

York- Welcome to the Chocopolis!

York is home to more confectionery factories than Birmingham, which is widely recognised as a chocolate haven in the UK. With such a deep chocolatey history, a York walking tour (such as the Haxby walking tour from the Rowntree Society).

The company, Rowntree's made chocolate and other sweet products, and quickly grew from 30 employees to over 4000 by the end of the 19th century. This made it the 8th largest employer in Britain.

Joseph Rowntree provided his workers with a library, free education for them and their families, health care and a pension fund. He also opened Rowntree Park to remember the employees who had died during WW1.

The legacy of Seebohm Rowntree's study into the Poverty Line paved the way for liberal reforms in the 20th century, and destroyed the notion of poor people as lazy or sinful.

Within the context of beginning to study the liberal reforms in the UK in the 20th century, leading off from the Industrial Revolution topic, consider these next points.

On your tour, imagine you are an employee at the Rowntree's factory in the mid-to-late 19th century.

What is your biggest worry? Does this change from day to day? Do you think ahead to what your future may look like?

You can smell chocolate, but what else lies thick in the air? What do you think the factory has done to the landscape and the air of York? Why?

What do you think the working future for your children/grandchildren will be like? What are your hopes for the future?

Would you rather work for the Rowntree factory or the owner of Quarry Bank Mill? Why? What do you think were the biggest similarities and differences between these workplaces?



