BULLSEYES

A history of sweet-making
in Waltham Forest

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This is the fourth in the Workshop's series of booklets exploring local topics through the memories of local people. The previous three booklets are still available from:

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Members of the group involved in the production of this book were: Susan Ashworth, Nicola Bastin, Bryony Batchelor, Michael Custance, Nick Hayes, Simon Lace, Alan Nance, Tammy Ratoff, Marian Vaughan, Robert Wilkinson and Thelma Wolfe.

Our cover illustration features a photograph of the interior of Green's sweet shop at the junction of Church Road and Lea Bridge Road, Leyton in the early 1950's. Mr. Green is on the left with his assistant, known to us only as Margaret, on the right. A view of the outside of the shop in the late 1920's can be seen between pages 46 and 47.
Photograph from the Vestry House Museum Collection.

Foreword

While collecting memories of the bakery trade (Cottage Loaves and Plain Bricks) the Waltham Forest Oral History Workshop found that some of the recollections were about confectionery too, and decided to pursue that aspect further for our next project. The result is this book.

There were some larger sweet manufacturers in and around Waltham Forest, but it was also a trade which could be done in a front room or small workshop quite easily. Almost everyone has memories of sweets, whether as makers, sellers or consumers. We were surprised by the extent to which the popular brands of decades ago are still going strong today, both nationally-produced and local specialities.

This book contains memories of sweet-makers large and small, covering making and selling as well as eating!

Acknowledgements.

As ever we would like to thank the many people who have freely given of their time and shared their memories with us. Their names and some biographical notes are given below.

Thanks are also due to Vestry House Museum, Walthamstow and its staff who continue to provide the Workshop with a secure base and with practical, moral and financial support.

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Age Concern Waltham Forest again kindly assisted in the production of the booklet with the use of a word processor which helped enormously.

We would also like to thank Bonds of London Ltd., Trebor Ltd. and The Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance who supplied information which helped our research.

Robert Barltrop has again kindly allowed us to reproduce his map of the borough.

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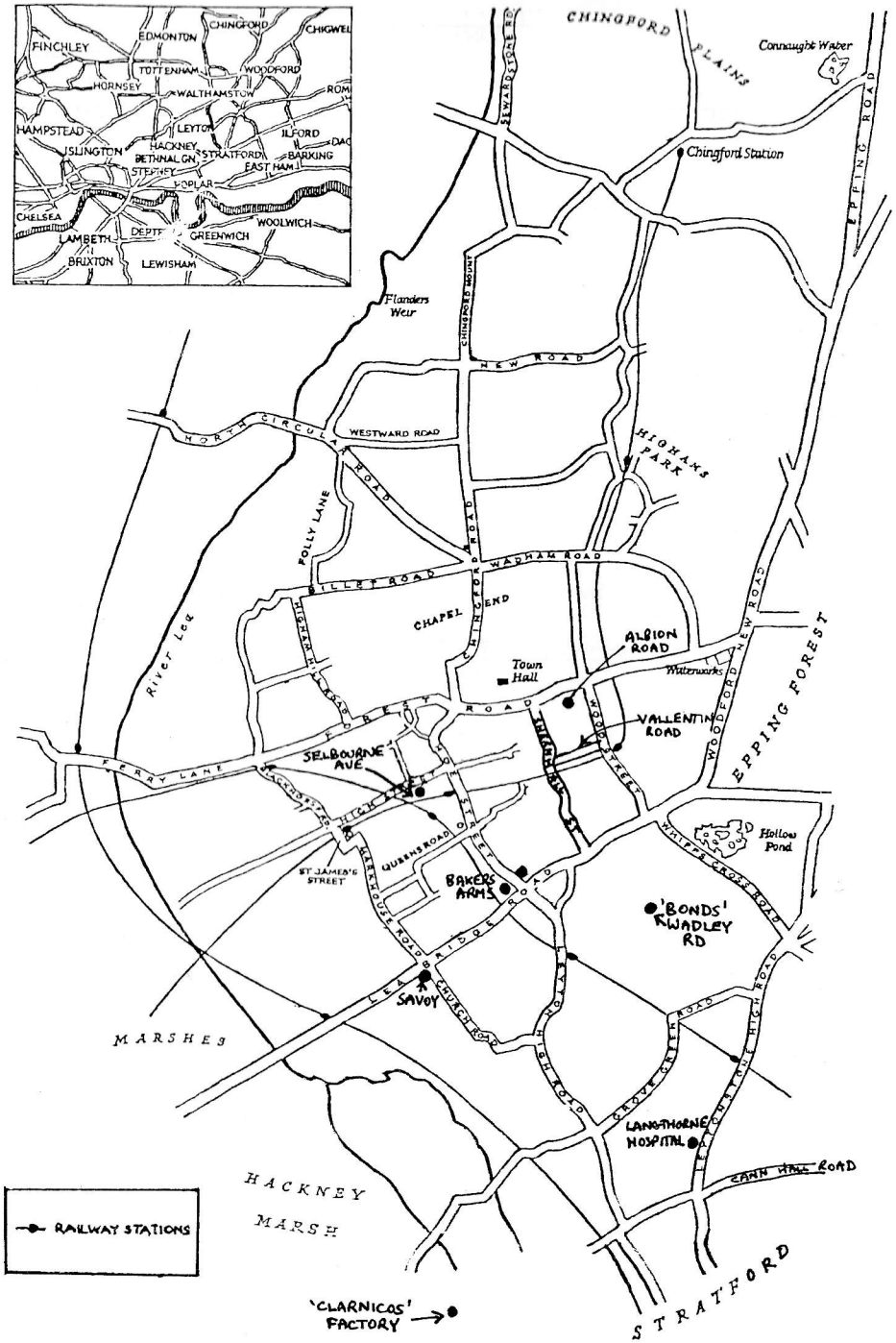


INTRODUCTION

Today in Britain we each consume an average 8 oz of confectionery a week. Although we all remember favourite sweets from childhood, the industry's Cocoa, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance states that only 13 per cent of confectionery is actually bought by children.

The amount of boiled sugar, along with most other sugar confectionery despatched by manufacturers is falling and is now only half the 1973 level. Only gums, jellies, pastilles and "medicated" sweets show any increase on their 1973 figures. But Britain still has one of the highest sugar consumptions in the European Community, and sugar is a basic ingredient of the many snack and convenience foods and drinks which are now so popular.

In 1914 60 per cent of the sugar eaten in Britain was from German and Austrian sugar beet. During World War I the British government intervened in sugar production, and by 1928 eighteen factories had been built in Britain. There are now only two main suppliers of sugar in this country: Tate and Lyle, based at Silvertown, East London (who refine imported sugar cane) and the British Sugar Corporation (which processes sugar beet.)

Confectionery has come to mean any kind of sweets or chocolate product. However there are a number of distinct paths to modern sweetmaking, some of which are still quite separate. Chocolate confectionery, for instance, can be traced back over 300 years to the introduction of cocoa to this country. It was only in 1826 that J S Fry and Sons managed to produce a solid lozenge of chocolate. Milk chocolate was first produced commercially in 1876, and developed most notably by the Swiss Nestle Company.

The subject of this book is sweetmaking, and particularly sugar-boiling, as it has developed in north east London within living memory. The three main ingredients for sugar-boiling have always been sugar, glucose and water, and in earlier times apothecaries found there was a demand for a sugar coating to the medicinal pills they produced. A number of firms started up in this way, among them Joseph Terry of York in 1767, indeed Mrs Hartley remembers Bonds producing:

'Zills for Chills' - a type of medicated sweet.

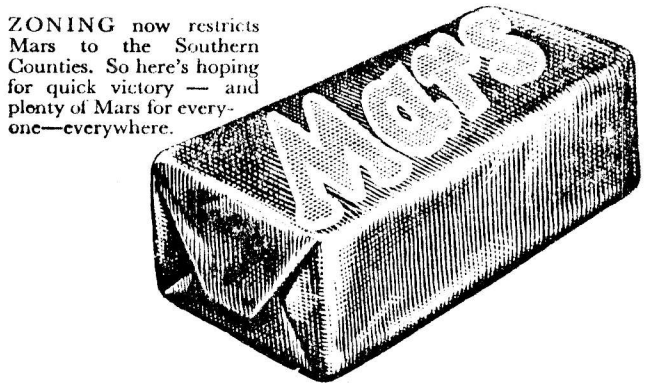
During the 19th and early 20th centuries, sweetmaking in London was predominantly a small-scale, home-based industry, often involving the extended family and using simple domestic equipment in back rooms or garden sheds. These small businesses might handle every aspect of production and sale, from taking in sacks of raw ingredients, through sugar boiling, flavouring and cooling, to cutting, wrapping and distribution to market stalls, sweetshops, etc.

There is a very clear pattern around the turn of the century of these small family firms gradually succumbing to increased mechanisation, and either dropping out of business or being "taken over" by larger firms. The history of the modern Trebor company is a good illustration of this trend. It started with William Woodcock, an expert sugar-boiler of Upton Park, East London. In 1907 Woodcock merged with one of his wholesale customers, Thomas King, and two other associates, adopting the name "Trebor," as the new company rented a small house in Trebor Terrace, Upton Park. The new firm set out to provide good quality sweets at competitive prices, and invested in equipment, advertising and new lines (eg the Farthing Dip) and by 1920 was a thriving business. After World War II Trebor acquired a string of smaller family businesses, such as Moffat's, Edward Sharp and Son (famous for toffees), and Clarke, Nickolls and Coombs. This latter company was well

known in East London for its 'Clarnico' products, which included fudge, iced caramels, marzipan, fruit jellies and chocolate coated raisins. With the acquisition of these firms, Trebor took over a large range of factories, both in and out of London, and moved into the export market. Today the Trebor company still has its head office in the area at Woodford Green, but now is a multi-national corporation with subsidiary companies in Europe, the United States and the Far East.

Other companies which are all now household names such as Cadbury, Rowntree and Mackintosh, have developed in similar ways, although without the East London connections.

The confectionery industry has become big business, and directly employs some 64,000 people nationally (1982), plus the many thousands employed in the retail sector in corner shops, supermarkets, cinemas, and servicing vending machines, etc. The demand for confectionery is enormous, and the public's liking for sweet things continues. It is true, however, that sugar consumption is now declining in some traditional 'sweet' areas, but growing in the form of packaged and convenience foods. The reasons for this are unclear, but include the adverse publicity about the effects of sugar on teeth and health in general, and the heavy promotion of alternative and 'fast' foods and snacks, such as crisps, biscuits, yoghurt, etc. Even so, there is an amazing resilience in the popularity of



Mars Bar advertisement, c.1940.

some types of confectionery; Mars Bars and Kit Kats for instance continue to be best sellers after many decades of production. No doubt the psychology of buying is influenced by our experience of sweets and chocolate in childhood, leaving room in the trade for both traditional and novelty lines.

In north east London echoes of the past linger on, and a walk down Walthamstow High Street reveals at least one stallholder still selling sweets he has made himself. But as Terry Hand told us:

> "... we're a dying trade. There's obviously a lot of sugar boilers about, but they tend to be employed by the companies. Well, you're looking at Trebors, they make conventional boilings, and Bonds of London - they're always advertising for trainee sugar boilers. But as for making yourself, and selling direct to the public! I've got a friend, he used to work at Mascot's, but he moved out of the area and started up on his own at Clacton. Obviously in the coast towns you get people making sweets and selling direct to the public.

Interestingly, the practice of making and selling sweets and cakes is also evident in the Asian community in London, keeping alive a tradition which has been taken away from small, home-based producers and is now threatened by mass production, standardisation of foodstuffs and corporate advertising.

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CHAPTER 1 - MAKING THE SWEETS

Confectionery was a major industry in and around Waltham Forest before the Second World War. Many people remember the amazing variety of sweets, toffees and ices that were made and sold locally, and even plain toffee was eagerly bought. A number of people referred to Strutts - a sweet shop that used to make all their own sweets, including great sheets of plain toffee. The Strutts' sweet shop was in Markhouse Road, and Mrs Strutt can remember being told that her husband's grandfather used to put farthings into the toffee to make it even more popular.

Mrs Diver worked at Clarnico's in the 1920's, just across the border at Hackney Wick:

> "I worked in the marzipan department ... we laid the bars out into trays and stacked them on stands, and stood them up on top of one another until they were dry and then they were wrapped and packed.

later she worked in the fondant room:

> "...you had a spatula, a thing that you picked them up twisting it round ... it's just automatic, you know you got used to doing it and naturally you were all talking".

For three pounds a week Mr Hand would produce between half and three quarters of a ton of sweets using two fires:

> "We used to boil the sugar or glucose up to about 310, or whatever it is, you'd have a fire at the side of you, melting sugar and glucose, so when you'd tip that one at 310 the boy'd put that over on the other big fire ready for you. So you could say that

Making sweets at Terry Hand's premises in Chingford Mount Road, 1987. Terry is on the left preparing the boil while his son and daughter-in-law are breaking up sheets of coconut ice before bagging it up for sale. Photograph loaned by Robert Wilkinson.

Thomas Strutt making nutrock (above) and sticks of humbug which would later be cut into smaller pieces. The workshop was at the rear of 57 Markhouse Road, Walthamstow. Photographs loaned by Mrs. Strutt.

you're getting a boil of toffee off every 15 or 20 minutes."

Mr Hand started at Mascot's in Blackhorse Road, Walthamstow as a boy doing the donkey work, but when an older worker left he volunteered to make the sweets. He started with coconut flake, doing this for about four months, graduating to peanut work then boiling work such as cough candy, pear drops and coconut ices. Training was not all on the job:

> "I went to the Polytechnic ... you're not supposed to start until you're 17, but because I was keen they let me start when I was 16 ... Monday was theory, Wednesday was practical ... I wasn't so wonderful on the theory but I excelled myself in the practical."

Sweet making falls into two main types, often used together: chocolate and sugar boiling. It appears that most of the chocolate used in the Waltham Forest confectionery trade was manufactured outside the borough and then remelted for enrobing sweets or nuts locally.

Sugar boiling itself was widespread both in factories and small family businesses. The technology might vary but the principles are common throughout as Mr Hand explains:

> "Everything we make, anything you like to name, is basically all sugar and glucose. If you make a boiling it's sugar and glucose. If you make coconut ice, which is soft, it's still sugar and glucose. You make jellies, basically it's still sugar and glucose you see... you can't make sweets without glucose, apart from using cream of tartar, but to do it professionally and properly you've got to use glucose .."

You dissolve the sugar, you don't melt the sugar. People come up to me and say "Well I've melted the sugar, but it doesn't work." Well you don't melt sugar, you dissolve sugar if you add water to it, all you do is like when you put it in a cup of tea, you're not melting the sugar you're dissolving it, big difference! Because if you put sugar into a pan without moisture it'll go black as the ace of spades, that's trying to melt it. There's no moisture at all in sugar, but there's moisture in glucose. If you put glucose in with sugar you can get away with it, because there's 20% moisture in glucose to help you dissolve the sugar.

"The least water you put into a batch of sugar and glucose the less sticky it's going to be at the end product, because the more water you put into a batch the longer you've got to boil it to evaporate the moisture. The longer you boil it the weaker the boil's getting, so the least water you get away with the better you are."

Since vacuum boiling has been introduced, the temperatures for the boil do not have to be so high. The sweets however retain a greater moisture content, Mr Hand observes:

"If you get a wrapped boiling, a high class boiling from one of the big houses, and it's wrapped, take the paper off and leave it in the palm of your hand for a matter of seconds. And within seconds it will go sticky. That's because it's vacuum made. But if you get a conventional boiling like we make on an open fire, sugar and glucose taken to 305 (degrees F) and slung out, you can put that on a table and that will stay dry in the right atmosphere for anything from 10 minutes to an hour.

Unlike in the large factories where the ingredients are generally metered into the machinery, experienced sugar boilers rarely measured their materials. Mrs Strutt recalls that her husband:

"never measured a thing, and his father never measured a thing. He used to get the glucose in his hand and just feel it and that was it."

Mr Hand similarly:

"I don't weigh anything when I make. I just judge it, it's not a thing to be proud of, it's just the way I've always done it."

The Strutts and Mr Hand both had their ingredients from the same range of suppliers: sugar from Tate and Lyle or the British Sugar Corporation, and flavouring oils from Bush, Boake and Allen, or Underwood and Barker at Basildon. The particular supplier at any time would depend on price.

The glucose was supplied in liquid form. Mrs Strutt remembers the big barrels being wheeled through the shop, while Mr Hand has now moved to bulk supply:

"We used to buy that at one time in little half hundredweight buckets, polythene buckets. You got 40 buckets to the ton, and consequently you were overrun with these buckets for the end product. But we've graduated now, we have them in 6 cwt drums, but instead of having a 6 cwt drum delivered everytime, we keep the drum, there's four of them, and they come in a tanker and they pump it in like petrol."

At times the mix in a boiling goes astray, Mr Hand again:

"If I'm making I'm always picking ... it pays dividends sometimes because when I was at Mascot's once I made a batch of cough candy. And it all went through beautifully and it had a nice gloss to it, and the twist was all terrific, and I just happened to pick up a piece and try it, and I'd put in pear flavour instead of aniseed!"

The legend that sweet factory workers could eat as much as they like held true at Bonds, originally in Wadley Road, Leytonstone. Mrs Hartley recalls:

""You could eat as many as you like there" he said, "as long as you don't take any out." You could eat as much as you like of the sweets until you feel sick. We got used to it after a while. When we got a new line in we were all eating it to see what it was like." Leave some as samples for the reps," he said, "there won't be anything left for them to eat. If I catch any of you taking them out Gawd help you." I said we didn't need to, we got two pounds every week, we didn't need to take any out."

Mr Strutt used chocolate in fairly small quantities, according to his wife:

"He used to flavour the chocolate ice, so it used to be chocolate and white ice, half and half. And of course he had to pay for that chocolate powder, and if we ran out I used to go out and buy a tin of Cadbury's chocolate, you know, cocoa really..."

Mr Hand's use of chocolate increased during his many years in the business.

"A lot of things now we cover in chocolate, whereas in the old days I didn't used to cover in chocolate. So much so that in the early 60s, I used to make up a hundredweight of peanut toffee, and I used to ship it down to a shop in London who did some chocolate work and he used to cover it in chocolate for me. And I was so naive at that time, I didn't realise, he was only sort of hand-dipping it, 'cos I didn't know anything about chocolate, it was fear of the unknown!

"But since then, I learned that I can handle chocolate.....I do my own. I used to cover it by hand, and then from there two years ago I bought an "enrober." That is a small head where the actual chocolate flows down like a curtain fall, then it goes on a conveyor belt, you've got about thirty foot of conveyor belt, goes through a refrigeration unit, so when it comes out you put things like a bar of coconut ice through, or peanut toffee or dates, apricots, anything, you put it through this....And when it comes out, it's completely set and you can pack it. That's a chocolate enrober. I bought that from Denmark. That's the most expensive thing I've ever bought in my life."

The centres of chocolate sweets were many and various, Mrs Hartley remembers making jam and boiled centres at Bonds:

"They used to do the jams, because I said to him [a manager at the factory] "I reckon I ought to get a rise." He said "Why?" "You've got Hartley's jam in your sweets." He said "I never thought of that." I used to make it in big buckets, it was apple pulp flavourings and colourings. A big copper pan, it used to take 40lbs at a time. I used to tip it into buckets then when it got cool, carry it down and lift it up in the cupboard according to what flavour they were, I used to put the different

lines in the cupboard. Percy Clark [one of the other workers in the factory] only used to do the essence work. He used to get them every night and put them in the ovens to warm up for the next day."

Other centres Mrs Hartley made were:

"Almond, nut walnut and mint toffee liquorice: all different kinds of centres for the sweets. They used to come and take the trays, what they wanted for the next day and put them in their oven. I'd have a list to make for the next day.

Nutrock, basically peanuts in a boiled sweet, was a staple product for most makers. Mrs Hartley recalls at Bonds:

"When I finished doing centres, you do centres two or three times a week according to what they want, then you used to go on to nutrock. You do so many boils a day. It worked out say half an hour a boil. While you're doing one boil you got another one on the go. And you put your sugar and water in, steam that up and put your thermometer in [until] it's a certain temperature. Then you add your nuts and a little bit of salt. With all that in then you get your slab all oiled up ready, and you stick it on to the slab and level it all out, then its cuttable without sticking. You get the cutter and cut it like it's a rolling pin, backwards and forwards into slices. Then cut it the other way into about sixteen inch bars. Then when it's done you just break it off, knock it on the side of the bench into bars then wrap it in wax paper and put it into trays. Then you take it to the packing room and they used to pack it."

Mr Strutt made rather smaller amounts, as his wife recalls:

"He used to enjoy making I think, and he used to make the nut rock very quickly. He'd say "Oh, I'll make some nutrock, we're running short of nutrock," just like that. His nutrock was good, because you can get different grades of peanuts, but he always had the best. And he used to believe in that for everything."

Another classic boiled sweet is the bullseye. Making these involved quite a lot of work as Mrs Hartley describes.

"I hadn't been there long when they put me in the boiling room with Mr Stewart who was going to do bullseyes. I said "How do you get the black and white stripe?" "You do that with a paintbrush!" I said, "A paintbrush?" He said "Yes, I'll show you." He tipped the boil out and cut it in half, when it had settled [he put] the black in one and nothing in the other one. He put the flavours in, and he rolled the black one up. You roll it out and twist it round, and roll it out again like a sausage. The other one, you have to do it with white colouring. And you put the two together like that, keep cutting them till you get black and white lines all along. Then you lay it out and put the centre in, like a soft centre. You roll that round like a big sausage, then put it in the machine.... Then cutters at the other end cut them like bullseyes."

Getting a colourless sweet involved more extreme measures, Mrs Hartley again:

"He [Mr Stewart] said "I want you to go over to Mantle's (a local grocery shop at 24 Wadley Road) to get me two Reckitt's Blues." [Usually added to laundry as a whitener.]

I said "What do you want Reckitt Blues for?" So he said "To put in the sweets." I said "It's poison!" So he said "No it's not, someone's led you up the garden." So I went and got these Reckitt Blues. I said to one of the girls, Mr Stewart wants Reckitt Blues, what's he want them for?" She said "I don't know." I came back and he said "Break one up and put it in that jar and melt it down, and put that in it." So I said "What's it for?" He said "When I do clear mints, mints is yellow and I put that blue in and it brings them up like your mother's washing." And I went home and said to Mum "Don't eat clear mints, they put Reckitt's Blue in it."

"They come up beautiful. Only just a little splash. One of them lasts about two or three weeks, dip it in and it goes clear white. Of course I don't suppose they use Reckitt's Blues now."

The commonest black sweet was liquorice which was melted and manipulated like everything else. One day Mrs. Hartley's boss said:

""You know what that is? That's liquorice. I want you to break that all up and put that in that pan and cover it with water and keep stirring it until it all melts."

Rock was another popular sweet. Mrs Lane remembers her father making peppermint and pineapple rock, but lettered rock, though it was sometimes manufactured in the area, was usually made to be sold at the seaside - its traditional home. Perhaps this was because rock-making was seen to be a reserved and traditional craft. Local sweet makers would prefer to concentrate on other lines rather than on making time-consuming lettered rock. Mr Hand again recalls:

"I know the fundamentals of how to do it but I've never personally done it. Once you get a rockmaker, he stays a rockmaker. You wouldn't start making say a hundredweight of cough candy or a hundredweight of coconut ice. He solely does rock and when he does the rock he only does the building up of the lettering. Someone else would tip the boil."

At Bonds Mrs Hartley recalls a Mr Macintosh:

"We used to call him Mac. He used to do the rock with names in it. He used to say, "What name shall I put in this one?" We used to say a big long one, you know with about six or seven letters in it. "I can't put that in here," he said, "I only want a little name." So we used to say Ivy or Dot or something short like that. Then we'd say a big long one and I said, "Put it in longways."

"But that was interesting to watch him do that, I couldn't do that myself. You get the pink toffee on first, then you get the white pinky colour, then you get the dark pink. Then you fit it all in like a jigsaw puzzle, roll it up and when it came up read the name inside. Professional."

Sweet making was also prevalent in very small family-run firms. Mrs Lane's parents made sweets in the home, and as a child she too was involved:

"When the sweets were cool they had to be wrapped and they were wrapped in this greasy sort of paper. But they were all wrapped by hand, no machine. We wrapped them in the evening, we wrapped them in the mornings, any time we wrapped sweets. You didn't sit and do nothing you wrapped sweets or toffee apples or whatever, or you packed peanuts.

Mr Hand's father made sweets from 1934 at his family house at 8 Selbourne Avenue, Walthamstow from 1934 - now demolished to make way for the new shopping centre. This was a typical terraced house where his son Terry was born. Mr Hand later worked with his father and one of their specialities was toffee apples.

> "We were actually making, not sweets as such, but toffee apples, that's an attraction in itself. You can actually see the toffee being boiled up, you see the sugar going in the pan, you see the glucose going in the pan, it's being boiled up, and the apples actually being dipped; even today I would say it would be a novelty for somebody to see... 'cos people today don't know how you get the toffee round the apples. I get people even today come up to me and say to me, "I wonder if you can help me, I made some toffee apples, and I can't get the toffee to stick to the apples, can you tell me how I'm going wrong?" Well, I always just say, "use stronger drawing pins!" but, you're obviously not going to tell them ... I know where they're going wrong, but you're not going to tell them, you see!"

Toffee apples are still sold in the market in Walthamstow High Street, but more recently they have appeared only in the cold winter months. Between the wars they could be bought at several stalls and shops all year round. Mrs Lane pointed out another difference:

> "Toffee apples weren't made like the great big toffee apples we know today. They were those little Beauty of Bath apples, very small.

Mrs Strutt saw her husband choosing his apples:

> "He used to buy the best apples and he always used to wipe every one; he always used to say,

> "Well, I wouldn't eat an apple without wiping it." He used to go up the High Street. He knew the people up there ... and they used to supply him."

Strutt's had a very long history of making toffee apples - Mrs Strutt again:

> "For about 100 years. I used to remember when I was first going with him and he was on the stall at the Bakers Arms, they used to come home and make toffee apples, and run back to the Bakers Arms. They always sold very well. [See photograph.]

Mrs Strutt recollects that her husband's grandfather:

> "... started making sweets at Hackney Wick in a house. They used to make the sweets at the back of the house, used to sell it from the window.. the open window of the shop. And then they came to live in Markhouse Road when the shop was first built, they moved into it new. And then it didn't close until it was nearly a hundred years old."

The Strutts had no-one else to help in the business outside the family, and often they closed the shop while Mrs Strutt helped her husband twist the cough candy or carry out other two person jobs. Mr Strutt made the sweets on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, running a stall in the market on Thursdays. The smallness of the business did at times pose problems:

> "When my husband went into hospital my son had never made sweets before, but he went into hospital to see his dad, and he asked him, you know, about how to make it. But he really made it very well, everybody thought how lovely it was. He didn't make all the lines, he helped us out."

CHAPTER 2 - WHICH SORT?

For those children with very little pocket money there were still sweets to buy. As Sylvia Hill explains, it could lead to difficult decisions:

> "Very rarely did we get sweets. I used to get a halfpenny a week pocket money, which I could buy sweets with if I wanted, or save it towards my holiday. It was an agonising choice! If I did buy sweets they were Tom Thumb mixtures, because you got hundreds of these in a bag for a halfpenny. They used to last quite a long time, eating them one at a time, tiny little balls of sugar".

Most local sweet manufacturers made stickjaw which was always very popular, especially with children. As Mrs Lane explains about the sweets she and her friends took to school:

> "Stickjaw was the thing that we took most of all ... and seemed to like most of all, perhaps because it lasted longer than anything else".

As its name implies it was a very chewy toffee. Mr Hand can remember his parents making it at home, in Walthamstow before the Second World War:

> "We call it coconut flake, that's the upgraded name. They used to call it stickjaw which is primarily coconut toffee. The reason they call it stickjaw is because once you've got it in your mouth and start chewing it, it's like chewing gum, they couldn't move. The reason it is like that is it was such a low boiling, it wasn't brittle but chewy".

Mr Hand remembers another coconut confectionery - one that he still makes:

> "Coconut ice is where we pride ourselves. If

> anyone asks me "What's the best thing you make?" I will say my coconut ice. Anybody can make coconut ice I would say, but it's the method for coconut ice I'm proud of".

Mrs Lane's father had a sweet factory in Cann Hall Road, Leyton and he also made coconut ice:

> "That was 8d a slab, and I think that was a pound slab".

Mrs Lane also remembers another strangely named confection:

> "Hokey cokey was the lemonade stuff. He [the Hokey Cokey man] used to have a wooden box about 18" long and about 10" deep on a leather strap round his neck. And you would go and buy this toffee. Hokey cokey I suppose you'd call it. It was a stranded toffee like candy floss today but a much coarser strand. And whether he made it before he came out or whether he had a little machine in the box I'll never know. But you only got a little tiny piece for 1/2d. He would turn the cone like that ... it was just a paper cone ... [and the toffee] melted like candy floss ... it was delicious".

Another delicious product was cough candy, a hard orange or brown boiled sweet. Mr Hand explains that it was often confused with a similar flavoured sweet, Horehound candy:

> "They'd say cough candy please, and you'd give them cough candy which is a boiling, orange in colour; and they'd say "No, I don't want that, this is off." And what they'd want is Horehound Candy, and that is coconut ice mix, sugar and glucose, taken to the same
> temperature as coconut ice but it's got no coconut in it, it's got aniseed flavour added. So it's

literally a cough candy, soft. Eats like coconut ice. You can't buy it today, no-one bothers to make it, not down here. I don't know if they might do up north. I've made it the odd time, but unless it's the old people, the new generation don't know what it is. The old people [know it as] soft cough candy but the actual name of it is Horehound Candy. Back in the old days, the '30s and '40s, they sold a lot of it".

Toffee with nuts in it was also very popular before the war. Mrs Lane remembers making it:

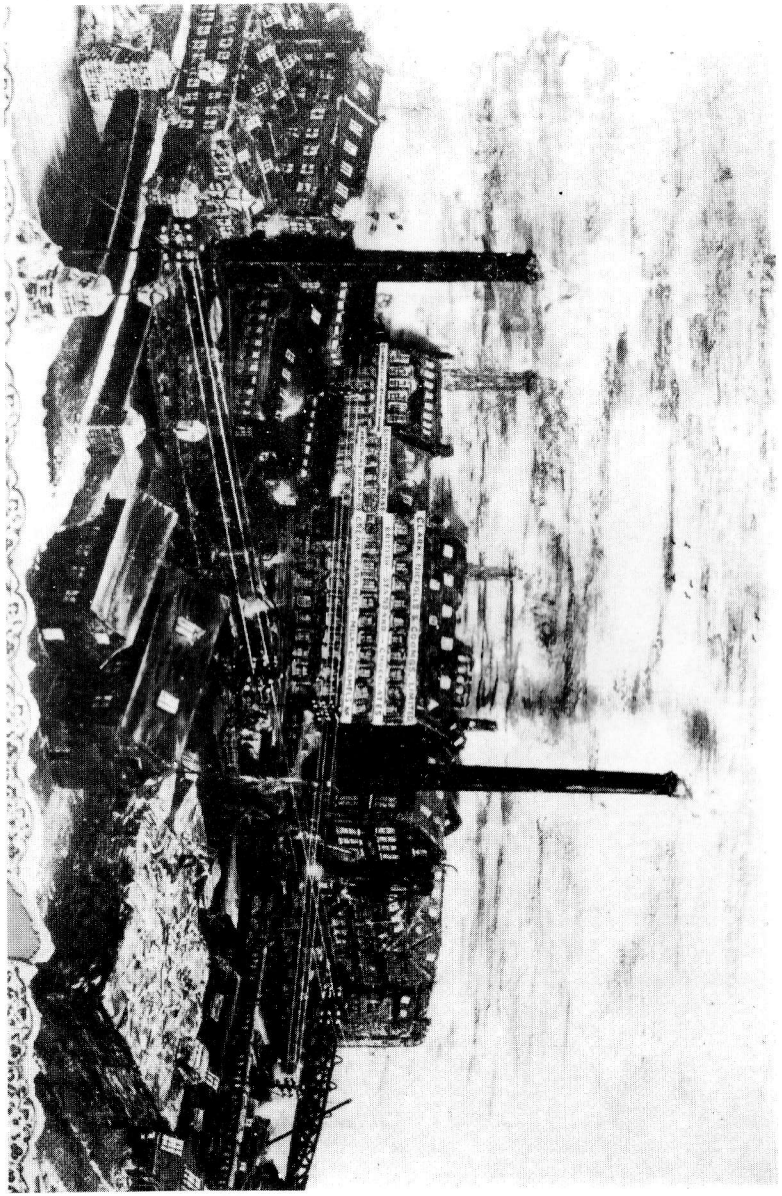
"Lucona toffee was a very well known one. It was made in flat tins that we make sponges in now and in that was Brazil nuts, walnuts, peanuts and hazel nuts. That was a soft toffee that wasn't brittle but soft and creamy and was very nice. After it had been out in the tins it had to be shaped off round the tins. We were allowed to eat as much of that as we wanted".

Peanuts were also used in a toffee invented by a man named Jack Stewart with whom Mr Hand used to work at Mascots's. Mr Hand again:

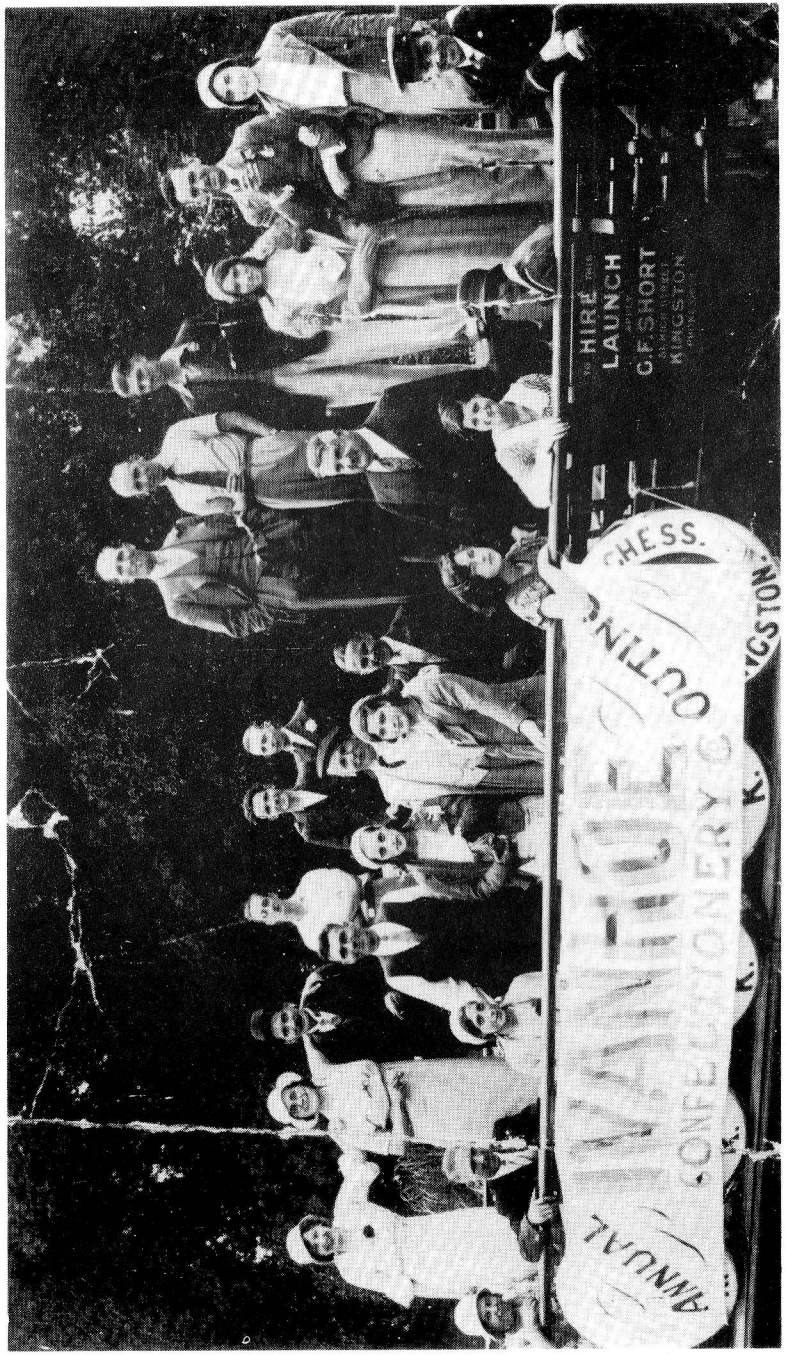
"I remember Clarke coming out and saying that he was looking for a line, something different and Jack Stewart came up with this "Golden Nut Crunch". It's a peanut toffee with a difference - the difference is that you can't make a lot of it.

"I think it's about 28lbs you could only make at a time ... but it outstripped any other line, because whenever we made more of it they used to put it in these jars, and it used to fly out; so much so that after that he got a couple of chaps in just to make this "Golden Nut Crunch" all the time".

Mr Hand can recall another popular sweet called



This model of the Clarnico factory at Hackney Wick was made by a deaf and dumb employee in 1896 and was constructed entirely out of marzipan. It gives a good impression of the enormous size of the factory. Photograph loaned by Mrs. Worstencroft.



Ivanhoe and Co.'s annual outing on the Thames at Kingston, c.1933. Staff outings were a regular feature at this sweet factory. "Grandpa" Bond is pictured in the centre wearing a beret. His son Arthur is wearing shirt-sleeves and a tie on the back row.
Photograph loaned by Mrs. Hartley.

Mascot's Special:

> "It was a concocted colour after you put the brown sugar in. Everything went in it: aniseed, peppermint, clove, every hot flavour you could imagine went in and menthol too".

Mrs Strutt remembers another kind of difficult choice people had to make, which toffee or sweet to have. They got round this:

> "Well, they used to have our home made, they would ask for "A pound of mixed." A pound of Strutt's mixed, see?

There were other home made sweets too, like Tiger Nuts, acid drops, humbugs, peppermints, clove and acid sticks, lemonade powders, raspberry tynes and aniseed balls. On sale beside the locallymade toffees and sweets were the nationally-known brands. Mrs Colin used to own a confectionery shop in Hoe Street and stocked several well known brands:

> "Cadbury's, Rowntrees, MacIntosh's, Caley's. And we also bought up lots and lots of what were ostensibly throw-out chocolates, but weren't really. Chocolates had to be perfect, throw-outs were what they had put aside because it wasn't fit to put in a box; and obviously we sold them very cheaply. I remember Thorn's and toffee we used to sell called Riviera; I only remember that because regularly, every Friday, a man used to come in for a pound of "Ry-vera", and you know how little things stick in your memory; but I can't remember who made that, it was a very good firm. And then we had Callard and Bowser's stuff, Maynard's, especially their liquorice allsorts".

As can be seen from the photograph on the cover, some brands of chocolates which were brand leaders before the Second World War are still selling well today. Mrs

Colin points out:

> "All types of sweets were available. There may be new types now but there was Roses and Quality Street, we sold all those things before the war. I don't think there's a lot that's gone out of use today in the confectioners".

Mrs Strutt recalls one extremely good toffee she sold on her High Street stall:

> "That used to come from Walkers, Walkers Toffee. Well, we used to spend over .300 on an order of that toffee. It was wonderful...it used to be brazil toffee, walnut toffee, chocolate toffee and plain toffee and that was a very good sale on the stall".

Another good selling sweet at her stall and at the shop in Markhouse Road was Streamer's Nougat. Mrs Strutt continues:

> "It was well known everywhere, Streamer's Chocolate Nougat. They used to do the little nougat pieces and the slabs of chocolate nougat and that was a very good seller. We also used to get jellies off him. That came from Stratford but they were closed down because Mr Streamer, well I don't think his name was Streamer, but he was in his 90's and had had enough, you know".

Mrs Hill can recall selling large fancy boxes of chocolates and many loose ones:

> "I can remember the boxes. They had King George chocolates and Edward chocolates and they used to have a red ribbon on the corner and come over the other corner and it ended up with a bow. The boys had more money then. They used to buy their girls pound boxes. And we used to sell loose Milk Tray from a 14lb box.

> I can remember that. And there were all the rows of Turkish Delight and the hard caramels and the nuts, you know all in rows and perhaps you got someone come in and they would say "Well, can I have extra nut ones?" or "Can I have extra hard ones?". I don't think that there were many chocolates that were separate like today where you get half milk and half plain or all hard or all soft. I don't think they were like that. There were Terry's, we used to sell Terry's down there".

At Christmas time many sweet makers and sellers would add to their existing lines, specials which would be sold for the festive period only. Mrs Strutt remembers her father-in-law's speciality:

> "Years ago...they used to make the fancy walking sticks, you know...all the different coloured rocks. At the shop we used to sell boxes of chocolate but it seemed like at Christmas time people used to like a different variety, not a lot of chocolates, it was toffees".

Mrs Lane remembers helping make butter brazils:

> "Butter brazils were nice because you didn't buy the brazils already cracked like today. They all had to be broken first and they came in great sacks around Christmas time".

She also remembers other Christmas favourites at her family's sweet factory in Leyton.

> Toffee pears and grapes and pineapple, toffeed pineapple. That was fresh pineapple dipped in toffee. They were specials, just specials for Christmas time. (The grapes) were dipped in bunches. They were delicious, that was a speciality

... You'd bite your grape off and leave the twigs and suck the toffee off the twigs ... If people wanted those they were done while you waited. You might buy yourself a quarter pound of grapes and then come in and have them dipped in the toffee".

Mrs Lane again on another unusual speciality sweet:

"Sugar lumps. It was called sugar candy but we called it sugar lumps on a string. I don't know how it was made but ... you bought it by the string. And you chewed off your piece of sugar, toffee type sugar but it was more like opaque toffee really".

After the summer apples came the winter sweets, one speciality at Bonds Mrs Hartley recalls:

"We used to make cough sweets "Zills for Chills", used to have a brown and gold label on it. "Zills for Chills" used to be horrible to do, because fumes used to come up and make your eyes water, they were like a medicated sweet".

While Mrs Lane remembers:

"Cough candy and winter mixtures would come towards Christmas and raspberry tynes were a Christmas thing. Have you seen raspberry tynes? They're made of an icing compound like a fondant we would call it today, and that all had one hazel nut on the top and was shaped like a cherry - half a cherry shape. And they would have just the one hazel nut on top. Then they were shown in the window the way people put up apples these days. But they were all small sweets of course and they were loaded up in 7lbs. at a time these raspberry tynes, a speciality, they were delicious. They were a bit like the very expensive creams of today".

CHAPTER 3 - WORKING CONDITIONS.

The working conditions and standards of hygiene in the sweet-making factories were described to us by a number of local people. Mrs Diver worked at Clarnico's in the 1920s:

> "[We worked] 8.00 til 5.30 or 6.00, we had a lunch break. I think we got a cup of tea given to us in the morning, but I don't remember stopping, not the rules we have recently. It was brought round in a mug and if you hadn't drunk it by the time it was collected, you went without."

But it was not all hard:

> "They had a sports club where they used to go running: had a running team over Victoria Park."

Mrs Hartley worked at Bonds' Leytonstone factory, previously called Ivanhoe's, during the 1930's. It was:

> "A family concern, more or less. Grandfather we used to call him, grandad. Then there was Mr Arthur Bond, he was "Sonny", we called him "Sonny", but Mr Bond when we were polite. Then there was Peter the grandson, he's one of the heads now I should imagine.... There were about six sugar boilers, about one girl to each, probably twelve, so about 40 or 50 at the most. That's counting sugar boilers and youngsters, bottle washers and all the lot. It wasn't a very big place but we used to send out a good lot of stuff you know."

Being taken on at Bonds did not involve an interview for Mrs Hartley:

> "You didn't do like they do today you know.
>
> "They just asked you how old you were and if you'd worked anywhere else when you left school and what

> would you like to do. They'd take you round to show you the factory, ask you if want the job. He said "We'll take you on for a trial, see how you go". And they'd take you on. If they thought you were not satisfactory, they'd just tell you not to stay like, then they gave you your cards. And I wasn't told to go."

The hours Mrs Hartley worked were similar to Clarnico's.

In the 1950's Mr Hand worked at Mascot's in Walthamstow where on one occasion he had sick pay, of a kind. When he happened to meet the boss of the firm, a Mr Clarke senior, in the street:

> "Hello Terry, all right?" "I've done my shoulder in, Mr Clarke, I've pulled a muscle, I'm all right now I can start work again Monday" "That's good, when you come back take it easy, curb the lifting, take it easy". He was the only one gave me words of advice. And he said "Mr Clarke paid you?" "Oh" I said "no, I couldn't work this week"....And he took .3.00 from his pocket, he gave me three pounds, a week's money."

At this time about 20 people worked at Mascot's: four men, two boys and the rest women. Protective clothing was not supplied, instead:

> "Our apron was half of a 2 cwt sack, so one sack served two sugar boilers. We never used to have a white apron or a white coat."

Accidents were inevitable with the boiling vessels but mainly of a minor nature at Mascot's:

> "Burns, You'd always be having burns galore, and blisters; you'd get the boil spitting on your hands and that used to obviously cause a blister. But once again Jack (the foreman) used to come

along and burst the blister on your hand and .... he used to rub (tartaric acid) on to the bare skin to make it dry up quicker!"

Machinery then as now was a source of danger. At Bonds Mrs Hartley had problems:

"They put me on a machine cutting up licorice allsorts. I was making these others called custard tips, little creams inch and a half square. And I was doing these slabs. I caught my finger under the guilotine the knife come down after I shut it off. It cut across that finger. You can't see it now but I did have a scar then. So of course when I came back the boss said to me " How did you get on Read?" (Because they didn't call you by your Christian name.) So I said "They couldn't stitch it because it cut through the nail". He said "We want custard tips not finger tips!"

The work in sugar boiling is hard and took its toll. Mr Hand speaks of his father:

"The sugar used to be delivered at one time I can remember in 2 cwt, and of course he used to lift these. Nuts came in the same way - 2 cwt sacks. He tore his lung lifting something wrongly, he tore his lung at some time or another and he was never the same since. And asthma set in... in 1948 he was finished, and I used to go downstairs and help him make, assist him in doing a bit of lifting."

At Bonds there was the opportunity to move to less physically demanding work, Mrs Hartley recalls. From making doing her own boiling on sweet centres and nutrock, she moved to helping in the boilings, and then to lighter work:

"The foreman said he thought it was getting too much for me so he gave me a light job on the dipping. But I didn't like that so much because you

were standing all the time. One thing you got a lot of burns, always got burns, burns or wasp bites, plenty of them."

Clarnico's at Hackney had a local doctor who saw staff, but Mrs Diver's memory of him is mixed. Going home she had fallen on the iron footbridge across the Lea by the factory; the following day she went to work:

"They sent me to a doctor that was on the bend of Sidney Road (now called Kenworthy Road), a little surgery. I can't remember his name but he was Clarnico's doctor, everybody got sent to him. He always smelt of beer. And I went and told him, so and so "Oh, that's alright". So I said "do I use it?". He said "Yes, that's alright"."

But a couple of years later she had an X-ray, the bone had been broken and had to be broken again and reset:

As with any food production sweet makers were visited by the Public Health Inspectors, although for Mrs Diver not frequently enough:

"I don't think the inspectors were invented in those days, I'm sure they weren't...."

In a factory by the river rats were a major problem, attempts were made to catch them but were not completely successful:

"You'd look and there was a rat running down. They never attacked you or anything, but we did say, "They'd chew the leg off the chair before they're finished". You could hear them,
"I think that was what turned me off."

Mrs Hartley also came across rodents:

"They used to put all the waste from coconut ice and all that sort of stuff (into a barrel) and they

asked me to put some of this into a pan... I put my hand in this barrel and there were these little pink mice in there."

The boilings did produce smells:

"People used to say all round about that they knew what was being made that day, they could smell it. They used to come in the shop and say "oh, we know what you've made today."

Mr Hand remembers the precautions the Public Health Inspectors insisted on before they could make ice cream.

"They used to come and inspect the refrigerator where we used to keep the ice cream, and in fact those stalls (see photo section) that was the Public Health's idea after the war when we said we were going to start selling it. When my Dad said he was going to sell Dicky Bird's ice cream, that was when Public Health stepped in and said this is what we require, and all they emphasised was three sides covered, washing facilities and insulated cabinet to hold the ice cream, that was all that was required. And they were more strict with the ice cream than they were with sweets, I suppose because of the milk content. I can remember going to the hospital not for myself but mother did and having a blood test to make sure everything was all right."

CHAPTER 4 - DISTRIBUTION AND SELLING

Confectionery products, whether made at home or in a large factory, have to be transported to the place of sale and displayed to attract customers. Mr Hand describes the packing of the standard sweet jars:

"At that time the wrapped boilings weren't just shot loose into a 7lb. jar or a 5lb. jar; the women used to have to 'face' the jar. They used to lay a jar down first, and get a sweet, and lay them in one at a time. So the face was all sort of regimental sweets; and then throw the others in the back; and when they took the jar up you've got a faced jar, with all the sweets facing out, all facing the same way, put in by hand. And behind the jar they were shoddy and loose; and then you've got the label in front of that, and then they used to put a clear film over this label, to protect the label when it got to the shop. And that was high--class boilings; I know it was high class, because it was 8d a quarter; and that was expensive!"

At Bonds Mrs Hartley remembers:

"The reps used to come in every Monday and pick up their samples. And they came back on Fridays and gave their orders they had taken. They'd be delivered the next, following week."

Bonds used their own vans for delivery:

"Big navy blue vans with gold letters on the side, "Bonds of London". Oh yes, they had about three big vans, two small ones, they used to go quite a way out."

Mrs Driver remembers that at the Clarnico factory in the 1920s:

"They had horses in those days. My aunt's husband was a horse keeper to Clarnico's horses.

Clarnico's delivered to the wholesalers with horses."

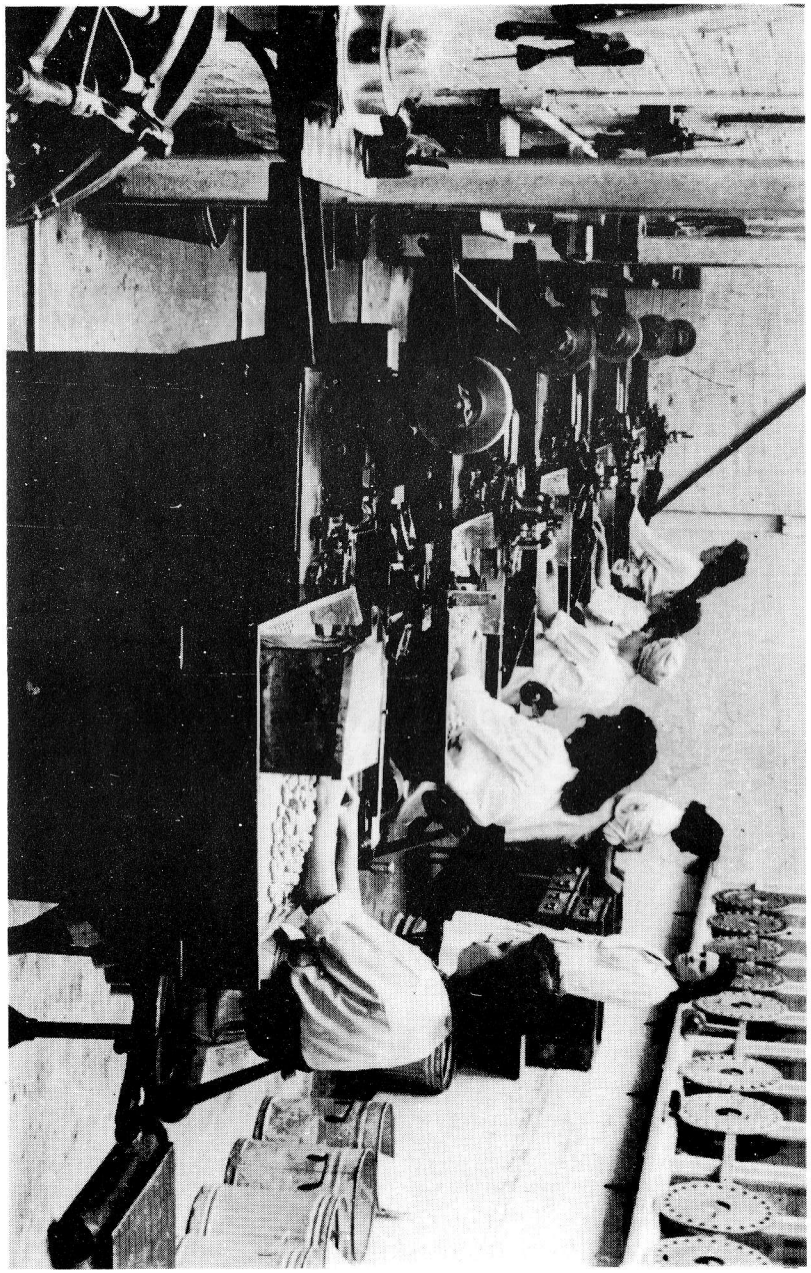
Terry Hand, recalling where he started work in the early 1950s told us:

> "Mascot's sold wholesale, they had three vans on the road. And they would deliver throughout London and I would say within a good 100 mile radius of Walthamstow. They had vans and reps on the road. It was all under Mascot's own label."

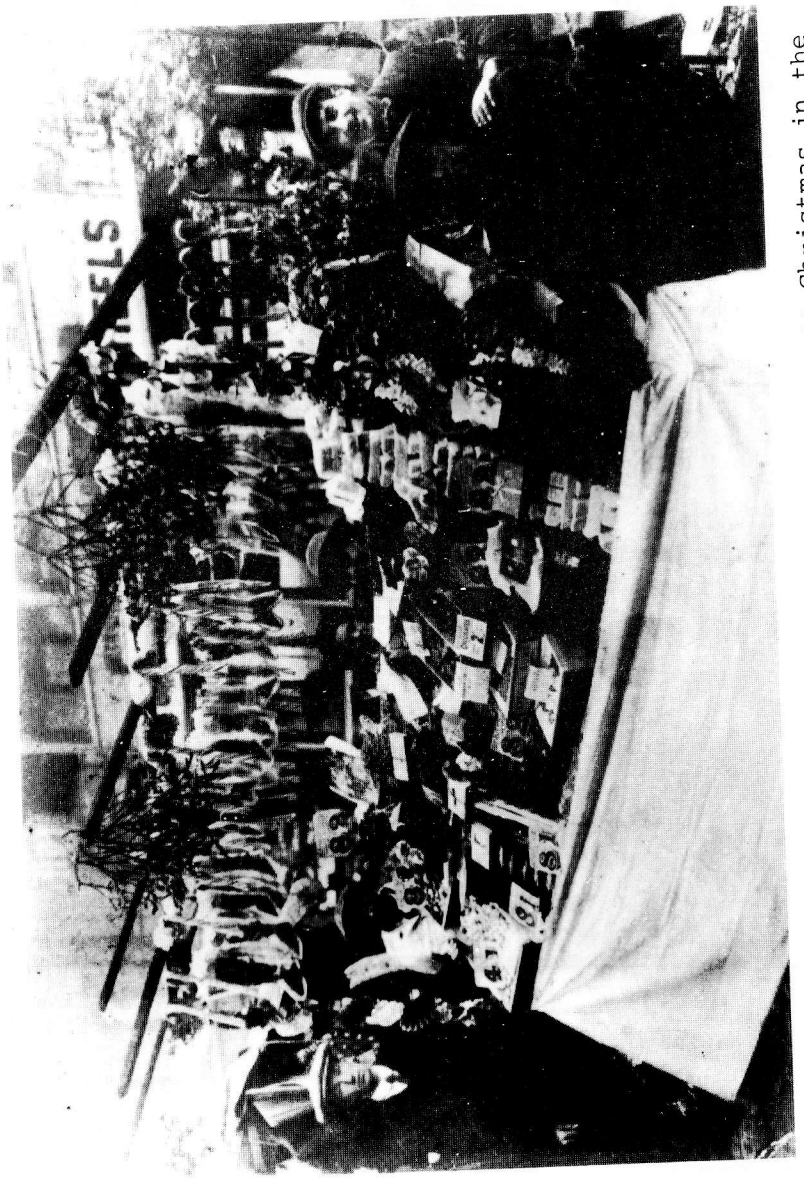
For the really small sweetmakers, delivery to the point of sale was a straightforward, if energetic, business. Mrs Strutt recalls that products were made behind the family's sweetshop in Markhouse Road, between the wars and were pushed on a barrow to the stall at the Bakers Arms. In a similar vein, Mr Hand remembers how as a teenager, one of his many jobs was to carry trays and tins of sweets from his father's house in Selbourne Avenue to the stall in the High Street.

As today, shops and stalls selling sweets varied from high class and specialist to the outlets selling cheaper sweets and often other things too. One interviewee gave us a vivid description of her father's shop:

> "It was a large square shaped shop, with green linoleum on the floor and a waist-high counter around three sides of the available space. The left hand side of the shop was decorated with a great variety of confectionery, with a long row of jars behind a brass rail fixed to the counter. Boxes of loose chocs and sweets "displayed on shelves at the back of the serving space and with the extreme corners of the counter given over to an array of small boxes of the cheaper kind of confectionery items much loved by the children, who would flock in on the way to the local school whenever they had a halfpenny or even a farthing to



Sweet wrapping machines at Bond's factory in Wadley Road, Leytonstone, c. 1950. Originally called Ivanhoes the firm was owned by the Bond family who changed the name shortly after the end of the Second World War. Photograph loaned by Mrs. Hartley.



Strutt's sweet stall at the Baker's Arms, Leyton, one Christmas in the 1920's. Mr. Strutt Snr. is on the far left; his wife is in the centre. Note the seasonal display with mistletoe and stockings filled with sweets. Photograph loaned by Mrs. Strutt.

spend. There were gobstoppers, liquorice skipping ropes, sherbert dabs, sweet cigarettes, chocolate animals and coconut squares, flavoured chews and packets of chewing gum, to mention just a small sample of the collection."

This shop also sold cigarettes, loose tobacco, cheap toys, stationery, fireworks and soft drinks as well as:

> "odd items such as cuff links and elastic bands which appear to have had a rather slow rate of sale."

The shopkeeper evidently gave much thought to displaying and advertising his stock:

> "The windows contained jars of sweets and many little dishes with heaps of milk gums, liquorice allsorts and jelly beans. There were also dummy boxes of chocolates and advertisements for the many different bars of confectionery available inside. These windows were looked after on a regular basis, by a window dresser who used to come along with ribbons and boxes of long pins to suspend and juggle with the dummy boxes and to display them in

the window as artistically as may be."

Other local people remember different methods of display and selling. Mrs Hill recalls:

> "We used to have a window that was the width of the shop, nine feet, and we used to have perhaps three feet of it with boxes of sweets, like you opened the box, cardboard boxes about 12 inches wide and about 9 inches wide: sherbert dabs, banana splits, milky bars, and all different sorts of things like that. The children used to look in that window ... I think they were all about 1/2d something like that."

Mrs Lane recalls an earlier era when most sweets were sold loose:

> "The front of the shop was divided into sections as the greengrocers divide the displays. And there were boards like a triangular shaped board set up. So that you had the lowest part at the front of the window and as far as I can remember it wasn't chamfered up, so that only a small layer of sweets were on top - pounds of sweets went into each display. So the sweets were loaded in by hand one or two at a time until they were all loaded into the window. And that really did take a lot of time and a lot of patience. Sweets weren't sold from the window "until they were, I would presume, some days old and then they were sold as seconds or something .. misshapes I think they were called. Because by that time the sun had got a few of them.
>
> "Well they weren't wasted because they sold quite well. They were sold in larger amounts you see, probably mixed together and put into a bag. Each of the sweets were put into the window. And the coconut candy and all the candies were sort of loaded up criss-cross in the windows as well. They were sold from the windows."

As well as selling loose sweets and boxes of quality chocolates, at least one shop used a display which customers then wanted to buy:

> "Mum used to have these what you call clock sets. They were a shaped clock in, a paisley patterned tin with two end pieces, and an open lid at the top and they were just perhaps 6 inches square all the way down and about 12 inches high and they were all filled with sweets in perhaps cellophane packets and inside the clock they had a little door at the back and all these packets of sweets were packed in these ... When they came in the women who lived near used to say "Oh, I'll have that set when it's empty" and I think they used to be 5/- a set and they used to pay perhaps 1/- a week off that. Then you would see it on their mantel piece wouldn't you."

Mrs Colin was proud of her husband's displays, in their shop where the Arcade now runs between the High Street and Hoe Street:

> "My husband had wonderful ideas about bringing trade. He really should have been something much better, but he came from a poor family. "At the time when we first went in, we didn't have much in the way of shop window, but eventually we had the whole front of the shop altered. I can remember, it must have been in the early 1930's, when Shirley Temple made a film called "The Good Ship Lollipop", and opposite to us was the Carlton cinema where it was showing. We had given us as a wedding present a [model] boat. I used to dust it, and my husband put it in the centre of the window, and hung it with lollipops."

At the quality end of the confectionery trade shops would stock more expensive items and sell fewer, or no, locally-made products. Mrs Hill's father moved to such a shop in Lea Bridge Road:

"It must have been 1936 when we moved there. It was a shop called "Babby's", a high class confectionery and tobacconists, big boxes of chocolates which sold very well. He sold confectionery and tobacco, no newsagents, no just that. He bought all the stock. They had all proprietary brands, chocolates and cigarettes you know, good class there was there. It was a nice shop."

Traditionally, small shops have often been open for long hours, and sweet shops - especially when they sold a range of items - were no exception. Mrs Hill recalls:

"That shop was open morning till night, I think 8 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock at night, all day. All day Sunday as well. Seven days a week. Long hours. Christmas day they used to shut from 12 till 2 and then there were people banging on the door wanting something. They've run out, they forgot their stuffing or forgot their custard or something like that you know."

At Mrs Strutt's shop at 57 Markhouse Road, where only confectionery, soft drinks and cigarettes were sold, long hours were worked both at making and selling, and the family also had a High Street stall to run. Mrs Strutt told us that the shop stayed closed on Mondays, and occasionally on other days too, without too much concern about lost custom:

"If we wanted to go out we used to close the shop in the week, because our people would come back to us. We had plenty of holidays, we always closed for our holiday."

Terry Hand's father Mr Edward Hand was primarily a sugar boiler and a market trader, but together with his wife rented a shop in Canvey Island for three summers between 1946 and 1948. Here the family sold buckets and spades, ginger beer and various types of

confectionery; lettered rock made by a firm called Grosvenor in Southend, toffee apples made on a Primus stove outside the shop, and the full range of sweets made at, and brought from, Selbourne Avenue, Walthamstow. This meant a complicated lifestyle for the family:

"Mum and Dad used to take it in turns. Dad used to stay up here [in Walthamstow] and make it and Mum would be down at the shop with me; I'd be on the Island with her. And he would work the High Street, probably with a friend; and then he used to pack up on Saturday night and he used to get the train from Walthamstow Station, straight through to Benfleet, and be there for the Sunday, which was a busy day, at the coast. Any ice cream he had left over from the High Street, he used to put that in a trike, put it in the guard's van, and take it down."

Eventually Mr Hand Snr bought a van:

"but my Dad never drove, so he had to get a friend to drive. He bought a Bedford van, a 5 cwt van, and he used to take it down to Canvey Island, the finished product. Once again, in these biscuit tins, loose sweets to sell in the shop."

Terry Hand recalls that the shop did good business:

"Being a retail shop on the Front, '46 to '48, from what I can remember, whatever there they put out they sold, because people had gone without everything for so long. It was the first years after the war, I mean, they were still trading at 12 o'clock at night; the whole of the precinct was full of lights, and I can remember seeing people on the wall, and it would be 12 o'clock midnight, and they were just going mad."

Proximity to the seaside, or any place of

entertainment, has always been good for the confectionery trader. Mrs Driver told us that some time after leaving Clarnico's, she went to work for a Mr Green in a sweetshop next to the Savoy Picture Palace in Lea Bridge Road: [See photograph.]

"I started off working there Sunday afternoons when we first moved here. I was working from half past two till half past five for the Sunday afternoon cinema. And then Mr Green said you can work Saturday morning because they'd started doing the children's Saturday morning scheme then."

Mrs Colin remembers the stampede in her shop when the cinema emptied:

"The trouble was that on Saturday mornings, one of the shops was right next to the Granada,

"and the other one in the High Street. The youngsters used to go to the cinema on a Saturday morning. We had to be ever so careful because they were such thieves. And although perhaps there'd be two or three of us selling, it was still difficult because we had two counters, the tobacco side was one side and the confectionery the other and then right in the centre of the shop we had great big show cases, with boxes of chocolates on display; and that was something we had to watch out for. And every Saturday morning they'd come in with a rush, so really you couldn't control it."

Usually however, sweetshops have welcomed children and their pocket money, and Mrs Williams' in Vallentin Road was no exception:

"I would ask for a ha'penworth of Palm toffee which she would break up for me with a little toffee hammer. I'm sure she used to give me more than I was entitled to and, after a time, she understandably protested that she could no longer supply me. Either I would have to have a whole

pennyworth or choose something else. Since I rarely had more than a ha'penny to spend, I reluctantly opted for coconut chips - thin slices of coconut, some white and some pink, dipped in sugar. They were nice but I missed my Palm toffee!

The storage and freshness of goods could cause headaches for confectioners. Loose sweets and anything containing chocolate are affected by temperature and can easily spoil. Mrs Hill remembers the large glass jars of loose sweets:

"You were left with perhaps about three inches of sweets and you dug and dug into it with this, like an ice pick and in the end you had to wash it all out with boiling water because it just stuck and it wasn't any good. I suppose good selling sweets didn't go like that but if you had a slow selling one, perhaps you had bulls-eyes or something like that, they just wasted I suppose."

Mrs Lane remembers the same problem, but a different solution:

"There were one set of boiled sweets that were made and they were powdered. Whether that was icing sugar or flour I do not know it looked the same to me. But they didn't stick in the jar. Because if they did stick in the jar, you would lose quite a lot of money because they would have to be sold cheaper. But the easiest way to unstick them was just to turn them upside down and bang the lid on the floor which I saw many times being done."

Mrs Strutt's family expected to do less business in the summer months:

"Well the trade used to go off when it was warm; it's never good, the sweet trade, when it's warm, never, but we used to do all right - that was the

time when we never used to make so much. There's plenty of fruit about, and ice cream, and all that kind of thing."

For the Strutt family, predicting the ups and downs in demand meant less wastage, and a good reputation locally:

"We never used to have any stale sweets. I mean, now they have a date on everything, but never had a date on things then. But I suppose because we had a good turnover, selling quickly, when we used to go home Saturday night, we didn't used to take a lot back with us! My husband used to have to make every week, so the home-made was fresh every "week."

Confectioners who did not make their own products could respond less quickly to changes in demand, but could still take steps to store produce carefully. Mrs Diver recalls that at Hunter's confectionery shop near Langthorne Hospital, the owner:

"... had a beautiful storeroom at the back. It was all done and made to the right temperature for keeping chocolate, because chocolate has to be kept at a certain temperature. And it was funny because someone did try to say "Oh, we bought this here and the chocolate's all funny, it must be stale". And I used to say "Well, come back this afternoon about two o'clock, Mr Hunter will be here." And if you've got the stockroom at the right temperature, no way are the chocolates going to be like that."

Local people must have decided for themselves which shops to avoid. We were told:

"There was a tiny sweet shop named Fage's beyond Collard Road (in Shernhall St). It was entered by stepping down into it from the street and was probably so old that it was built of wattle and daub. It sold all manner of cheap sweets in

ha'penny and penny titbits, all attractive to children, but mother feared that these were unwholesome and, after a time forbade us to patronise this shop."

Cheap sweets, mostly unwrapped and piled high, are the speciality of the market trader. Here the turnover would be so fast that the storage and freshness were not major problems.

Mrs Strutt started helping her future husband and his father on the family stall at the Baker's Arms in the 1930s. Later the stall moved to St James Street, Walthamstow and then to the High Street:

"By Liston's at the bottom of the High Street, Liston's drapers, and we used to be right outside. And then it became the Co-op down there, and we always stood outside there ... by Burton's, by the bottom of the High Street."

Strutt's stall sold sweets made by the family at the shop in Markhouse Road, also a few toffees and other items supplied by local firms. Mrs Strutt told us how the sweets would be brought to the stall, not only unwrapped but even uncut:

"We used to cut everything up on the stall, we used to have just those sticks and they used to be on the stall and you'd nip them on the stall. I've still got those cutters."

Sweets would then be weighed, before being put in a bag for the customer to take away:

"I think people used to like to see it weighed - they didn't like it in bags. I don't think it would have been a good stall if we'd bagged our sweets up. Don't matter who you talk to, nobody ever saw a bag of sweets on our stall!

Mrs Colin, Mrs Lane and others told us about the

variety of sweet shops and stalls in the High Street, and the competition between them. Mr Jones told us about his sales technique:

> "That was another job I had in the High Street, I used to auction chocolates you know ... one, two, three ... six packets of chocolates for so much. And there's another on the top, we used to sell them like wildfire."

Terry Hand and his wife still run a stall down Walthamstow High Street, selling sweets made by Terry and his sons in their small premises on Chingford Mount Road. Terry's father started making and selling in the 1930s:

> "Originally, the stall was outside Garvin's the butcher's shop, that was when he first started in '34. But then I would say during the war, he moved just across the road, to outside William Brothers, where it is now, and has been ever since."

Like Mr Strutt, Mr Hand Snr and his son would do the sweet-making between Monday and Wednesday and then run the stall on the market days of Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Their wives did much of the serving and selling, leaving plenty of other jobs for younger members of the family. Terry Hand told us:

> "I used to do, for want of a better word, the donkey work, all the fetching and carrying. I took the trays down to the stall and when they were finished it was my job to wash all down, you see, wash all the trays, wash all the stalls down, before I took the stall away, because I used to pull those stalls to where they are now."

After the Second World War, Mr Hand Snr bought a pair of specially made stalls on wheels, which could display and dispense both sweets and ice cream. The stall now sells sweets pre-packed in half-pound bags. Previously, however, everything was sold loose:

> "You could have, say, ten trays, and ten different varieties, say, and they used to come up and say "Can I have a quarter, or a half pound of all mixed?" And they would put cough candy in with coconut ice, and the nut rock in with the cough candies, or the coconut "flake in with the clove, never dreaming that ... you'd have a bit of coconut flake in your mouth, and it would taste of clove. But that's how they wanted it. But you'd be surprised people ask for that today ... the old people still come and say "Can I have a piece of everything in one bag?"

Mr Hand no longer uses the clippers and scales belonging to his father:

> "If you've got to start clipping and weighing it up, they don't want to know, you see, they're all on the hurry up. Whereas in those days, people would come up and spend sixpence ha'penny on cough candy, and stay there two hours jawing, having a chat ..."

Market and stall traders are known for their versatility. Mrs Jaggs told us about her father who turned his hand to anything that would pay:

> "You see these old people are very adept at business, to make a living. Now he had two stalls in Wood Street which the sons and daughters used to do. Then he had a wood round and creosote. Someone used to go round for him then. And he used to have another man come in and chop the wood for him. Then he used to do ice cream and toffee apples at weekends, and sell them at the street door."

Having the wood round meant that Mrs Jaggs' father could even supply his own sticks for the home-made toffee apples!

Terry Hand's father also made and sold his own toffee

apples in the traditional way. Terry told us how he himself had made some changes over the years:

> "I used to go to Spitalfields Market at three "o'clock in the morning, buy say 10 bushels of apples, come back, toffee say two or three bushels of them, end up with say 500 toffee apples, come straight back, go to the Avenue, toffee them, and then load up the van. I used to go and do the country markets, like Hoddesdon or Ware, taking the toffee apples I made that morning, and I did that all through the Sixties. I used to make them that morning, take them to the market and sell them. But as time went on and I got older, I got a bit wiser. I used to make them overnight, so that I wouldn't have to do this 3 o'clock in the morning stint. When I first started making them they were all unwrapped, you didn't wrap toffee apples, they were all loose, unwrapped; but as time went on, we graduated, put them in cellophane paper, you see."

By hard work, and an eye for the new openings, confectionery traders could do good business. Some were even involved in a type of 'mail order' system, as Mrs Strutt told us:

> "We used to send that mixed toffee everywhere. We had to send it to Africa once, we sent it to Australia, and we sent it to America. People used to write and ask us to send it. People have moved right away and I suppose wanted some home made toffee ... we sent it everywhere!

Mrs Lane remembers her father's pride in the stalls' takings:

> "As a child I can remember them coming home from the market stalls perhaps at midnight. And I can remember my father coming in many times with a long black cloth bag, and tipping it on to the table and it would be just full of sovereigns. Giving us a roll of notes and saying "Cop hold of that. You

probably won't "have as much money as this again." I don't suppose it was all his. But to us you know it was fabulous - we thought we were very rich. Bags full of sovereigns didn't ever keep one unfortunately!"

CHAPTER 5 - WARTIME AND RATIONING

During the Second World War sweets, along with many other foods were rationed. Mrs Diver recalls that:

> "There were so many points for sweets. Chocolate was very hard to come by and I don't think we ever saw more than an occasional box of chocolates. People couldn't afford them anyway. Chocolate really was a luxury and mostly you only got little tiny Nestles milk bars or chocolate buttons. Most parents kept their ration for their children's sweets because what you got didn't go far at all."

She also remembers that other forms of confectionery were no more readily available so:

> "You couldn't turn round and say we'll have boiled sweets as you get more of those."

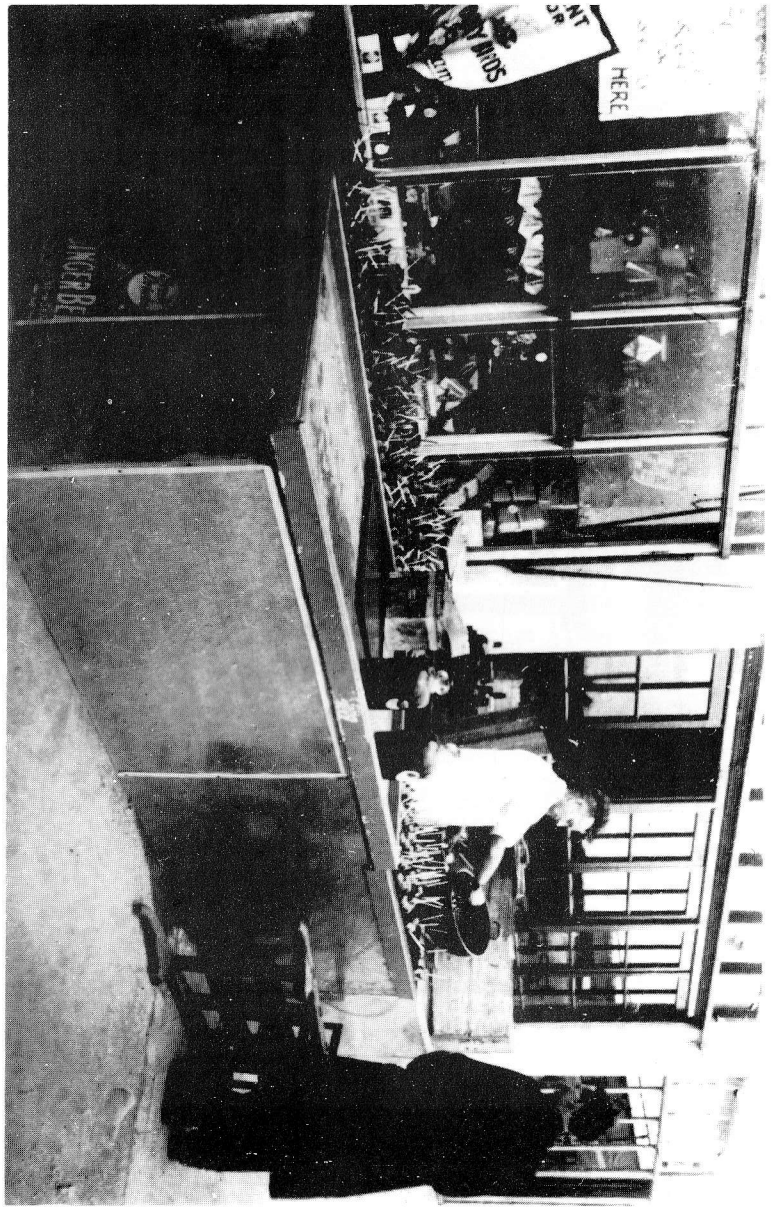
Because of this situation, no retailer kept their stock for very long. As Mrs Diver remembers:

> "People knew when you had your allocation in and they would all come in and spend the whole of their ration and your stock would go."

Terry Hand remembers that when his father used to sell toffee apples:

> "You had to sell them by weight, if somebody wanted three toffee apples you had to put three on the scales and take the appropriate coupons - "D" for 2oz, and "E" for 4oz. One of my jobs was to collect all the coupons at the end of the day because you had to send them back before they'd give you any more sugar."

This is a reminder that it was not only the retailers and their customers who felt the effects of rationing, but also the manufacturers. Terry Hand remembers that his father used to get:



Terry Hand's father Edward, making toffee apples at the family shop on Canvey Island, c.1948. The shop sold sweets made at Selborne Avenue, Walthamstow and "Dicky Bird's" ice cream from Blackhorse Road. Note the sign offering to exchange sweets for sugar.
Photograph loaned by Terry Hand.

Green's confectionery and tobacco shop at the junction of Church Road and Lea Bridge Road, Leyton in 1929. Mrs. Diver later worked here as a shop assistant.
Photograph from the Vestry House Museum Collection.

"A sugar allocation of a hundredweight a week which Tate and Lyle's used to deliver to him, [however] by the time you've added the glucose, that makes up nearly 1 1/2 cwt which still makes a lot of sweets."

Whilst Tate and Lyles's still managed to supply sugar, other ingredients had to be obtained from different sources. As Terry recalls:

"The flavourings, I think, came from Barnett and Fosters in Dalston, while the glucose came from Klumans."

In 1952 Mr Hand spent nine months at Mascot's melting down fondant.

"They couldn't buy sugar, since it was still on allocation, so they used to import fondant, which is sugar and glucose, that's all it is. And I used to melt that down, once its melted down into a syrup that's equivalent to having a panful of sugar, so you could actually make something with that."

Mrs Hartley also remembers using fondant at Bonds.

"After the war sugar was short for a long while. Fondant was hard and thick but it was very creamy. We used to use that instead of sugar."

However, manufacturers found other ways of obtaining smaller amounts of sugar. Mr Hand remembers that:

"Sometimes people would give us a pound of sugar, and we'd give them a pound of sweets in return, without exchanging coupons! We'd still take their money, but deduct the price of the sugar from what they owed us."

In this way, a sort of black market for exchanging rationed goods was set up:

"We'd take a pound of sugar for a pound of sweets and all this sugar began to pile up until it went back into making sweets. I'm not saying we made a habit of it though."

CHAPTER 6 - ICE CREAM

"Do you remember Dicky Bird's ice cream, he used to come round with his old blue cart?"

asked Rose Brims, continuing:

"I can remember, 3d they used to be. I mean we didn't very often have 3d. I think it was Fro-joy, it was a choc ice on a stick. That was one of the best ice creams with chocolate you could buy. To get one of them you know is really good. I remember him peddling round in his old blue cart."

Terry Hand's parents worked for Dicky Bird.

"Dad was a salesman, and Mum just used to work in the factory. She was a forelady, she prides herself she was a forelady at 16, because she was married at 18 bear in mind, she married early. So she was forelady at 16, in the factory, and Dad was a salesman riding one of those 3-wheel trikes round the streets; just retail salesman. They didn't wholesale as such."

Later when his father had his own business, selling ice cream from Dicky Bird:

"It was delivered to Selbourne Avenue, transferred to the refrigerators there, so we used to take them round to the stall."

Mr Hand described the products made at Dicky Bird's.

"It was all block ice cream, no loose ice cream, and the choc ices ... much later, they brought in the "glo-joys" and the "fro-joys", but that came after the war. That was the late 40s, early 50s, they brought out the new lolly which was "glo-joy" and the choc-ice on a stick which was a "fro-joy", and that came from America; he copied the idea from America."

He went on to explain how the ices were kept cold on the stall:

"In the centre of the stall there was a cabinet, and there were four insets, large, flat, 18" long full of acid. You'd leave them in the fridge overnight, and they'd go solid, and really cold. And they tried to insulate, there's a metal container in there, stainless steel, aluminium container, and you used to put them on the four sides, like an insulator flask, and it used to get ice cold. And you used to put your blocks in there to work from, and when that was empty I used to go round, put them in that container ... Once they were in the stall, they'd last many hours; but once again, they weren't there that long. I'd either have that ice cream, or I didn't have it all. There weren't many outlets for ice cream as such. Plus the fact, the name sold it, because they all wanted Dicky Bird's, it was the brand leader, I would say."

Dicky Bird's is no longer trading, and according to Terry Hand it was in the late 1950s that:

"Dicky Bird's was eventually bought out by Neilson's. They moved to Barking and Neilson's bought them out, and then a few years later Lyons Maid bought the whole issue out, and did away with the name Dicky Bird's, and Neilson's; it was all just Lyons Maid then. And then Klacken, the manager at Dicky Bird's, just packed up, that was when he went to Southend ...; and we never dealt with Neilson's as such, once Dicky Bird's packed up, we packed up."

There were other brands available, too. Mrs Strutt recalled:

"We used to have Wall's ice cream ... they always sold Wall's ice cream, and only that ..."

Mr Hand recalled other local firms:

"Shales had a factory in Shernhall Street. That was the early 50s; they also had a shop in Walthamstow High Street, just solely selling ice cream, solid ice cream like we used to sell. And of course you had Rossi's opposite, next to the Chequers which is still there now. They made their own ice cream."

Mr Jaggs' grandfather made ice cream, and gave the leftovers to his grandchildren:

"He used to come out and say "Go and get a cup each and Fred will give you some ice cream." They used to get the biggest cups they could find to finish it all up. He was very good like that."

He made it just at weekends and it was sold from a street door.

At the other end of the market was the ice cream parlour. Mrs Lane's mother married at 19 and acquired five parlours as her dowry in Poplar, Stepney and Upton Park. Mrs Lane pointed out that this was before her time! But, according to hearsay, she thought her mother was so comfortably off that she employed manageresses.

"That was really something in those days. In the ice parlours you didn't buy ice cream to take away; you sat in the shop and ate it in the shop, from a little glass. There were wafers in later years. We were shown the kind of wafers and they're the very expensive three corner ones that are sold now and they only sold those kind of wafers in those days."

Mrs Worth used to go to the shops for her ice cream:

> "We used to go and get a penny cornet, used to go down the road here and get a halfpenny white ice in a cornet, you know. White, bit of lemon in it, taste of lemon. It was lovely: just the ice, not the cream."

Mrs Lane recalled an ice cream man coming round the streets.

> "He would come along the streets crying "hokey, cokey". Yes, isn't there a rhyme that goes with that? The ice cream man used to cry "Stop me and buy one". That was the Wall's ice cream man. The man used to come along with a three-wheeled trolley. He used to call out "Walls ice cream. Stop me and buy one."

But Mrs Lewis and Miss Whitehouse remember this rhyme:

> "Hokey, pokey. They used to call out Hokey, pokey penny a lump, freeze your belly and make you jump."

Confectionery Manufacture in Wadley Road, Leytonstone.

The site between numbers 19 and 21 Wadley Road, Leytonstone, was first occupied in 1924 when the "Wadley Manufacturing Co. - Toolmakers" appears in that year's Kelly's Directory. In 1929 the site was taken over by "Abbey Confectionery Co. (Abbey Works)". By 1931 this firm had gone and there is no entry. In 1933 "Ivanhoe Confectionery Co Ltd - Confectionery Manufacturers" first appears. The name was changed to that of Bonds, the family who owned the firm around 1948. It still manufactures under that name, although it is now part of a larger firm, Carter-Penguin with businesses in Carlisle and Sheffield. Amalgamations among confectionery manufacturers are very common.

Bonds now manufacture sweets at Argyll Avenue, Leyton and have warehouse facilities at 800 Lea Bridge Road, Leyton. The Wadley Road site has recently been built on, and now contains a small group of "town houses" in a road called Temple Close.

Biographical Sketches and List of Contributors.

Mrs Reina Colin and her husband had three confectionery shops before the Second World War, she was in charge of the one in Walthamstow's High Street. Her experiences during the war years were of particular interest to the group. The family sold their business in 1951.

Mrs Rose Diver started her working career at fourteen as a seamstress, but very soon moved to work in the marzipan department of Clarnico's large factory in Hackney Wick. She was later employed in the fondant room where chocolates were dipped, and even had a short (half a day!) spell at another local sweet factory, Ivanhoe's. She subsequently worked in sweetshops firstly near the Thatched House and then at Green's (see cover and photo) at the Lea Bridge Road/Church Road corner.

Mrs Winifred Hartley was born during the First World War in Leytonstone. She first worked at Ivanhoe's (later Bond's) at their Wadley Road, factory, Leytonstone in 1930. She did a variety of jobs within the factory including that of sugar boiling, normally a male preserve. She left to get married but returned after the Second World War for a further ten years employment at Wadley Road. She now lives in Forest Gate.

Mr Terry Hand was born into a sweet making family, in fact his parents met while working at Dicky Bird's ice cream factory in Blackhorse Road, Walthamstow. They went on to run a sweet stall outside Percivals in the High Street, Walthamstow. Terry has continued in the family tradition, now making sweets in Chingford Mount Road, and his sons carry on the home making tradition into the third generation. Terry has been an enthusiatic contributor allowing us to photograph him at his work and checking the text for technical accuracy.

Mrs Sylvia Hill is another lady whose family owned shops and sold, among other things, sweets. In the summer her parents used to have stalls outside where they sold home made ice cream and soda. She has many memories of characters who patronised their shops, and of her father's benevolent attitude towards his customers.

Mrs Iris Lane's father owned a small sweet factory in Cann Hall Road, Leytonstone in the 1920s and her mother's dowry was five East End ice cream parlours! She has vivid memories of the sweets made in the family's factory and of her uncle's shops and stalls in Leyton.

Mrs Maisie Strutt married into the sweet making Strutt family, whose business had been founded by her husband's grandfather in the 1880s. By 1891 the Strutts had moved to No. 57 Markhouse Road, Walthamstow, called "The Old Toffee Shop", this was where Maisie Strutt helped run the business from before the Second World War until the mid 1970s, when the premises were compulsorily purchased. The family also ran market stalls, one at the Baker's Arms and another for many years in Walthamstow High Street. Mrs Strutt in addition to being interviewed has supplied many photographs, which have been copied and are now part of the museum collection.

Other interviewees included:
Mrs Brims, Mr and Mrs Jaggs, Mr Jones, Mrs Lewis, Miss Whitehouse and Mrs Worth.

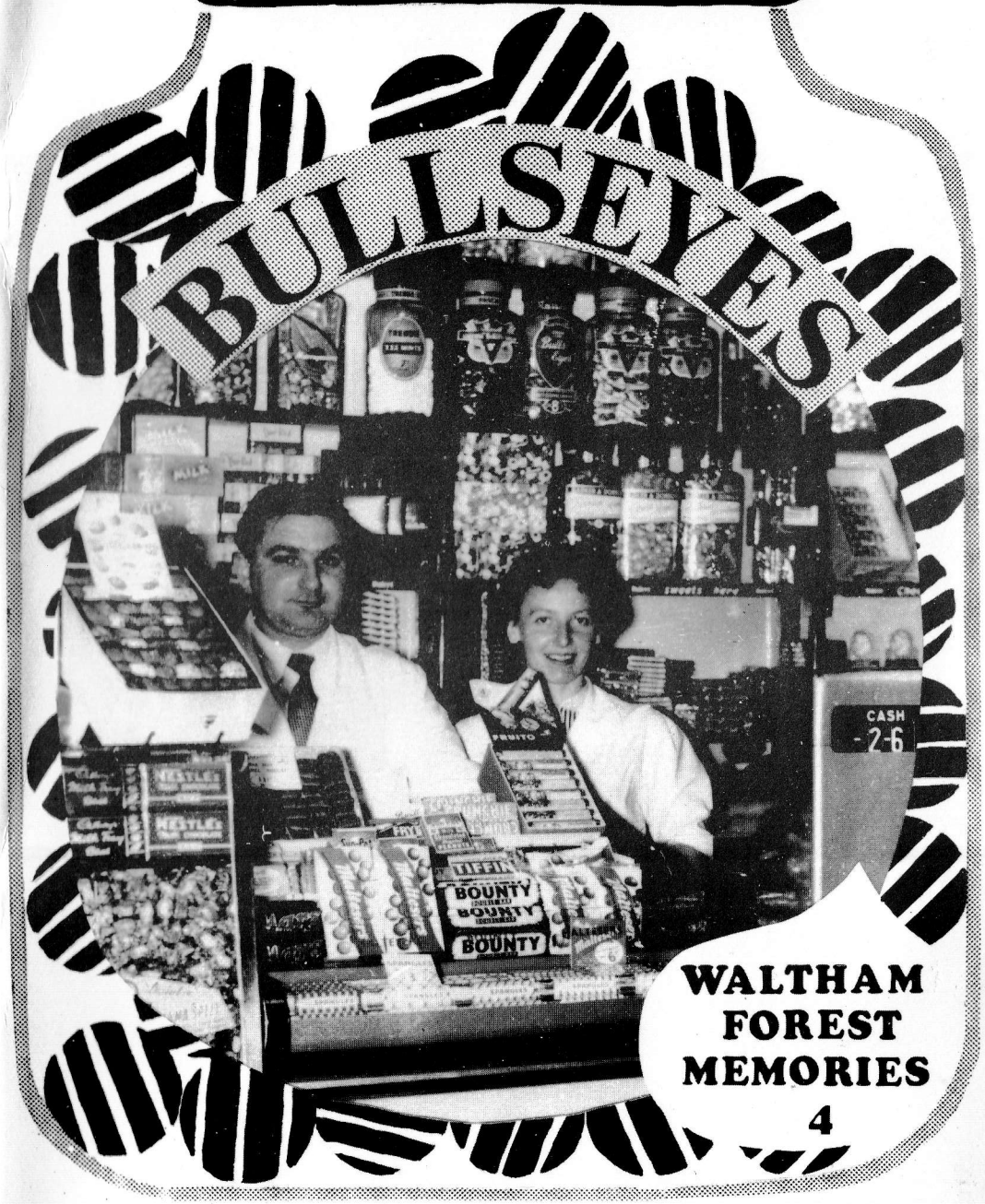
Our back cover illustration is of an Italian ice cream seller tentatively identified as either Antonio Ferrari or Peter Grandini. Both these ice cream men were well known figures in the Baker's Arms area of Leyton around the turn of the last century.
Photograph loaned by Mr. Pierce.

Sweet manufacture was not always a trade associated with large factories and famous names. Confectionery was often made in small workshops and spare rooms to be sold locally and for many people was an important part of the local economy.

This book examines the local confectionery trade through the memories of those involved in it either as sweet makers, sellers or simply as sweet eaters.

£1.75

BULLSEYES



WALTHAM FOREST MEMORIES

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