its own separate sales organisation. When the new range was introduced in London in 1912 it met with almost instantaneous success. The brand 'Bonds' was used until the late 1960's.



Carsons (1911)

In addition a controlling interest was acquired in Carsons Ltd., which was producing high quality chocolate confectionary in Glasgow. The Packer's board saw that the Glasgow site was too small and difficult to extend. They took the decision to build a new factory for Carson's chocolates on the land they had bought in 1899 and still owned at Shortwood.



Carson's Shortwood Factory

In 1913 production was moved to the new factory. The buildings, constructed by John Mowlem & Co. of Westminster to the designs and direction of Hal Williams & Co. of London were, at the time, considered to be the most perfectly arranged factory in existence for the manufacture of chocolate and confectionery. Carsons, which had its name prominently displayed on the building, went on to occupy the site for nearly fifty years.

The History of Carsons (1887-1960)

A Scottish chocolate manufacturer started in 1887 when Zaver Marb and Julius Bechtle, two confectionary workers in their twenties, decided to form their own company in Glasgow. From premises rented at £30 a year they launched a business specialising in the manufacture and selling of high class hand made confectionary and marzipan goods which expanded so quickly that they soon ran short of capital. They obtained the necessary money from 51 year old Bailie Carson, who as a boy had worked in a Glasgow grocery shop before going on to own a shop of his own.

This well-to-do Irishman had been looking for a business into which he could put his two sons, James and William, and on 24 September 1895 Carson, Marb and Bechtle Ltd. was registered with Bailie Carson, who was the controlling shareholder, as Chairman and Managing Director. Unfortunately, neither Z. Marb nor J. Bechtle were able to get on with Carson's sons, who were also shareholders, and as a result within the year both founders had left the business.

Although the firm was by then specialising in penny-an-ounce lines, with small profit margins, it nevertheless prospered, and by 1896 its name was changed to Carsons Ltd. On 30 November 1898, B. Carson, who had been ill for some time, died leaving an estate worth £55,000. His sons expressed no interested in the business, so it passed into the hands of two former employees, A. E. Hillard and F. E. Cullum. In spite of a number of subsequent problems, including many moves and a serious fire in 1901, the firm flourished, and in October 1906 it became a public company with A. Hillard and F. Callum as joint Managing Directors.

In spite of the fact that the original flotation was not as successful as had been anticipated, the shares recovered so well that in 1910 the Glasgow stock exchange began quoting them on the official share list. A. Hillard then realised that the real profits were to be made in the high class chocolate which the continental manufacturers were so expert in producing. It was decided to abandon the "penny lines" and to concentrate on the high class end of the business. In order to accomplish this he travelled to Vienna and elsewhere in Europe forming links with various manufacturers, while F. Callum became an expert on German production techniques. Carsons then went on to set up export agents in many parts of the world and produce a magnificent range of boxes of expensive fancy chocolates retailing at the then astronomically high figure of 28/6d each (twenty-eight shillings and sixpence).

In December 1911, after much talk of mergers designed to capture the British high class chocolate and cocoa trade, the Managing Directors announced that they were selling their interests to H.J. Packer & Co. Ltd instead, and advised other shareholders to do the same. This news caused a storm of controversy, but control of Carsons did, eventually, pass to Packer's.

Carson's Products

Carsons operated through both wars and produced a wide range of quality chocolates including Empire, Saxon, Mascot and Dorchester chocolates, Twin Tray Assortments, Fruit Creams, Milk Shakes and Milk Chocolate Fruit Drinks, as well as chocolate Easter Eggs, Wine Bottles and of course their renowned Liqueurs.





Chapter 3
The War Years 1914 – 1918

Packers' products put on hold

At the outbreak of the 1914-18 war Packers, Charles Bond and Carsons were between them employing over 3000 people.



They immediately encouraged employees to join the armed forces and readily released any of military age. Certain raw materials became difficult to obtain which resulted in the temporary curtailment of the Packer lines, but this was to some extent offset by an expansion in the production of the Charles Bond range, and the factory at Carsons also continued production.

Consequently during the conflict the Packer's were able to supply large quantities of chocolates to the Navy & Army Canteen Board. Profits made during the war enabled Packers to add a fifth companion block to the Greenbank factory.

H.J. Packer & Co. Ltd also equipped and ran the Bruce Cole Hospital for wounded soldiers, the hundred beds they provided being installed in their recreation centre which was sited in the corner of the sports field.



The Bruce Cole Hospital

All three firms promised that when peace returned they would take back any of their employees who had served in the forces, and not only was this pledge honoured, but they also hired many others who had never previously worked in the confectionary trade when they were finally demobilised.

Clock No. 1017 Name Pedler Ernest Jas Dept. Caramel Stationery

Born June 1st/87 Date Engaged 7.6.17th 1905 Married ~~do~~ Yes

A/2,000/11/11.

Present Rate.	Date of last Rise.	Amount of Rise.	Remarks.
35/-	20.12.16	2/6	24.5.16 5% War Bonus.
37/6			Joined Army March 27th 1917.
65/-	24.2.19.		Re-started 24.2.19.
65/-	May '19	10/-	

One man who joined Packer's in 1919 was Leonard Broad, who was taken on as Sales Manager, before joining the Board of Directors in 1926.

FACTORY REGULATIONS

OF

CARSONS LIMITED, Shortwood, nr. Bristol.

MEN and BOYS.

Name William Bennett Date July 26 1915

Register No. 58 Rate of Wage for first position in factory | If Daywork 6/- per week. | If Piecework, at Rates posted up in Department.

NOTICE OF LEAVING.—Dayworkers: One week's notice to be given or taken.
Pieceworkers: Two hours' notice to be given or taken.

THE HOURS OF WORK ARE:

Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., stopping from 12 noon to 1 p.m. for Dinner.

Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

You are strictly prohibited from taking away or eating on the premises any chocolate or confectionery.

Money or valuables should not be left in clothing in the Cloak Room, as we cannot accept responsibility for their safety.

All employés are expected to take a pride in their personal appearance. In manufacturing departments white trousers and white coat or apron must be put on clean every Monday morning. The Firm offers a bonus at Christmas to those obtaining full marks for neatness, as follows:—

To those who have been in the Company's service 12 months, 7/6
" " " " 9 " 5/-
" " " " 6 " 3/-
" " " " 3 " 1/6

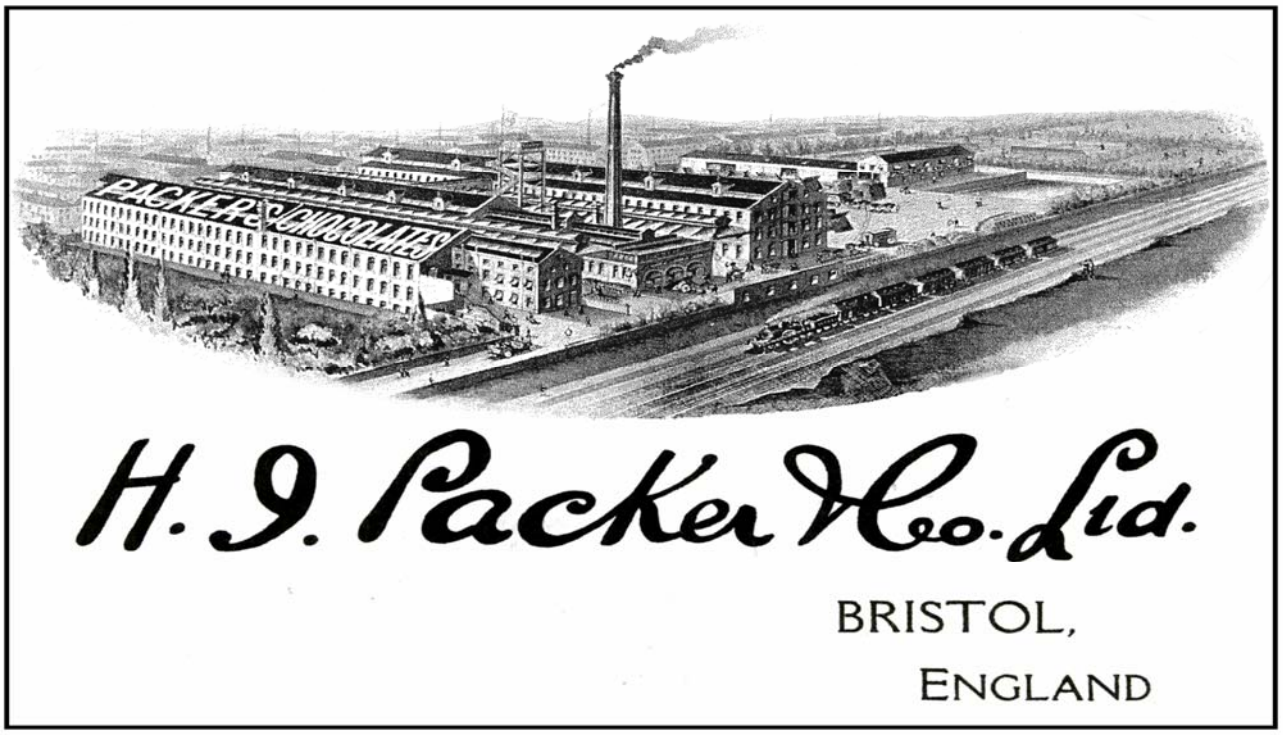
IMPORTANT.—Employés changing their residence must notify their Foreman or Forewoman.

C.250-6-7-14

Staff Rules and Regulations

By July 1915 day-workers in the factory were being paid 6/- (six shillings) a week, their hours being 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, with a lunch break between 12 and 1pm, and on Saturdays 8am until 1pm. Staff were forbidden to take away or eat on the premises any chocolate or confectionary. All employees were expected to take a pride in their personal appearance. In the manufacturing departments white trousers and a white coat or apron were to be put on clean every Monday morning. The firm also offered a bonus to those who had obtained full marks for neatness, and this was payable at Christmas on a sliding scale from 7/6d (seven shillings and sixpence) for employees with a year's service, down to 1/6d (one shilling and sixpence) for workers who had been with Carsons for just three months.

Chapter 4
After the War was Over 1919 – 1938



Packers the largest producer of the cheaper chocolates

In the years following the war, industrial unrest and depression had its effect on the chocolate trade. But by 1922 Packer's had become the fourth largest chocolate manufacturing concern in Britain, and the largest producer of their grade of chocolate in the world. However from then on both the Bond's and the Packer's grades experienced highly competitive trading conditions.

> 1924 it was decided to repaint the famous legend 'Packers Chocolates' on the factory roof. It had been painted out to protect the factory during the war. The task took some seven weeks to complete due to inclement weather.

Crispets

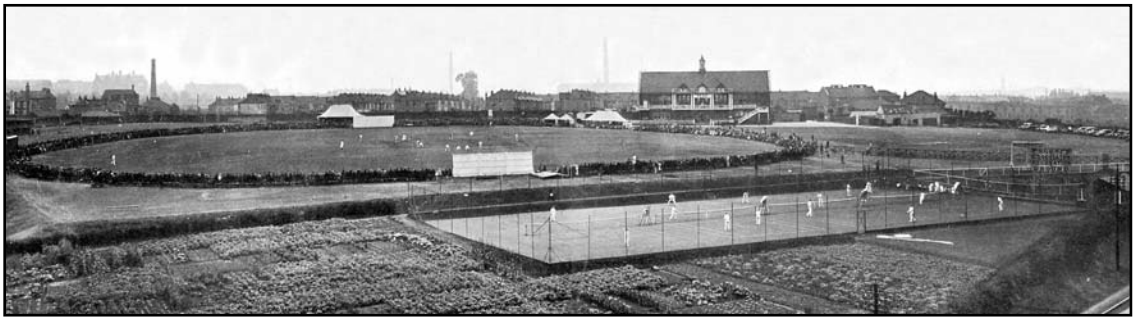
Packers re-introduced their cheaper brands. At a penny-an-ounce, a popular line being their Milk Crispets which went on to become the company's longest surviving product.



Staff Welfare and Social Events



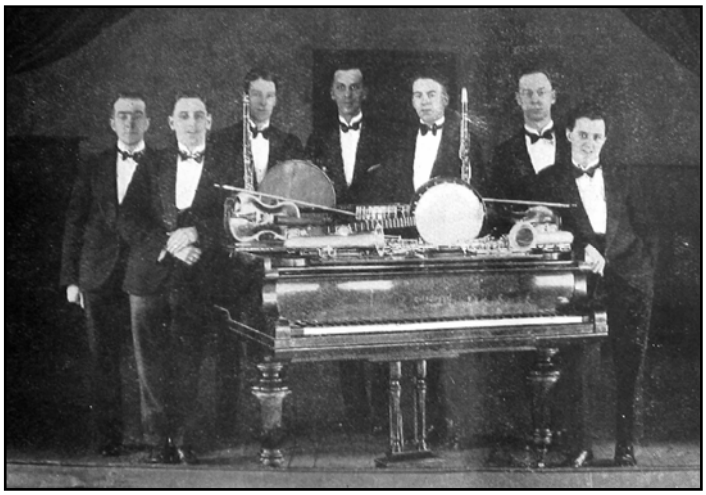
Although not the highest payers, throughout their existence Packer's had their staff's welfare very much at heart, and during the 1920's placed a great deal of importance on involving them in social activities. They were also the proud possessors of an athletics ground so well appointed that that on 27/28 August 1925 it was chosen as the venue for a cricket match between Gloucestershire and Scotland. The outdoor facilities provided included not only tennis courts and a swimming bath, but also a bowling green which was laid out in the summer of 1925.



The field itself was used by the Girls' Hockey Club, Packer's Football and Cricket Teams, and from 1921 onwards hosted an annual sports day for the employees and their families, while the whole complex was dominated by the magnificent recreation centre, by then known as the Bruce Cole Institute. Here the Girls' Gymnastic Class practiced, and so proficient did they become that they took part in events such as the Eisteddfod for Country Dance and the Bristol Pageant.



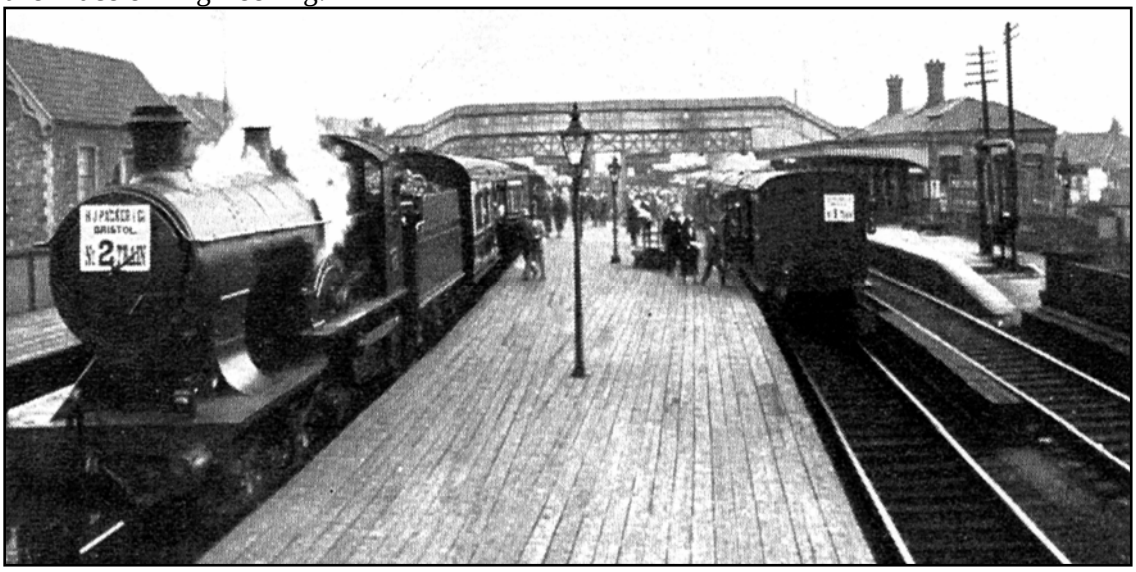
Billiard tables were also provided, while every Wednesday and Saturday evening the company orchestra played at dances held at the institute.



Starting in 1920 Packer's went on to provide their workforce with an Annual Christmas Treat, an event which normally began with tea in the factory dining room followed by a concert in the institute, where upon their arrival each child would be presented with a package of chocolates and a cracker. In addition, at Whitsun workers would have the opportunity of going on the Annual Staff outing, which visited such places as Tintern Abbey and the Exe Valley.



A special outing was also arranged for 21 June 1924 when Packer's went as far as to hire two private trains from the GWR in order to convey 800 of their employees to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. In the Palace of Industry Carson's had erected a fine stand on which chocolates could be seen in the course of production. Bond's also had a presence at the exhibition as their Shakespeare range of chocolates could be purchased at Kiosk 22, which was on the Lake side right opposite the main entrance to the Place of Engineering.



Housing for the workers was also something of a problem, and so in January 1925 Chairman Horace Walker announced that he hoped that within a matter of months the Bristol Housing Company would be able to build forty houses on the firm's ground as part of the solution.

Health and safety at work was not forgotten, and during the early 1920's Packer's Fire Brigade enthusiastically took part in the Annual Tournament of Private Bristol Fire Brigades, while the company's Ambulance Division often competed successfully in local competitions designed to improve first aid work.



Financial Crisis: Wage cuts

1928 and 1929 such a severe crisis hit the firm that all the employees at Greenbank, from top to bottom, had to take a pay cut of up to 10%, and consequently wages in the factory fell from 72/- (seventy-seven shillings) to 66/6d (sixty-six shillings and sixpence) a week.

In April 1929 Horace Walker was replaced as Managing Director by Thomas Crawford who lived with his family in a large house known as 'The Limes', situated in the corner of the sports field. Although a strict disciplinarian, Crawford was always seen to be just and was very popular with the staff, both at Greenbank and at Carsons, of which he was also Managing Director.

Packer's Field is sold

Unfortunately the depression of the 1930's put a great strain upon the company's finances, leading Lloyds Bank to put in a Mr Gillette as a sort of 'company doctor'. In a desperate effort to survive the firm was forced to sell off its large and locally famous playing fields and pavilion, as well as the houses owned by the firm.

Consequently in 1932 Packer's lines were once again marketed at two ounces-a-penny. After that it could be safely said that firm's position as leaders of the cheap chocolate trade had been re-captured!



In 1935 Leonard Broad and W.S. Lockyer as joint Managing Directors.

Chapter 5
The Second World War 1939 – 1945

Lack of raw materials

The outbreak of World War Two in September 1939 was followed by the introduction of the Control of Raw Materials, this affected production of both Packers and Bond lines. July 1938 and June 1939, was known as the 'Basic Year'. Consequently, with certain items in short supply once again the decision was taken to withdraw the Packer's grade from the market, and only Bond's goods were manufactured from 1939.

As chocolate was a rationed commodity the firm introduced its own scheme in order to ensure absolutely fair and proportionate distribution to every customer, and this was more than justified by the many expressions of appreciation subsequently received by the company.

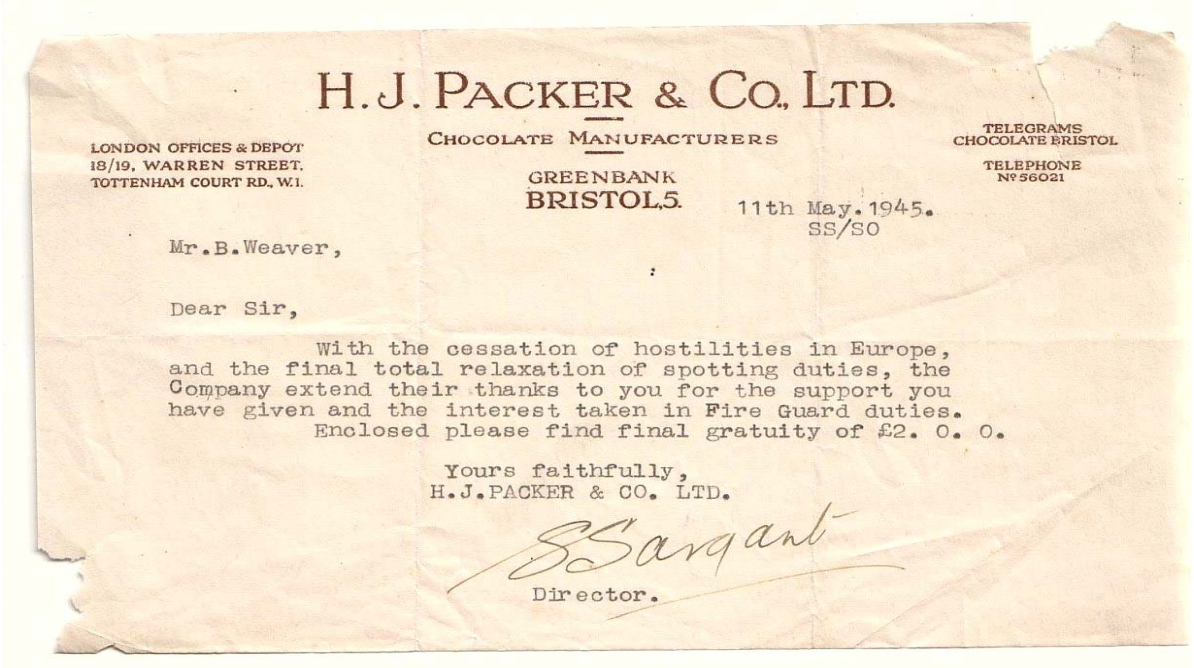




Queen Mary's wartime visit to the factory.

Chocolate for the Army

Many male factory workers were called to fight, leaving production in mainly female hands. Rationing did stabilise demand, and sales were boosted by orders from the army. Nevertheless, overall output did diminish, and later in the war part of the Greenbank factory was taken over by the American army, before hostilities finally ceased in 1945.



H. J. PACKER & CO., LTD.

CHOCOLATE MANUFACTURERS

LONDON OFFICES & DEPOT
18/19, WARREN STREET,
TOTTENHAM COURT RD., W.1.

GREENBANK
BRISTOL, 5.

TELEGRAMS
CHOCOLATE BRISTOL

TELEPHONE
No 56021

11th May, 1945.
SS/SO

Mr. B. Weaver,

Dear Sir,

With the cessation of hostilities in Europe, and the final total relaxation of spotting duties, the Company extend their thanks to you for the support you have given and the interest taken in Fire Guard duties.
Enclosed please find final gratuity of £2. 0. 0.

Yours faithfully,
H.J.PACKER & CO. LTD.

S Sargant

Director.

Chapter 6
Post-war Years 1946 – 1959



Austerity

In 1949 Leonard Broad became the sole Managing Director, a somewhat unenviable position in the immediate post-war years of austerity which proved very difficult for Packer's, along with the whole of the confectionery industry.

H.J.Packer and C. Bond Travellers' Convention 1948

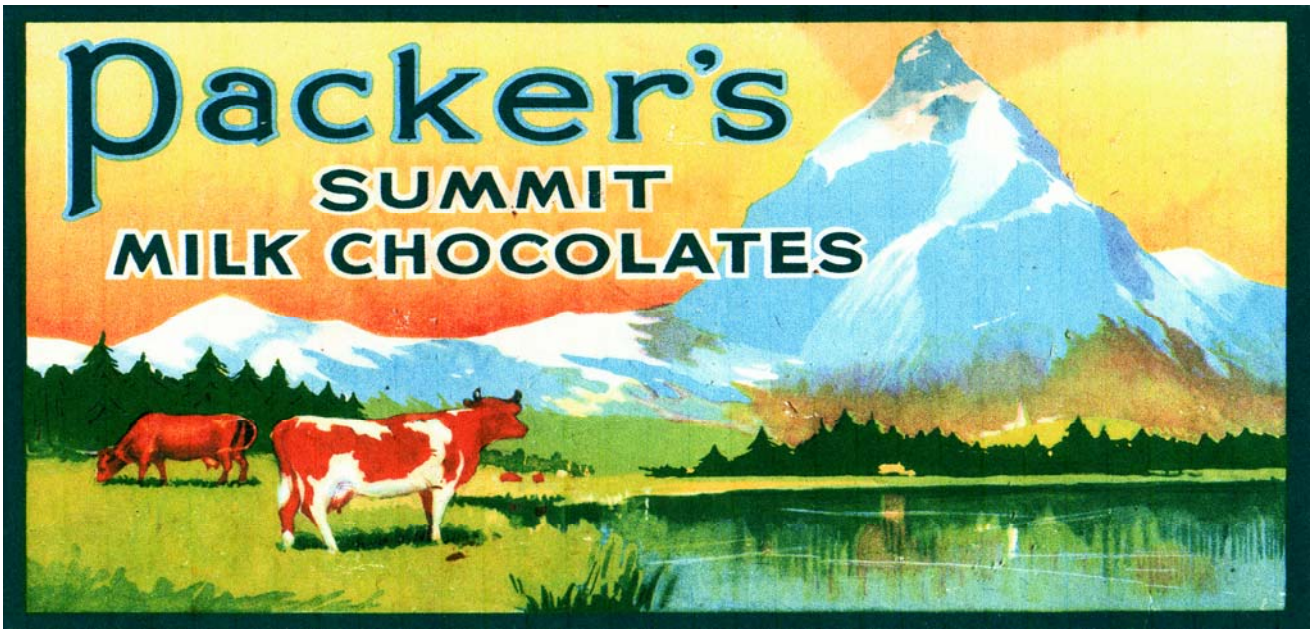


The industry stagnated until the removal of controls on raw materials and the lifting of rationing on confectionary products at the beginning of 1953. Consequently, the whole period was dominated by the continual struggle to remain viable, and with very little money available to invest in new plant and equipment at Greenbank. Leonard Broad and the factory's 1100 or so employees (830 of which were women), were struggling to cope with outdated production methods.

Rules and Regulations for staff

Likewise Packer's factory rules and regulations issued in December 1954 had changed little since World War One, stating that in order to promote cleanliness spitting was strictly prohibited, while two overalls were issued to each girl, and two suits consisting of either jacket and trousers, or apron and trousers, to each man. These were to be washed each week and clean garments worn every Monday. In addition, girls were forbidden from wearing earrings in the Work Rooms, except on a doctor's recommendation, while any employee was liable for instant dismissal for either taking away or eating on the premises any chocolate or confectionary.

The gloomy post-war situation is well illustrated by the company's performance in 1955, during which it made a trading loss of a little over £30,900 due to the high cost of raw materials, greatly intensified competition within the trade, and an abnormally hot summer which seriously restricted production at a time when stocks should have been built up ready for the busy autumn and winter period. Nevertheless, although since the start of the war only Bond's lines had been produced, with the removal of the last vestiges of food rationing in July 1954 it was felt by the latter part of 1955 that the time was right to re-introduce the Packers grade, for which it was believed a large demand existed.



Chapter 7
Consolidation and Acquisition 1960 – 1973

During the 1950's much of the UK's confectionary manufacturing was still in the hands of private family companies, all competing for the same business, and many had large production surpluses. Many firms went out of business, while others were either taken over or amalgamated. As one might expect H.J. Packer & Co. Ltd were not immune from this trend and in the summer of 1960, when both their Greenbank and Shortwood factories were working with spare capacity, in a last ditch effort to survive the decision was taken to sell Carson's Shortwood site to E.S. & A. Robinson Ltd.

Packers re-named Carsons Ltd. (1962-1977)

In April 1961 the Greenbank factory became the site for the entire Packer, Bond and Carson production. On the 1st July 1962 the name H.J. Packer Ltd was replaced and the parent company was known as Carsons Ltd.



Carsons had become well known as Britain's largest producer of chocolate liqueurs, the success of which had been due to the combination of a special bitter-sweet chocolate filled with some of the world's leading brands of liqueurs, spirits and fortified wines. Consequently, many thousands of pounds from the Shortwood sale were spent on re-equipping the Greenbank factory for their manufacture. In February 1963 Carsons became the first firm in the country to adopt a spinning method for forming chocolate shells into which the liqueur centres were later injected.

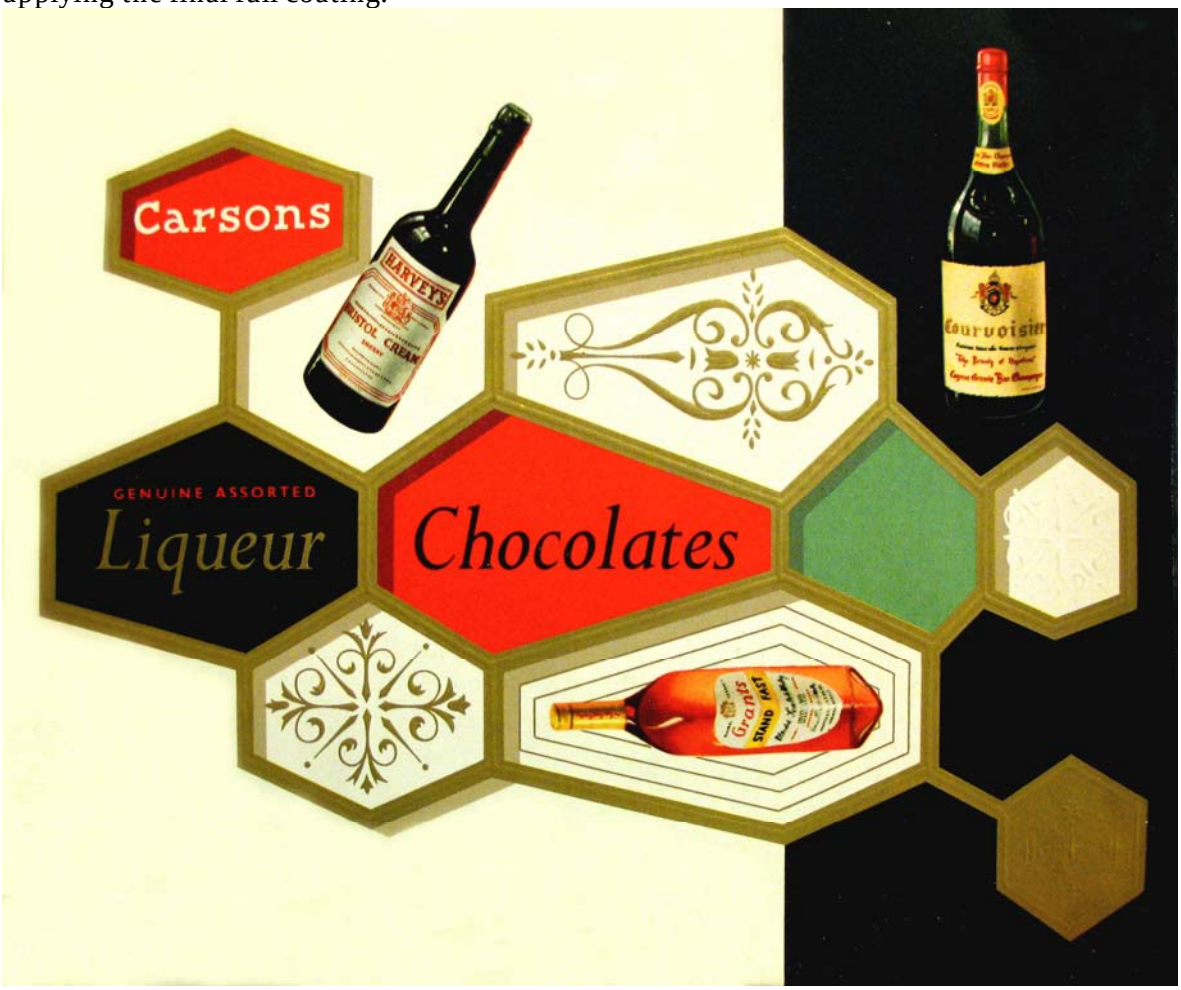
Liqueur Chocolate Production

The spinning machine formed part of a new production line, which although about 200 feet long and run by just eight people, was capable of turning out 20,000 liqueur chocolates an hour. The chocolate shells were actually formed by rotating moulds which contained controlled amounts of molten chocolate on an orbital course on arms of a spinning machine, before they were cooled in a tunnel, the liqueur injected and the hole sealed. After passing through another cooling tunnel the chocolates finally travelled to four automatic foiling machines, again the first of their type in Britain.



Carsons liqueur chocolate range was expanded over the years and made available in both gift box and stick packs, so that by the late 1970's the brand was dominating the UK market with a share of over 40%. Since they were first introduced, a wide range of fillings have been used including Amaretto Saronno, Babycham, Bailey's Irish Cream, Ballantine's Scotch Whisky, Bols Advockaat, Chartreuse, Cockburn's Port, Cointreau, Courvosier Brandy, Drambuie, Glenleven Malt Whisky, Harvey's Bristol Cream Sherry, Grand Marnier, Grant's Stand Fast Whisky, Haig Whiskey, Hennessy Cognac, Jacobert Fruit Brandies, Lemon Hart Rum, Malibu, Peter Heering's Cherry Brandy, Sandeman Port, Smirnoff Vodka, Teachers Whiskey, The Famous Grouse Whiskey, Tia Maria and Warninks, while for a short time cocktail chocolates were also produced which were filled with Pina Coladas, Black Russians, Brandy Alexandres and Banana Dakiris.

In terms of production the liqueur chocolates were divided into two types, 'crust' and 'crustless', the former being used when the filling had a high alcohol content, and the latter when it was lower. As chocolate is largely fat based and alcohol dissolves fat, it was necessary to enclose fillings such as whiskey and cognac in a protective sugar 'crust' capsule before being enrobed in chocolate. This was not necessary for drinks of the strength of port or sherry where all that was required was to fill a chocolate mould or 'barrel' with the liquor before sealing the open bottom with a fine chocolate spray prior to applying the final full coating.



Carson's Branded Products

Apart from the liqueurs the Carson's range also included the Equisite, Connoiseur and Splendour fancy boxes of mixed plain and milk chocolates, Roses, Superb and Orchid plain chocolates, and Felicity, Butterfly, Elegance and Floral milk chocolates, in addition to Kandy Chocs, Bon Bars, Glacé Pineapple Fruits, and Milk Chocolate Nut Whirls, Brazils and Cream Eggs.

Packer and Bond Branded Products

During the early 1960's under the name of Carsons both the Packer's and Bond grades continued to be manufactured at Greenbank.

Packer's lines included Smokers Outfits, Whiffs, White Mice, Royal Scots, Coconut Squares, Bananas, Zoo Bars, Supa Bars and of course Crispets.

While Bond lines included Chocolate Smokers Sets, Cream Mice, Teddy Bears, Cigars, Variety Creams and Milk Chocolate Walnut Whips.



In spite of producing a comprehensive range of products, during 1963 Carsons made a loss of about £39,500 and early the following year W. Howard Johnstone the Managing Director, along with Mr C.R. Coward and Mr P.G. Wreford, retired from the Board of Directors. Co-opted in their place were three new directors including the high profile financier James M. Goldsmith who assumed the position of Chairman.

Under Jimmy Goldsmith (1963 -1981)



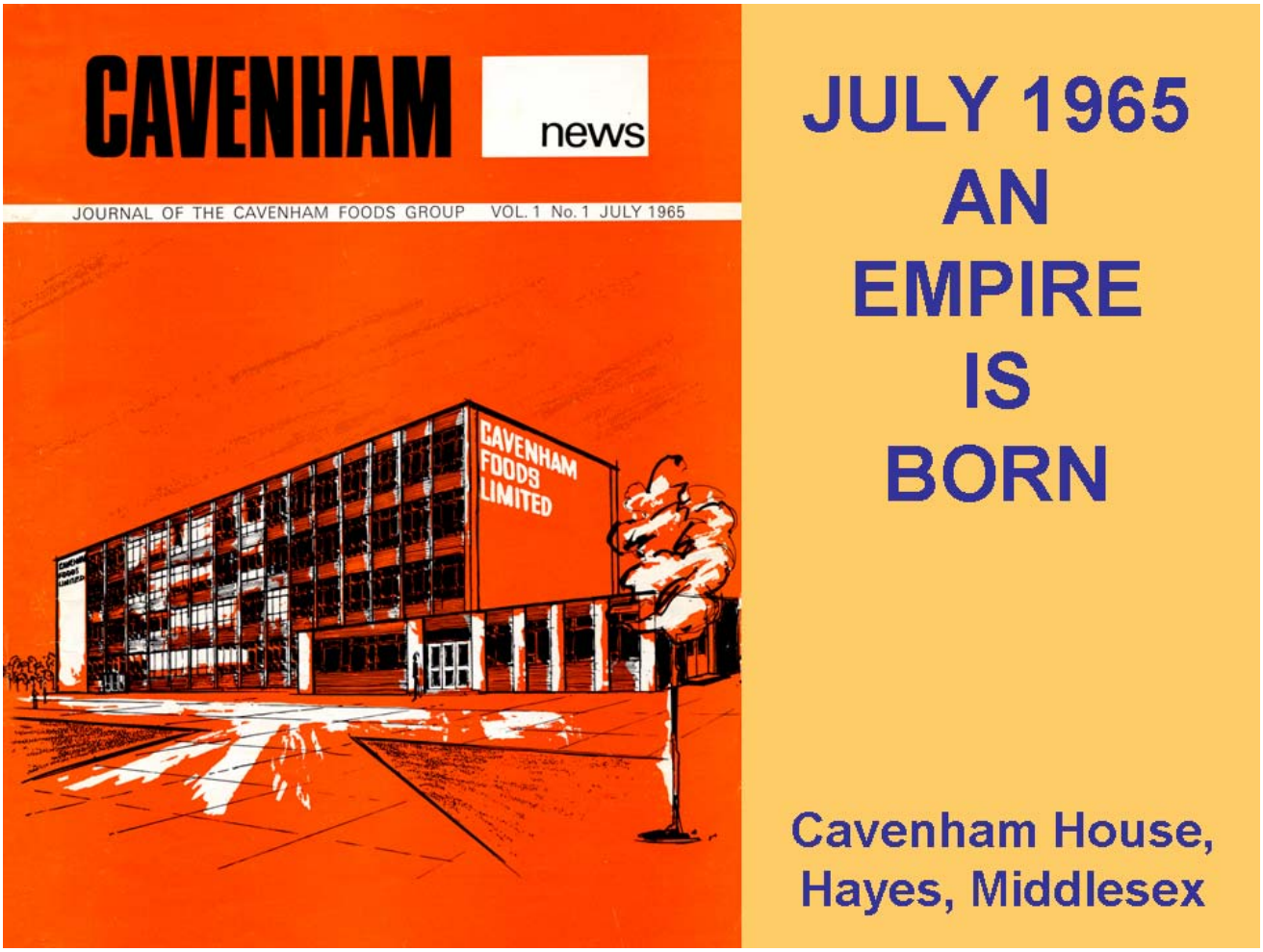
In May 1964 'Jimmy' Goldsmith, through his company Gresham Foods, gained control of Carsons Ltd which was then employing around 830 people. His master plan had been to take over some smaller companies connected with the food industry which were in poor financial health, inject new management into those with the greatest potential, closing the others and moving the production of the most successful brands to larger sites where investment in new machinery could most easily improve overall efficiency. Goldsmith hoped that the increased profitability of the survivors would then attract new investors and enable a group specialising in manufacturing food and wholesaling confectionary and tobacco to be established by further acquisitions.

Yeatmans
Consequently, in July 1965 Goldsmith went on to acquire Yeatmans of London, and made the decision to close their Watford factory and transfer production to Greenbank of the Selesta Orchard Fruit Jellies, a line targeted at adults.

Arthur Holland Confectionery Ltd
Also taken over in 1965 was Arthur Holland Confectionery Ltd in Southport, which made quality toffees and caramels, its best known brands being Penny Arrows and Goodies White Mice. The company had been founded in 1886, and moved to its Virginia Street premises in 1926, before becoming a group in its own right in 1961. Consequently, by 1965 it controlled S. Parkinson & Son Ltd, which had been established in Doncaster in 1817, and later became famous for its butterscotch, as well as Ewbank Ltd founded in 1810, which had moved its liquorice manufacturing business to the Eagle Works in Pontefract at the end of the nineteenth century. The other member was Fillery's Toffees Ltd of Birmingham, established in 1900, which in 1961 had also taken on the manufacture of Walter's Palm toffee for the old established company based at Acton in London.

For a short time the various firms taken-over operated entirely independently, each with its own factory, administration, sales forces and distribution systems. However, as their work force of nearly 2000 strong were making an aggregate loss in the region of £1 million per year Goldsmith soon began radically re-organising his confectionary holdings by closing most of its nine confectionery factories and centralising production at the three largest plants, Bristol, Southport and Doncaster.

Company renamed Cavenham Foods Ltd (1965-1981)



By the 6th August 1965 enough take-overs had been made for Cavenham Foods Ltd, to be created, a group named after a village in West Suffolk where Chairman 'Jimmy' Goldsmith's father had once lived. It was initially run from a small head office at Colnbrook, near Heathrow Airport, which dictated overall policy and exercised financial control over the group's four operating divisions each under the executive control of a General Manager and his Board of Directors: bakery, confectionery, grocery and wholesaling.

Consequently, the Slough based Cavenham Confectionery Ltd, which had been created out of the merger of seven confectionery firms, became responsible for the three surviving undertakings, Carson's, Holland's and Parkinson's. Following an offer made on 16 July 1966 Cavenham's finally obtained Carson's outstanding ordinary and preference shares, and in the same month 42 year old Michael Spencer Beard became Site Director at Greenbank, having previously been employed as Production & Maintenance Supervisor at Mars Ltd.

Upgrading the Greenbank factory (1966-1973)

It was essential to upgrade the factory to reduce operating costs, integrate the new brands, rationalise the layout of the equipment required, modernise some of the existing plant and employee facilities, including the cafeteria, locker rooms, toilet and washroom areas. The new factory layout was designed to ensure a consistently high quality of finished product, the safety of the workers, a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene commensurate with the operation of a modern food factory.



The New Automated Bindler Shell Moulding Plant

In order to implement the £350,000 scheme the services of a new Production Director were secured, the man chosen for the task being Maurice Gibson who since 1949 had been responsible for manufacturing a range of well known household products.

Details of the improvements

To begin with an extra 25,000 square feet of open plan operating space was built between the two newest of the five parallel factory buildings thereby joining together No.4 and No.5. It was within these that all production, with the exception of the actual chocolate manufacturing plant, was then located. The other buildings were then set aside for storage, service departments and employee facilities.

Efforts were also made towards creating a cohesive and versatile workforce in the factory. In addition unprofitable lines were identified and phased out.

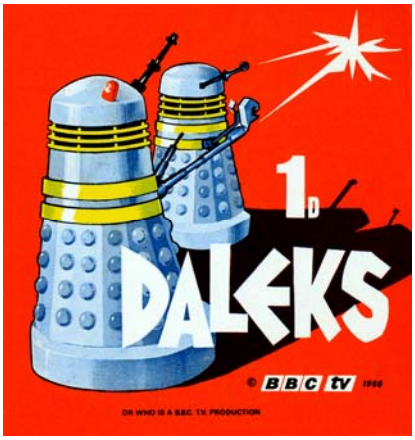
Production was then re-organised so that the raw material could pass to the finished product stage by the shortest possible route. To facilitate this eight new packing lines, five with direct feeding from foiling machines and three for assortment and novelty packing were installed. During the spring of 1966, a double enrober for crust liqueurs, over 180 feet long, was re-designed and erected. Following that a new Bindler drop making machine arrived, and this had sufficient capacity to replace the three old Jensen machines transferred from Watford.

A further development was the acquisition of a larger new solid moulding unit, also from Bindler, which was capable of replacing the three Jensen machines previously used to manufacture the Goodies 1d range, including such items as the newly introduced White Fish and Christmas novelties. However, the major machine development was the installation and commissioning of the Shell Moulding Bindler employed in the manufacture of all crustless liqueur products such as Raisins in Rum, Cherries in Brandy, Sandeman Port Barrels and Harvey's Sherry Bottles. It was also used in the production of cream units, such as Orchard and Strawberry Creams, as it had the flexibility to make solid moulding units through a part circuit of the machine, albeit at a lower rate.

On the Selesta side two new automatic weighing sets with check weighers were installed on the Orchard Fruit and Pastille bagging, and a much improved arrangement for bulk packing. In addition, No.3 Building was turned into a factory services block with the top floor being used to house both the Research & Development Laboratory, where pilot plant could be installed for the small scale manufacture of new marketing ideas, and the Factory Control Laboratory under the chief chemist, which was responsible for quality control. It was also became home to the Mechanical Workshop, the Personnel Department, the Canteen and the main Locker and Rest Rooms.

A new main factory entrance, two stairways and lifts were also provided, thereby eliminating congestion and speeding up the mechanical handling of both the raw materials and the finished products. Internally, all the floors of the modernised factory were re-laid using the special dust-proof hard wearing 'Fama' material, while the walls and ceilings were also suitably treated and improved, and easily cleaned lighting installed, something particularly appreciated in the Packing Room.

Externally, the factory was provided with a good hard standing for loading from the new Despatch Area, along with a new Security Guardhouse, fencing around the perimeter and a new car park large enough to accommodate all the employees vehicles and to avoid creating any parking nuisance to the neighbours.



Re-branding: Packers, Bond, Carsons brand names are discontinued (1966)
With the manufacturing of the Packer and Bond brands discontinued, the Bristol factory was able to concentrate on the all important Carsons chocolate liqueurs, which by 1966 were being sold under the Famous Names trademark, along with the newly acquired Selesta and Goodies lines.



Selesta Orchard Fruit Jellies

Selesta Orchard Fruit Jellies had an excellent reputation for quality which depended upon a skilful combination of texture and flavour. To produce them, a blend of various sugars and a gelling agent were passed through a continuous cooking process before colour, natural juices and citric acid were added. The liquid jelly poured into the depositor hopper of a Mogul starch moulding machine. Here trays were filled with moulding starch, levelled off and then printed with an impression to give the required shape. The syrup was then pumped into the impressions and set aside to cool. Then the solidified jellies were passed automatically to a 'sanding' machine and steamed prior to being coated with sugar crystals in order to provide a dry exterior surface that enhanced their colour.

Goodies Range

In July 1966 Cavenham Confectionary purchased Paramount Laboratories in Slough, closed them down and transferred the production of their Sweet Cigarettes to Greenbank in August. They were incorporated into the Goodies range, along with Crispets previously a Packer product.



The extremely valuable Goodies range of moulded candy was extensive and ever changing, and by the late 1970's Greenbank was producing Baby Bears, Dormice and Sweet Cigarettes at ½p each, White Mice, Might Monkeys and Cheroots at 1p, and Pink Mice, Bananas, Oranges and Basil Brush at 2p. In addition, the range of 'weigh-outs' sold by the quarter included Crispets, Chewing Nuts, Pear Drops, Fairy Drops, Rainbow Drops and Jelly Drops, and these were also available in bags. All these were made by moulding 'White Compound' chocolate into distinctive shapes, with or without the prior addition of colouring and flavours, except the Jelly Drops which were made in a similar manner to Selesta.



Acquisition of Elizabeth Shaw (1968)

In 1968 Cavenham Foods acquired the right to manufacture the products of Elizabeth Shaw Ltd following the destruction of their Camberley factory in a devastating fire. So it was that Bristol became responsible for making both large and small Mint Crisps, which consisted of dark mint-flavoured chocolate to which had been added small pieces of 'sugar crisp'. Likewise, the production of the entirely hand made Digestive Mint Creams, along with After Dinner Mints, was initially undertaken at Doncaster, although by the late 1970's the Greenbank factory was manufacturing all three Elizabeth Shaw lines.



History of the Elizabeth Shaw Brand (1937-today)

The origins of the Elizabeth Shaw brand can be traced back to 1937. In the early 1930's the Smith family relocated from Somerset to Teddington, Middlesex, where their daughter Elizabeth married Patrick Joice, an employee of local confectionary company Page & Shaw. Unfortunately the young couple soon fell on hard times and were forced to move in with Elizabeth's brother-in-law, Mr Bellchamber. Keen to pay her way, in 1937, Elizabeth Joice had the idea of marketing a mint flavoured chocolate made from honeycomb crisp. It was a favourite treat she made for her family, and one which she had developed from a recipe given to her by an American friend. So it was that Elizabeth started to produce Mint Crisps and Langes de Chat on her sister's stove to sell in the Bellchamber's shop.

As the venture was successful the Joice's decided to create a brand name for the new products by combining Elizabeth's first name with the Shaw of Page & Shaw, this they decided formed a combination that was pleasing to the ear. Patrick then began to distribute the chocolates further afield. In 1938, to cope with increased sales, a small kitchen was set up in premises at the rear of 25 High Street, Teddington. Here the company's first machine was also installed. In 1939 a new factory, known as Mint House, was established on an estate at Commerce Road, Brentford because demand was always outstripping supply. After World War Two a larger building adjoining the existing premises was taken over and more equipment acquired.

Unfortunately fire struck twice, one of their laboratories burnt down and then in January 1953 everything except for a few offices was destroyed in a fire causing £20,000 worth of damage and taking with it all of the Joice's investment. As a result the family were forced to sell the business to another concern who continued to manufacture the Elizabeth Shaw products using the original recipes re-locating production to new and larger premises in Camberley. According to a newspaper report Elizabeth died an unhappy woman in July 1957, aged 54.

The new undertaking prospered and in1963 it was granted a Royal Warrant for their Peppermint Cream chocolates following years of supply to King George VI, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Queen Elizabeth II. However, in 1968 history repeated itself when a disastrous fire swept away the Camberley factory causing massive financial problems. After every avenue had been explored, accountants were finally called in and they advised that Elizabeth Shaw Ltd should be put up for sale.





From losses to profit (1966-1973)
During the trading period in 1966-1969 Cavenham Confectionery Ltd did not make a profit.

In 1966/7 they lost £649,000, including £152,000 re-organisation expenses, while in 1967/8 losses amounted to £332,000, and in 1968/9, £206,000. In 1969-1970 a profit of £189,000 was finally recorded for the Cavernham Foods division.

In 1972 the Greenbank factory's Easter Egg manufacturing expanded. Cavenham Foods acquired Shuttleworths of London which they closed, transfering their equipment for manufacturing Easter Eggs to Bristol. The same year the factory won a contract to produce a range of Easter Eggs and novelties for Lindt & Sprüngli (UK) of West Drayton, Middlesex. Also new production facilities for the manufacture and moulding of both milk and plain chocolates where installed at Greenbank.

During 1972-1973 Cavenham Confectionery's plan for the modernisation and re-equipment of its factories was virtually completed, and a start made on the second stage of growth through marketing development.



Chapter 8
Increased material costs and recession 1974 – 1980

External factors affect the business

Unfortunately, the confectionery market was soon facing major problems due to the escalation of raw material costs. The price of cocoa beans increased from £810 to £2700 per ton over a two year period resulting in an overall 20% decline in chocolate consumption. High quality premium priced products such as Famous Names Liqueur Chocolates and Elizabeth Shaw Mint Crisps were particularly affected. This would normally have been compensated for by an increase in the consumption of sugar confectionery, but UK sugar prices also rose to a new high level. This caused a decline in that market sector which adversely affected the Parkinson brands.

Promotion and Rationalisation

Cavenham Confectionery responded to the situation by providing strong television and promotional support for lines such as Chewits and Arrows; cheap fruit toffee products which ideally met the economic and market requirements for 'low cost comfort'. Also they further streamlined production; principally by the closing the Royal Butterscotch Works of S. Parkinson & Son Ltd in Doncaster in June 1977.

In 1977 the Greenbank factory became the headquarters for all office functions. For over ten years the Carson's, Parkinson's and Holland's plants had operated separately, but following the closure of the Doncaster factory, Parkinson's head office functions, together with those of Cavenham Confectionery Ltd and Arthur Holland Ltd of Southport were all transferred to Greenbank.

Also in 1977 all chocolate production was moved to Bristol. Up until that time the Southport plant had manufactured toffee and chocolate enrobed products. Southport was to concentrate on sugar-based confectionery including the Chewits and Arrows, and the Parkinson's brands of toffee and boiled sweets.

As a result, by 1979 some 750 people were being employed at Greenbank, but due to the effects of a lack of investment, recession and high interest rates another survival plan had to be drawn up for the factory in1980. This included laying of 87 workers in October for periods of three to five weeks. This probably influenced Sir James Goldsmith to announce in 1981 that he intended to pull out of food manufacturing, claiming that it represented only 9% of Cavenham's business.

Nevertheless, although sales had fallen by some 20% during the previous five years Cavenham Confectionary were still selling £27 million worth of Elizabeth Shaw chocolates and Famous Names liqueurs.

Chapter 9
Management Buyouts, and Takeovers 1981 - 2007

Summary of changes 1981 - 2007

Cavenham's connection with Greenbank ended in 1981 when the undertaking was sold to the firm's existing directors, who had been backed by a major financial institution.

A new company, Famous Names Ltd, was created, only to be acquired by Imperial Tobacco plc in 1985, and incorporated into Imperial Foods. The take-overs now gathered pace and complexity, as the following year Imperial Tobacco themselves were acquired by the Hanson Trust, while Famous Names Ltd were re-titled Elizabeth Shaw Ltd in 1988.

The following year the company management bought out Hanson, this time with a little help from LEAF, the Amsterdam based international confectionery wing of the Finnish Huhtamaki Group, which during 1990 went on to take complete control of Elizabeth Shaw Ltd. In 1991 the new owners renamed their acquisition LEAF UK Ltd, but in 1999 the LEAF Group in turn was passed on by their Finnish owners to CSM, a Dutch confectionery undertaking.

However, they quickly decided to focus their attention upon the sugar confectionery side of the business, and consequently for the third time in its history the Greenbank factory, together with its well known Elizabeth Shaw and Famous Names brands, became the object of another management buy out attempt in 2000.

1981 – 1988 Famous Names (Holdings) Ltd



Management Buy-out (1981-1985)
The four directors, Michael Wilmot, Edward Dixon, Roland Griffiths and Ronald Wallace received backing from an impressive list of institutional and other investors raising the £8 million necessary to purchase the Greenbank and Southport factories, together with all their brands from Cavenham Foods Ltd. The transaction was completed in July 1981 and a new company called Famous Names (Holdings) Ltd was created with Michael Wilmot as Managing Director. To be acquired by Imperial Tobacco plc in 1985, and incorporated into Imperial Foods.



Investment (1982-1986)
In spite of the earlier injection of funds following the Cavenham purchase the factory it was again in dire need of modernisation and reorganisation. Stringent economies and fresh capital investment and promotional campaigns were required.

It had also been necessary to make a number of employees redundant to enable a £7 million capital investment programme to be undertaken during the period 1982 to 1986. As a result, between 1983 and 1984 £1.75 million was spent on plant, and during 1985 some of the most modern robotic packing and semi-automatic chocolate making machines were installed.

Strike (1982)
The workforce however felt the improvements to the factory were not being matched by an adequate rise in wages, and 1982 saw a lengthy and damaging strike in which some 200 workers at the Southport plant walked out in support of Greenbank's pay claim, joining the 340 on strike in Bristol who had rejected a 5% offer in favour of a £10 a week increase across the board settlement.

Despite the strike Famous Names' financial position improved rapidly, and in 1982 the company realised a £1.1 million post tax profit, followed by a 15% rise in 1983 when profits grossed £12 million. This success was mainly as the result of the reorganisation of stock ordering and handling, coupled with successful product advertising.

Product Range (1981 -1988)

Throughout the early 1980's Famous Names Ltd continued manufacturing their extensive range of liqueur chocolates and soon secured a 44% overall brand leadership in every market sector, while three of the Elizabeth Shaw lines accounted for over 50% of the total UK 'chocolate crisp' market. In addition, both Selesta and the ever changing Goodies brand, with lines by then priced between 1p and 4p, remained in production at Greenbank.



Take-over(1985)

However, the company's success prompted a surprise take-over approach from Imperial Tobacco, anxious to further diversify and to use the company as the core for expansion into confectionary manufacturing.

The board concluded that a new strong partner was required to provide the finance for the next stage in the company's development. The institutional city investors were to be replaced, and Famous Names was to operate as a separate company within the Imperial Group.

Imperial Tobacco Limited (1985 – 1986)

On the 12th of September 1985 the 440 staff at Greenbank and the 210 at the firm's Southport plant were told that the business had been sold to Imperial Tobacco Ltd for £15.5 million.

Although Dixon, Griffiths and Wallace stayed on, and Wilmot remained Managing Director, 51 year old John Bloxcidge from Imperial became the Chairman of Famous Names Ltd in place of Michael Vernon who, along with fellow director David Linnell, left the company as both had been nominees of the finance house that had originally backed the management buy-out.

Imperial then decided that their expanding portfolio of subsidiary companies required dedicated management at its centre in order achieve profit growth by unlocking their international potential. Consequently, on the 1st of February 1986 Famous Names became part of Imperial Tobacco Developments Ltd. (ITDL), and subsequently reported to Brian Wray, its Chairman, who was also the Assistant Managing Director of ITL.

Hanson Trust (1986-1989)

However, a prolonged and bitterly contested take-over battle was soon raging as the Imperial Group itself fought to prevent being taken over by the predatory Hanson Trust, but it was all to no avail. On the 11th of April 1986 it was announced that they had acquired 64% of Imperial's shares and that talks had already begun on the change of ownership.

Having acquired Imperial Tobacco Ltd. (ITL), Hanson's soon embarked upon the process of separating the food, drink and leisure elements of the business from the tobacco side prior to selling them off.

Consequently, although for a short period Famous Names remained under the Imperial Tobacco Development Ltd. umbrella, it was quickly decided that it would be more logical and commercially sensible for it to become part of the Imperial Foods Division of the Hanson Trust. Although the majority of the company's management were not affected by this change, John Bloxcidge, the Managing Director of ITL, Brian Wray and Angus Vine, the ITL Business Development Director, all resigned from the Board of Famous Names, while at the same time Jeremy Marshall, the existing Chairman and Chief Executive of the Imperial Foods Division, became the company's new Chairman.

However, the new arrangements were not to Michael Wilmot liking, and on 31 July 1986 the 440 employes at Famous Names were shocked to learn that he had resigned, and that his position as Managing Director was shortly to be filled by 46 year old Geoff Matthews, who had been the first manager at the Wills Hartcliffe tobacco factory in Bristol.

1988 -1990 Elizabeth Shaw Limited

Company Renamed

A further change came in March 1988 when the company was re-titled Elizabeth Shaw Ltd, and in the year ending 30 September 1988 it achieved a turnover of £31 million and made a profit of £1.86 million. At that time the firm's major brands were Elizabeth Shaw Liqueur Chocolates (previously known as Famous Names), with a 49% market share; Elizabeth Shaw Chocolate Crisps with 45%; Elizabeth Shaw Liqueur Chocolate Truffles with 43% and Chewits, brand leader in the fruit chew stickpack market with 64%. The company also manufactured the two popular sugar confectionary lines, Goodies for children and Parkinson's pic 'n' mix.

Hanson's asset disposal (1989)
Although Hanson plc in the three year period gave Elizabeth Shaw Ltd and its 750 strong workforce at Greenbank and Southport good support by way of capital investment and advertising spend, it went on to becomes one of a series of high profile asset disposals that the conglomerate made in 1988 and 1989.

Management Buy-out (1989)
In the case of Elizabeth Shaw, a management buy-out had the full support of Hanson's, as it had become clear to both parties that the future growth and prosperity of the company would benefit by forming a partnership, or link, with a global confectionary company in order to prepare for the creation of the Single European Market in 1992. Given the existing profit base, a full competitive price was given to Hanson's to avoid Elizabeth Shaw being absorbed by one of the large UK confectionary companies.



CTN, May 5, 1989

NEWS

Elizabeth Shaw gets bought by its bosses

The Huhtamaki Years, a global player (1989 -1999)



Management Buy-out (1989 – 1990)

The £24.7 million deal was completed on 26 March 1989 when ownership of the company passed to a group headed by Managing Director Geoff Matthews, along with fellow directors Vic Stevens (finance), Peter Redfern (sales), Alan Bolton (operations), Jim Currie (marketing) and Company Secretary Gerald Patch, all of whom had a controlling interest of more than 70%. In addition it was supported by Barclays and a non-clearing house bank, together with Leaf Inc., the Amsterdam based international confectionary division of the Finnish company, Huhtamaki Oy, the fourteenth largest confectionary manufacturer in the world which had extensive operations in Continental Europe, the USA and Canada. The buy-out was financed by £350,000 of equity, of which £250,000 came from the management, with Leaf putting up the remaining £100,000 and making a further contribution including around £21 million of debt funding.

Leaf in the UK

Leaf already had a small presences in the UK market with its Mr Freeze ice lollipops, Sportlife sugar-free gum, Hellas bars and LO low-calorie chocolate, and planned to evaluate the country's potential for a much wider range of chocolate and sugar confectionary. With Elizabeth Shaw, whose identity, brands and factories at Bristol and Southport it was promised would be retained. Also Elizabeth Shaw products would benefit in terms of the development of the sales of their own products overseas through Leaf's distribution network.

Following the management buy-out the relationship between Elizabeth Shaw Ltd and Leaf developed Their UK sales forces integrated, and a number of joint manufacturing and marketing initiatives were developed in the UK and overseas. The intergration was taken a step further on the 2nd January 1990, when after acquiring the remaining shares from the directors, Elizabeth Shaw Ltd became a totally owned company of Huhtamaki and the UK division of the Leaf Group.

At that time the company had an annual turnover of £33 million and a workforce made up of 606 people, 250 of whom were employed in the Greenbank factory, 200 at Southport, 60 in the Accounting Centre and 90 in Sales & Marketing. In addition, there were six directors. Greenbank also took on some 300 seasonal employees as required.

In the extremely competitive market place of the 1990's the continued performance of existing brands and the development of future branded products required considerable financial support, and it was felt that Leaf was the ideal company to pursue that strategy and to offer the optimum long term stability and profitability for the Greenbank factory.

1991 – 1999 Leaf United Kingdom Ltd.



Company renamed

In order to properly reflect the new arrangement, in January 1991 Elizabeth Shaw Ltd was re-named Leaf United Kingdom Ltd. The name of the company and owners of the factory had changed but the management still boasted that Greenbank produced the best liqueur chocolates in the world, together with other top quality chocolate products under the Elizabeth Shaw name, as well as Crispets, the company's oldest product.

CSM

Due to declining sales Leaf UK had sustained heavy trading losses in both 1998 and 1999. This instigated more change on 1 July 1999; the Leaf Group was officially transferred by their Finnish owners to CSM, a Netherlands based sugar confectionery, food and baking company for £249 million.

The new management planned not only a major restructuring at the Southport plant, but also a three point plan for Greenbank. This was revealed to the workforce on 16 November 1999 by Tim Walkley, the Bristol Operations & Supply Chain Director.



The first proposal was to reduce the complexity of the operation by concentrating only on the Elizabeth Shaw crisp products, Famous Names Liqueurs and the work for Lindt, and not considering any other business unless it had been fully evaluated. It was also thought necessary to increase the plant's operational efficiency, particularly by the introduction of annualised hours, and to reduce the cost base by cutting about 62 of the 160 permanent jobs at Greenbank with effect from 17 December 1999.

In spite of introducing these measures CSM soon decided to focus their attention on the sugar confectionery side of the business, and consequently to dispose of the chocolate brands and the Greenbank Factory.

2000 – today Packbond Holdings Ltd.



Management Buy-out

So it was that for the third time in its history the old Greenbank factory, together with its well known Elizabeth Shaw and Famous Names brands, became the object of a management buy-out. A consortium led by Malachy McReynolds, (Manager of Leaf UK), together with Martin Pearce, (President of Leaf Europe & Leaf East Asia), Paul Keith (Operations Manager of Leaf UK's Southport factory), and Bill Williams (Russell Marketing). Financial and legal advice was provided by Gerard Barnes of KPGM Bristol and Burges Salmon, respectively, while GE Capital Commercial Finance supplied £6 million of funding for the takeover, which went ahead on 29 March 2000. Forming a new company known as Packbond Holdings Ltd.

The company employed over 200 staff the company enjoyed an annual turnover of over £16 million including exports of £2 million. The opening years of the new century saw the continuation of the Famous Names range of liqueur chocolates as the number one liqueur chocolate brand in the UK, and the launch of new products such as Vodka Shots and Mint Crisp Truffles. Orange Crisp and Coffee Crisp were re-introduced to keep the Elizabeth Shaw lines at the forefront of the premium boxed chocolate market.

The main product ranges

The main ranges were the Famous Names liqueur chocolates, and the original Elizabeth Shaw Mint Crisp's. Other Elizabeth Shaw lines were produced including Milk Mint Crisps, Coffee Crisps, Milk Mint Crisp Truffles, Mint Creams and Easter Eggs, as well as a range of fine milk chocolates with truffle centres laced with either Harvey's Bristol Milk, Irish Cream, Tia Maria or Cointreau and three varieties of Shots, which consisted of assortments of smooth centred milk chocolates blended in four fruit or other flavours with either Schnapps, Tequila or Vodka. The firm also had a presence in the private label market.



The Southport Factory

The Southport factory, which had manufactured Chewits in various flavours since 1965, remained part of Leaf UK which itself was purchased by a venture capital company in February 2005. Consequently, in January 2006 it was signaled that the factory, which was outdated and running at a capacity of just 40%, was to close and production was moved to Eastern Europe.

The Greenbank Factory closes 2006

Likewise, due to the ever increasing cost of operating the large old Greenbank site which, like Southport, had excessive spare capacity, its owners were also forced to close down the operation and move the manufacture of the Elizabeth Shaw brands to other facilities both in the UK and Continental Europe. Among the final lines to be made at Greenbank were Mint Crisps, Milk Mint Crisps, Tia Maria Truffles and Vodka Shots, and although it was planned to shut the plant down in September 2006, it was early October before production ceased completely.



Packbond Ltd
Factory Notice

VOLUNTEERS TO CONTINUE WORKING UNTIL 8TH SEPTEMBER 2006

Due to an unexpected increase in orders, we need 15 volunteers to agree to work from 11th August to 8th September 2006. This will be on a day shift working pattern.

Any employee who has a provisional termination date of 11th August or who has actually been given notice of termination for 11th August can volunteer.

If you wish to volunteer, please write to Jean Francis or David Reid by 11.30am on Friday 11th July 2006.

Please note, the company is under no obligation to accept any particular application and must reserve the right to reject requests. Applicants must be able to commit to working until 8th September.

David Reid
HR Manager
15th June 2006

Packbond

The building was put up for sale and production moved to factories across Britain and Europe.

Pucklechurch



Elizabeth's Shaw Ltd still retain a presence in the Bristol area, with their new headquarters established at Becket Court in Pucklechurch, not far from the site of Carson's old Shortwood site.

The end of the factory



The Greenbank Factory is to be developed into housing and business units.