

A stylized, high-contrast illustration in black, white, and grey. It features a large, dark tree on the right side. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains under a sky with a single white circle representing the sun or moon. In the foreground, there are various plants, including a large, leafy plant on the left and a cluster of small, round objects (possibly berries or flowers) in the bottom right corner. The overall style is graphic and modern.

The Rowntree Legacy

Capitalism,
Compassion,
Change

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Cover design: Michael Kirkman (www.mkirkman.com)

Booklet design: Gavin Ward Design Associates (www.gwda.co.uk)

Printed in York by Colour Options on FSC-certified uncoated paper.

The Rowntree Legacy

**Capitalism,
Compassion,
Change**





Foreword

In the writing of the 'Founder's Memorandum' for the establishment of the trusts in his name, Joseph Rowntree revealed his concerns for humanity and hopes for the future. He was also articulating the behaviours and responsibilities of those left to implement his ideas. The Memorandum gives us an example of the standards he set himself and others and against which history could judge. The success of his Rowntree business interests enabled him to provide the money to back up his vision as well as provide employment for tens of thousands of men and women, and pleasure for millions of consumers.

He said 'the real goal for an employer is to try and seek for others the fullest life of which an individual is capable.' The numbers of people who turned out for his funeral are a testament to his success at the time of his death, as is the continuing work of the Joseph Rowntree Trusts to his legacy.

This booklet explains the roots and fruition of Joseph Rowntree's vision.

Liz Grierson, Chair of Trustees,
The Rowntree Society,
February 2016

Acknowledgments

This work, written by the Rowntree Society, has grown out of a reflective essay written to accompany JRF's 2014–18 strategic plan on Poverty by Michael Camroux (Peabody, London) during his time as an intern at JRF. It also accompanies a project run by the Rowntree Society in 2015–16, and funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, to purchase a collection of books by Seebohm Rowntree and to create a travelling exhibition that spotlights the extent of his influence nationally.

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For more information and further references about Rowntree history, see www.rowntreesociety.org.uk.



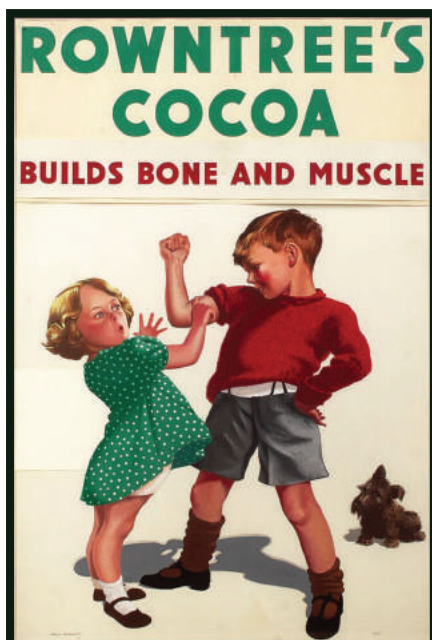
The Rowntree Legacy

'Few Englishmen of the last century have left behind them a more remarkable body of achievement in the realm of social practice and experiment.'

(A.G. Gardiner, 1925, on the death of Joseph Rowntree)

Many of us will remember the name Rowntree with affection. For most of the last century, it was one of the great names in confectionery. Fruit Gums, KitKat, Black Magic, Smarties and Polos remain much-loved household names. But the Quaker family that gave its name to the confectionery brand has also had a huge impact in many other fields, from social reform and the understanding of poverty to enlightened business practices and the concept of the minimum wage.

All of these ideas are still important today. We live in a time when questions have re-emerged about philanthropy and corporate social responsibility, as well as a debate about how we can achieve a fair and compassionate society. What can we learn from the life and work of the Rowntree family? How are their ideals still relevant to us today? This short booklet looks at the ways in which generations of Rowntrees have helped shape our views of social justice and industrial life and form our ideas about contemporary philanthropy.



An early Rowntree's advert. Initially Joseph Rowntree was suspicious of advertising, believing that a quality product would sell by itself.

Who Was Who?

Born in Scarborough, Joseph Rowntree [Senior] (1801–59) moved to York on his 21st birthday to establish a prosperous grocery business in a shop on Pavement. He made contributions to problems of insanitary housing and sewage disposal, he established a soup kitchen in 1846, and he pioneered schools for boys and classes for adults.

Joseph Rowntree (1837–1925) transformed his brother's cocoa and chocolate business into a major confectionery manufacturer and a household name. But he also had a major influence on our understanding of poverty and the movement for social reform. He founded three major

Politics, religion and family were intertwined in Joseph's life. Here he is depicted two years before his death with (left to right) Stephen Rowntree, Seebohm Rowntree, Arnold Rowntree and Oscar Rowntree.



trusts, dedicated to achieving social justice and to provide housing for workers and their families. These trusts continue their work today. Joseph also founded the York Adult School, gave lifelong service to The Retreat (a pioneering mental hospital) and helped to create York's city library. Joseph Rowntree was also an active campaigner on a number of issues, including temperance and House of Lords reform.

As a director and later chairman of the company, Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree (1871–1954) was an innovator in business management, industrial democracy and a champion of the poor, the unemployed, the homeless, and old people. As an adviser to Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Seebohm Rowntree was also a key architect of the welfare state, thus playing a role in shaping social policy in the early 20th century.

Seebohm's elder brother, John Wilhelm Rowntree, became a leading figure in the development of Quaker thought, determining to make Quakerism relevant to the world and its problems. In an important essay, he wrote, *'the grinding poverty of a third of the population becomes an evil too heavy to be borne.'* He believed that action to deal with this 'arises naturally

from the teaching of Jesus to the individual and the state.'

John Wilhelm Rowntree, once asked 'which Rowntree are you?', answered 'the brother of Poverty and the son of Drink'.

As a tightly-knit family, with extensive roots and origins in North Yorkshire, the Rowntrees passed their core values down the generations, thus maximising their impact towards social change over the course of the twentieth century. Other family members, such as Arnold Rowntree, (Liberal MP for York during the years of WWI), Oscar Rowntree (Liberal, who served on York City Council and worked in health and housing reform), Joshua Rowntree (Mayor of Scarborough and Liberal MP), and Kenneth Rowntree (artist, who captured the essential spirit of the country between the wars in the 'Recording Britain' project) – all were part of the wider Rowntree network that had an impact on the region and beyond in the early 20th century. Rowntree family members were later involved in the creation of the international aid charity Oxfam and humanitarian organisations working for refugees.

The Quaker Rowntrees

It is important to remember that the Rowntrees were Quakers, a religious group known for their plainness in speech and dress, their refusal to swear oaths, their teetotalism and their egalitarianism and philanthropic work in prison reform and social justice.

Throughout the 19th century Quakers were associated with radical causes such as the abolition of slavery. The Quaker form of Christianity held that because each human had something of the divine, each also had something inherently good within them. This was expressed by the noted American Quaker theologian, Rufus Jones (a close collaborator of

Kenneth Rowntree, Tractor,
Lithograph from the School Prints Series.



John Wilhelm Rowntree) thus: *'The Inner Light is the doctrine that there is something Divine, 'Something of God' in the human soul'*. Jones and Rowntree contributed to a shift in Quaker thinking, away from the Bible-based evangelical certainties of their predecessors and towards a less dogmatic form of the faith, making it more relevant and effective in the modern world.

Many Quaker families went into business such as the making of chocolate (that was encouraged as a suitable alternative drink to alcohol). In the 19th and early 20th centuries chocolate making was dominated by three families: the Cadburys, the Frys and the Rowntrees. All of them were involved in charitable work and pioneered social programmes in housing and welfare.

The Rowntrees' life and work was constantly informed by their faith, which emphasised quiet service, public responsibility, civic pride, pragmatism, and trustworthiness.

8 There was also a sense that as non-conformists they remained outside the mainstream and viewed the world with a dissenting eye.



Panorama of Rowntree's Cocoa and Chocolate Works, from the factory staff magazine, *Cocoa Works Magazine*, December 1920.

The Founder's Memorandum and Poverty

Joseph Rowntree made his fortune from the development of techniques for gum pastilles and chocolate. In 1904, he wrote the Memorandum to outline his visionary thinking about the way that wealth should be spent.

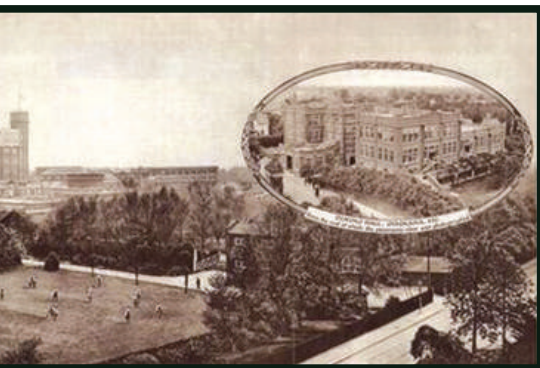
Like many Quakers, he believed that people should not inherit great wealth.

'...money is generally best spent by persons during their lifetime.'

An industrialist who cared passionately about the welfare of his workers, he was also concerned about the appalling levels of poverty which marked Victorian and Edwardian society. However, his approach was unusual in that he highlighted a need to understand and tackle the root causes of poverty, not just treat its immediate symptoms.

This was the essential message behind his famous Memorandum, which established the three trusts which still bear his name today (see below). The Memorandum laid out Joseph Rowntree's philosophy.

'...much of the current philanthropic effort is directed to remedying the more superficial manifestations of weakness or evil, while little thought or effort is directed to search out their underlying causes.'



Joseph Rowntree saw that more visible aspects of poverty were being alleviated by charities running soup kitchens and other services, but why were such services necessary in the first place?

'The Soup Kitchen in York never has difficulty in obtaining adequate financial aid,' he wrote, 'but an enquiry into the extent and causes of poverty would enlist little support.'

'If the enormous volume of the philanthropy of the present day were wisely directed it would, I believe, in the course of a few years, change the face of England.'

He also recognised that the proposals in the Memorandum should not be cast in stone, but should leave room for new responses to changing circumstances. In practice, this means that the examination of 'social evils' was to be ongoing and that there ought to be a constant re-evaluation of society's goals, values and directions.

Joseph was concerned about the impact of alcohol and like many Quakers, was a supporter of the temperance movement, which advocated abstinence from alcohol.

The breadth of Seebohm Rowntree's publications was enormous. He was a pioneer of British poverty studies, social welfare and business management.



However, he also thought that drinking resulted from the deprivations of urban life and that solutions had to be found for the poverty that led to drunkenness and what we would now call alcohol abuse. The public also needed to be made aware of the true nature of poverty in England and how widespread it was.

Thus he supported his son Seebohm in establishing a dispassionate scientific analysis of poverty in York, in response to the ground-breaking work of Charles Booth in London, *Life and Labour of the People* (1889–1891).

Seebohm Rowntree's interest in working people's conditions was first aroused by his work in a Quaker adult school in York. He also believed that a scientific approach was needed to measure exactly what poverty looked like and what caused it. To this end, he conducted a major survey of more than 11,500 families, pioneering a new style of interviewing real people to collect life histories and to tabulate the income and expenditure of working class households. He showed that much poverty was caused by low incomes, not bad spending habits. Many of those affected by poverty were in work but low wages meant they were unable to provide a decent standard of living for their families.

Photographs from Rowntree's book, *Problem Families*.

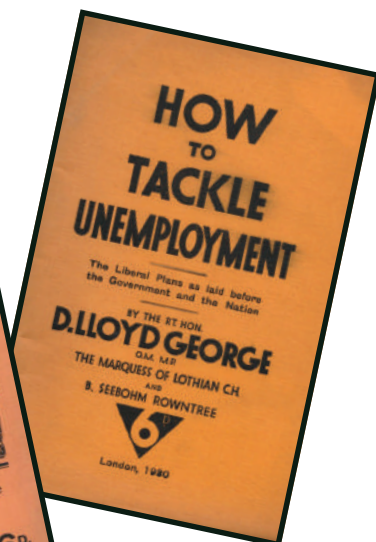
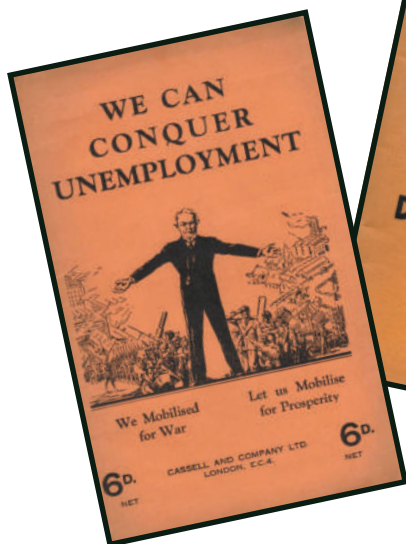
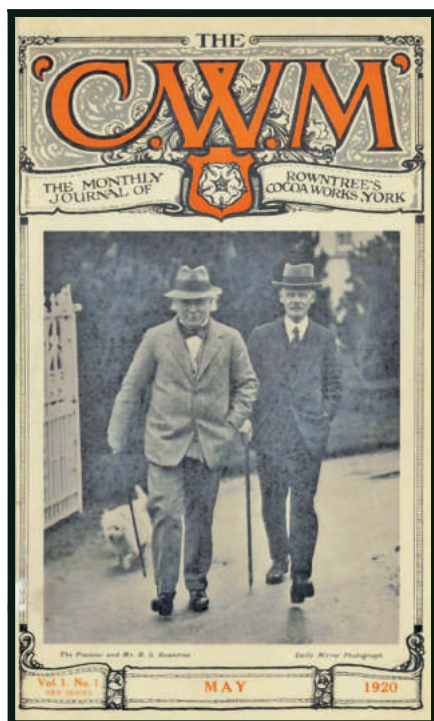


Seebohm also demonstrated that people at certain stages of life, for example in childhood or old age, were more likely to be in abject poverty than at other stages, and thus he formulated the idea of the poverty cycle in which people move in and out of poverty during their lifetime.

In 1901, he published his findings in *Poverty: a Study of Town Life*. Well written and accessible, it had a profound impact, challenging the public perception of the causes of poverty, and starting a debate on whether poverty was a result of

individual failings or structural issues, or what the balance was between the two.

Very significantly, Seebohm Rowntree's work influenced the welfare reforms of David Lloyd George, who used to brandish a copy of the book at political rallies. Another future Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, said that Rowntree's book had 'fairly made my hair stand on end'. It was the power and insight of *Poverty: a Study of Town Life* that brought Seebohm to the heart of political power in Britain. He had become a recognised authority and this gave him the credentials to sit on a number of important Parliamentary committees. In 1929 he co-authored with Lloyd George an important tract on the problem of unemployment: *We Can Conquer Unemployment, Mr Lloyd George's Pledge*.



Housing

'I do not want to establish communities bearing the stamp of charity but rather of rightly ordered and self-governing communities – self-governing, that is, within the broad limits laid down by the Trust.'

Joseph Rowntree,
in his *Memorandum*

Joseph Rowntree also set up the Joseph Rowntree Village Trust in 1904, to build and manage the garden village of New Earswick, York. His purpose was to create an experimental village of improved housing for working people in York, based on the principles of the Garden Cities movement.

The first conference of the Garden Cities Association was held in 1901. It was attended by Seebohm Rowntree, and by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, the two men who in 1902 were appointed to become architects of New Earswick. Between 1902 and 1904 they drew up the first plan of the village and built the first group of 'improved' houses. Their plan for the village implemented many of the ideas of the Garden Cities Association and provided open green spaces and community facilities as well as houses.

An early plan of New Earswick.



New Earswick Garden Village was intended to be a social experiment and houses were available, not simply to employees of the Rowntree Cocoa Works, but to *'all persons who ... earn a small income by the work of their hands or their minds...'* The ideas of the Garden Cities movement were tried out and experimented with in order *'to improve the condition of working people'* and to provide them with *'improved dwellings'* at affordable rents in a

healthy environment. The village was to become a blueprint for developments all over the country.

By 1904 there were 30 houses in New Earswick village; by 1954 there were nearly 630 residences of mixed tenure.

Seeböhm Rowntree was an adviser to the Liberal Prime Minister David Lloyd George, and also secretary of a national body called the Health and Housing Reform Association which campaigned for better housing, medical inspections in schools and improved milk supply. In these endeavours he was supported by his cousin Arnold Rowntree, Liberal MP for York during the years of WWI. It is likely that through these connections, Raymond Unwin, architect and planner of New Earswick, was appointed Chief Town Planning Inspector to the Local Government Board in 1914. In this role, he brought the principles

behind New Earswick to early national planning policies of the 20th century. House plans developed in the York garden village were included in the Government Housing Manual, which underpinned Lloyd George's promise to build Homes fit for Heroes for returning soldiers.

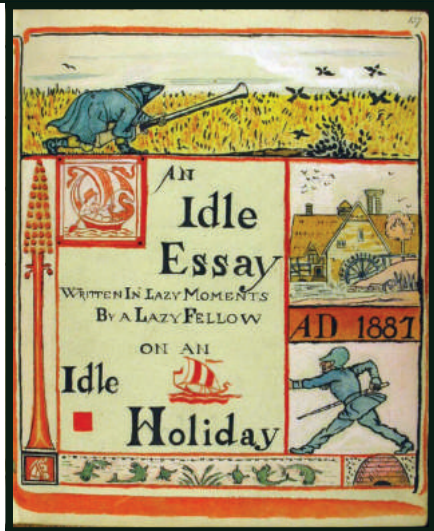
Both Joseph and Seeböhm backed proposals for land reform, as they believed that land in the hands of few individuals was one of the causes of the proliferation of slums. Although they stopped short of recommending the nationalisation of land, they suggested the taxation of land values, or the appropriation of unearned profits from development. The Village Trust was an early pioneer of the movement for land reform. New Earswick and the vision which lay behind it still attracts international attention and remains a focus of the housing debate today.



The Folk Hall today, the heart of New Earswick.

Education

First page of an essay written by Seebohm Rowntree, aged sixteen, while at Bootham School.



John Wilhelm Rowntree was a huge influence in the formation of York's Adult School movement. It is worth pointing out that very few people in Victorian Britain had access to other than the most rudimentary education. The Adult School filled a gap for many thousands of adults who wanted to improve their command of basic skills like reading and writing. The schools originally offered Bible readings but over the years expanded their activities to include a library, social clubs, education classes, allotments, a savings club and even a sick club to help those not financially prepared for times of sickness or death.

New Earswick village school, also designed by Parker and Unwin, was opened in 1912 by Walter Runciman, a Minister in Lloyd George's government. Like the village, it attracted a lot of outside attention, and was written up in professional journals. Its pioneering design, with large, south-facing windows to let in light and air, created an 'open air' school with more space per child. Boys and girls were taught the same subjects and the design of the school became a model for others to follow.

Later, Arnold Rowntree was also closely involved with the provision of adult education and was chair of the Quaker York Schools Committee for

many years, a position also held by his father and grandfather.

In 1909, Arnold Rowntree helped to create two educational settlements in York and Leeds. The settlements had wider ambitions than the adult schools, with parliamentary-style debating societies and classes on 'civics', and they often participated in local community activities such as boys' and girls' clubs, social survey work and branches of groups such as the League of Nations Union.

For the Rowntrees, the settlements provided political, social and civic education for the newly enfranchised members of the working classes.

As Arnold Rowntree remarked in a memorandum in 1913,

'the fundamental question of the time is the education of the democracy, not only in intellect but in character, and it is an urgent necessity that this should at least keep pace with the growing exercise by the democracy of its political power.'

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) gave substantial financial backing to the educational settlements in the forty years after 1909.

Almost every member of the Rowntree family was involved with the adult education movement.



Pioneers in Industrial Welfare

'Employees should 'never merely be regarded as cogs in an industrial machine, but rather as fellow workers in a great industry.'

(Joseph Rowntree)



'Anyone who sustains even a minor injury, either at work or elsewhere, is encouraged to have it dressed in the surgery.'

*(B. Seebohm Rowntree,
The Human Factor in Business)*

Joseph Rowntree was an industrialist who believed passionately in the welfare of his workforce. As a factory owner, Rowntree saw that compassionate leadership and informed managerial organisation was the only way that underpaid working people could be more productive, achieve better wages, and escape poverty. There was thus a direct link between his views on poverty and social policy on the one hand and his views on business efficiency on the other. Fair treatment and loyalty also helped fulfil Quaker ideals of service to employees and consumers.

Seebohm Rowntree went further, writing that 'the present industrial organisation of the country is unsound' and wanted to use the Rowntrees firm to 'minimise the evils' of the capitalist system. As an industrialist, he believed it was a Quaker duty to nurture the 'guiding light' of each member of his staff.

Seebohm became the Rowntree company's first director of labour, and believed that improving the welfare of workers would not only be a moral good, but would also promote industrial efficiency. He introduced an eight-hour day in 1896, a pension scheme in 1906, a five-day (44-hour) working week, works councils in 1919, and a profit-sharing scheme for

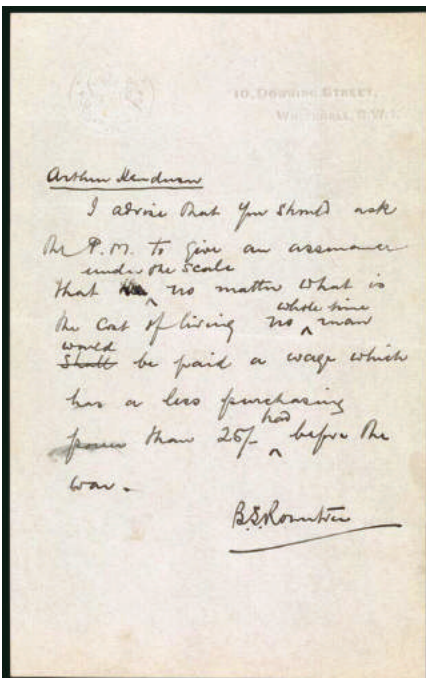
employees in 1923. In 1904 a doctor was employed to offer free advice to all employees followed by a dental department with a resident dentist.

Seebohm also believed that low wages were bad for the 'nation's economy and humanity' and from his position as an adviser in Lloyd George's wartime government, he argued strongly for a National Minimum Wage in England, which would also be 'a liveable wage.' He urged the Prime

Minister to ensure that the purchasing power of wages after the war would equate with wages before it.

He also put down his management philosophy in a number of books, the most influential of which was the *Human Factor in Business* (1921), which became a key text in the development of management theory. Not only did he advocate a more scientific approach to the business of business, such as cost accounting and research, but he also laid down the following principles which needed to be present for the welfare of workers in any efficient enterprise.

- Earnings sufficient to maintain a reasonable standard of comfort.
- Reasonable hours of work.
- Reasonable economic security during the whole working life and in old age.
- Good working conditions.
- A status for the workers suitable to men in a free country in the twentieth century.



A letter drafted by Seebohm Rowntree in 1916 on 10 Downing Street notepaper, which demonstrates his support for the national minimum wage.

Seebohm wrote that every man should be entitled to a basic wage that enabled him to 'marry, live in a decent house and provide the necessities of

The female rest room at Rowntree & Co in the early twentieth century.



physical efficiency for a normal family'. He added that if a business could not afford to pay such a wage, the company should limit what it paid itself while still making itself more efficient. Low wages, he wrote, were 'a false economy.'

Yet although the Rowntrees were anxious to deal fairly with employees, they were initially sceptical about the role of trade unions in representing the interests of working people. Nor did the profit-sharing scheme, introduced in 1923, prove very useful in practice. The scheme delivered very few

payouts due to Rowntrees' poor profits during much of this period.

Further, Seeböhm's Quaker principles were not always helpful in his dealings with his employees. On one occasion, addressing the workers about the company policy of not allowing people time off for the York races (gambling was anathema to Quakers), he was barracked for his pains.

Scientific Management

To back up his philosophy, Seebohm, ever the scientist, created an industrial psychology department in 1922 which pioneered the use of psychological recruitment tests to assist in the selection and training of workers.

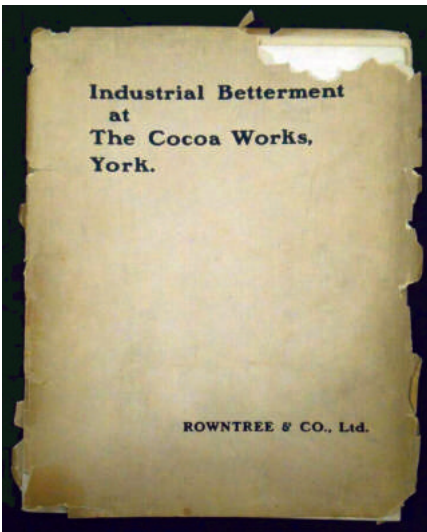
He also helped to set up the National Institute of Industrial Psychology and the British Institute of Management. He employed some of the most advanced thinkers on labour relations and industrial management. Oliver Sheldon, Clarence Northcott, Lyndall Urwick and William Wallace (who later became chairman of the Rowntree company) were profoundly influenced by Seebohm's pioneering work.

Sheldon, who was recruited from Oxford and who became Seebohm Rowntree's personal assistant, wrote *The Philosophy of Management* (1923), which combined social ethics with scientific management ideas. It became one of the most influential management primers of the early 20th century.

In his introduction to the book, Seebohm wrote:

'The author recognises that business has a soul, it is not a mechanical thing but a living and worthy part of the social organism. It is not an end in itself, but a means

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Written in 1916 this pamphlet describes the 8-hour day, dining facilities, factory conditions, a suggestions box, the pension and savings funds, and the wide range of educational programmes.

to an end and that end is the well-being of the whole community.'

Seebohm loaned Sheldon out to help start up the UK's first professional management institute and his successor as Rowntree's Labour Director, Clarence Northcott, also became a founding member of Institute of Personnel Management and wrote another influential book, *The Moral Duty of Management*.

Rowntree's factory was a:
'practical university of management'
and *'between us, we wrote most of the British management literature'*.
(Lyndall Urwick)

Seebohm Rowntree was not a socialist and he was a passionate advocate of the capitalist system. But his listing of the five main duties of business makes interesting reading today. He said that the duty of a business was to:

- be efficient;
- provide a decent living for employees;
- provide employment and security;
- provide pensions and sick pay;
- ensure justice and consultation for its workers.

Capitalism, according to Seebohm, had its limitations and he once wrote that the state should be able 'to over-ride the immediate interests of the employer by imposing on him obligations which are to the advantage of the nation rather than his own.'



Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree (1871–1954).

Social Reform

Seebohm Rowntree's work had a direct influence on social reforms enacted by the Liberal governments of the early 20th century. But he and his father were not satisfied with their own endeavours in these fields and wanted to leave their own legacy of reform. Hence the Memorandum and the encapsulation of their political, moral and social reforming beliefs in the creation of the three trusts.

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust was charged with supporting social research, adult education, and the Society of Friends. The Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust



Homestead Park opened its gates to the public early in the twentieth century and today is managed by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust.

concentrated on social and political activities that were outside the strict definition of charitable work, and the Joseph Rowntree Village Trust was given responsibility for building respectable but affordable working-class housing.

It is worth noting that the endowment which created the trusts came in the form of shares, creating a unique relationship between a company and social reform trust. Up until 1969 when Rowntrees merged with Mackintosh, the trusts were majority shareholders in the confectionery company.

The three Trusts still carry on this work today. Though their organisation and structure has changed over the years, the core of their respective tasks has not. They are each constantly responsive to change (illustrating a quotation from a hymn that Joseph Rowntree quoted in his Memorandum that 'time makes ancient good uncouth') but in essence they remain true to the vision of their founder.

The Village Trust has become the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Its housing arm, the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT), still provides housing in New Earswick but also manages houses in the City of York and surrounding areas. The Trust became a pioneering provider of

sheltered and supported housing in York and other parts of north-east England. It has developed a public park at the Homestead and supported the building of the Yearsley swimming pool, and was a major player in the creation of the University of York.

The Foundation's (JRF's) objectives have widened to cover research and development. It has been a significant force in the housing association movement and continues to look at the causes of poverty and to build public support for new approaches to ending deprivation. It has also been involved in a wide range of research into planning and housing matters, and pioneering new ways of providing accommodation for marginalised groups. Research reports like the Duke of Edinburgh's inquiry into housing finance and the cost of continuing care have had a major impact on government policies.

The Social Service Trust has become the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, moving away from temperance work to support for the Liberal Party, then to a range of campaigns from low pay to one parent families to Friends of the Earth. Over the years, the Reform Trust has continued to back the case for reform in causes which once seemed marginal, including devolution, democratic trade unions in Soviet-era

Derwenthorpe. The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust continues to pioneer new forms of housing in the twenty-first century.



Eastern Europe, defence against press intrusion, electoral reform, freedom of information legislation and the women's publishing house, Virago.

It too was one of the earliest supporters of the campaign to create a university in York, and has supported organisations working against domestic violence, deaths in custody and promoting democratic opposition movements in Africa. Today it works to bring about change in the political system to make it more accountable and transparent and to balance power for the well-being of society.

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust continued to promote the Rowntree's work on adult education, but subsequently its efforts have been focused on child poverty (it was an early backer of the campaigning Child Poverty Action Group), racial justice and tackling discrimination, and bringing peace to Northern Ireland. The trust was a significant promoter of integrated education between Catholic and Protestant children. The trust continues to work in the area of philanthropy at a national and international level.

Politics as Public Service

Arnold Rowntree (1871–1954) was a Liberal MP and newspaper director. As an MP, he allied himself with radical causes, speaking out against conscription in World War One and in favour of conscientious objectors. He was a strong advocate for penal reform and the ending of imprisonment of debtors. He supported his cousin Seebohm in creating a national insurance system, ensuring that it also covered women and low paid workers. Arnold also supported women's suffrage at a time when it was not a popular cause and was an early advocate of proportional representation in elections.

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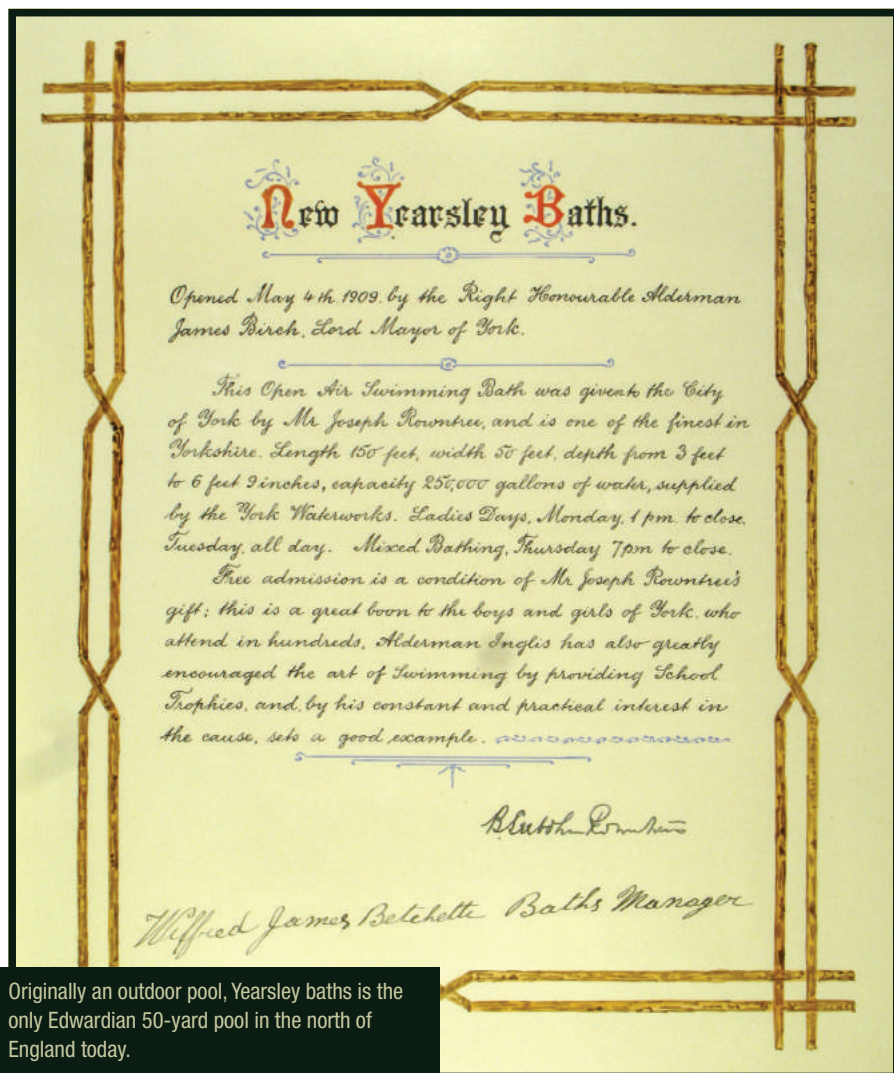
Following eight years as MP for York, Arnold Rowntree was elected Sheriff of the city in 1921.

Arnold was a leading light in the Quaker chocolate family's foray into the ownership of newspapers. Joseph Rowntree had warned in his Memorandum about the jingoism of Tory papers which had created a warlike atmosphere in Britain. Arnold became chairman of the *Northern Echo*, *Sheffield Independent* and *Yorkshire Gazette*, leading regional papers which campaigned on social reform, local government, land reform and housing conditions. Arnold was also closely involved with *The Nation*, a small circulation but influential weekly magazine.

Unlike their chocolate businesses, the Rowntrees, like the Cadburys, were

not interested in owning newspapers as profitmaking enterprises. However, huge losses on two of the national newspapers they owned meant that they were quickly sold to other investors.

Together with his uncle Joseph, Arnold was instrumental in the building of the York swimming pool at Yearsley for benefit of the city. The Rowntree factory (since 1988 owned by Nestlé) still supplies steam to heat the pool.



International Outlook

Rowntree Memorial Park was donated to the city of York in 1921 in memory of the factory workers who fell in World War I. The present day doves are allegedly direct descendants of the original doves in the dovecote, where the war memorial plaque is situated.



Another characteristic of the Rowntree family was their international outlook. This may have been in part due their family roots (Seebohm was a family surname going back to members of a German Quaker settlement in Friedensthal in Westphalia in the 18th century).

In their writings, Joseph and Seebohm often used international comparisons to draw attention to problems at home. For example, Joseph used the example of the state monopoly of the liquor trade in Sweden as a model which could help to reduce alcohol abuse in Britain. Seebohm studied land tenure in Belgium as well as wages, hours and conditions of work to provide examples from which he felt Britain could learn. Refugees from that country were housed in New Earswick when World War One broke out. But even before the war, through the adult school movement, Arnold hosted German educationalists and other visitors in the spirit of international educational cooperation.

The Rowntrees were also prominent in calling for collective post-war unity in Europe and were major supporters of the League of Nations, a fact that is reflected in the war memorial park plaque in Rowntree Park.

Rowntrees and the Rise of the 'Brand'

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The Polo mint was first manufactured in York in 1948.

The Rowntree company, under the chairmanship of Seebohm Rowntree, was also responsible for a remarkable change in the way that companies marketed their goods. Up to the 1930s, firms making consumer products like chocolates concentrated on persuading shops to sell their goods on the grounds that they would make a good profit from them. Decisions on what goods to sell and where to sell them were based on the needs of production and distribution (e.g. how much it would cost to make a product and get it to market). Rowntrees switched to a more customer-focused approach that asked consumers what they wanted and what companies needed to do to persuade them to buy their products. This visionary approach was led by the far-sighted and dynamic marketing manager, George Harris, who was married to Seebohm's cousin, Frieda Rowntree.

Harris's contribution to the success of the company was enormous. He created a single unified marketing department with responsibility for everything from product development to sales. It was this new department which used research to alter its product range and marketing methods with systematic testing of individual products on consumers, and the compilation of statistical data.

Black Magic was the first product to be launched which had its own brand identity, without mentioning the Rowntree name.



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Starting with a new chocolate box assortment called Black Magic, 9,500 people were interviewed to find out what should be included in the assortment and the winning flavours included orange, hazelnut, cherry, marzipan, caramel, and strawberry.

It became one of the company's most popular products and sparked a list of other brands that were launched in the 1930s, including KitKat, Aero, Smarties, and Dairy Box. These new techniques, which emphasised the brand rather than Rowntrees as

the manufacturer, meant that new products each had their own brand identity and individuality – the holes in Polo mints and the distinct Smarties tube, to take two examples – and demonstrated a new, single-minded and long term approach to branding.

This 'niche' strategy, which encouraged consumers to see branded products as unique, encouraged impulse buying and is now part and parcel of the way companies market and advertise their goods.

The Rowntree Legacy

– the Long View

Looking back at the work of the Rowntrees and at the activities of the three trusts which continue to bear the family name, it is clear that, more than 100 years later, many of their original ideas continue to resonate today.

- Low pay and the Living Wage are still a matter of important political debate.
- The importance of business and its place in communities continues to frame much discussion on the role of industry in a modern democracy.
- The impact of poverty and its moral context is a subject of fiercely contested arguments.
- Education as a process of 'lifelong learning' particularly in a fast moving age when skills need to be continually updated, remains a live issue. The importance of 'citizenship' education in a democracy based on universal suffrage is also much debated.
- The supremacy of the brand and brand identity is now a commonplace in discussion of the success of businesses. Indeed, the relationship between brand and reputation is regularly tested in the analysis of ethics and modern business practice.



In York, the Rowntree name still resonates powerfully and has nurtured a sense of community and shared belonging. Rowntree is seen as an embodiment of a set of principles – ‘they looked after you from cradle to grave’.

- Democratic reform, the devolution of power, the funding of political parties are all still the subject of much discussion today.
- The need for adequate sustainable housing and its continual improvement to meet the demands of modern-day living remains paramount.
- The lack of diversity in the press is still an issue for many people.

The Rowntree legacy embodies social values, philanthropic principles, better management of enterprise, and a vision for the long term. All of these are as vital today as they were in 1904. The religious terminology, the paternalism, the emphasis on family may no longer resonate to modern ears but ideas of fairness, equality, community, and change still retain their power.

Which is not to say that things have not changed for the better since Joseph Rowntree wrote his Memorandum. Many of the improvements originally suggested by the Rowntrees have indeed come about. Rowntrees were leaders in innovation, but their Quaker modesty and caution kept them out of the limelight, making it easy for us to forget their role in turning the innovations

of yesterday into the commonplaces of today.

It is also useful to remind ourselves of the role that the Rowntree family, often working through the trusts, has played in framing the discussion and as Joseph Rowntree's Memorandum put it, 'strengthening the hand' of those engaged in social, political and religious action.

The Rowntree message, first outlined in that 1904 Founder's Memorandum, is still firmly linked to the need for social change, and the trusts implement this message by collecting evidence, setting up new methods and supporting innovative ideas and organisations. Like the Rowntree company before them, the Trusts have pioneered their own anti-poverty employment practices and JRF/JRHT will be the first UK care-provider to adopt a Living Wage.

The ideas behind the Rowntree legacy continue to resonate and to be restated in the light of today's experience. For example, the ideals of 'enlightened entrepreneurialism' which were promoted so strongly by Seebohm Rowntree, have not become irrelevant or unworkable; indeed the recent financial crisis has put the issue of responsible business higher on the national agenda.

Rowntree & Co established itself as a trusted employer and brand name, as well as a force for social good throughout the 20th century. The Rowntree name as a chocolate manufacturer is now gradually fading from the public mind, but what remains is a distinctive 'brand' for the 21st century, a brand that is identified not merely with KitKat or Polo but with the values of fairness, equality, community, and reform. The application of those core values is the living embodiment of the Rowntree legacy.



The clock at the factory on Haxby Road.

