



**N** Dozens of workers at a profit share meeting in 1951

# Story of 'Willy Wonka' sweet factory is told

## Look at pioneering plant shut down in 1989

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People who worked at the Trebor sweet factory in Gants Hill are being urged to come forward by the author of a book about the company's history.

Matthew Crampton, a relative of a member of the Trebor workforce, has chronicled the highs and lows, and finally the selling of the company.

The factory, which was in Woodford Avenue, closed when the company was sold to Cadbury in 1989.

Mr Crampton, 49, of Gospel Oak, north London, said: "Imagine your uncle was Willy Wonka – mine really was. I was seven years old when I visited the factory

and was very excited to be invited."

Huge machines compressing powder into mints and vats of molten hot liquid ready to be turned into boiled sweets all resided inside the factory.

In the book, Alf Dixon, who worked as factory manager, says: "The sugar was delivered from Tate and Lyle in two hundredweight hessian sacks to be tipped into the sugar mills. In those days the sugar mills were always exploding and dried powder was piled up in half-hundredweight sacks."

Mr Crampton says he wrote *The Trebor Story* as he felt it was an important part of local life: "When the company was sold it was a huge thing and no one has really

talked about it since then. I thought it was right to tell the story."

Mr Crampton wants to hear from former employees of the factory so he can put their stories on his book's website, and is calling on them to contact him.

The factory opened in 1949 and was the first British factory to be devoted solely to the production of compressed sugary goods.

It was built on a disused coachworks site with a large bungalow and garden which provided room for expansion. In 1954 a warehouse was added to the complex to deal with packaging and exporting.

*The Trebor Story* is on sale for £18. For more information visit [www.thetrebortory.com](http://www.thetrebortory.com).



**N** Sweets were exported all over the world



**N** An aerial view of the factory