Introduction
Playing at Work/Working at Play

To the great relief of Cadbury's organising committee, the sun shone down brightly on the 8,000 employees and their families who crowded on Bournville's recreation grounds for 1914's summer works party (*B.W.M.*, August 1914: 239). Against the backdrop of the temporarily silenced red-brick cocoa and chocolate factory, workers had gathered to celebrate mid-summer and another year of Cadbury's industrial success. The party's entertainment programme was eclectic, and long. Running from three o'clock in the afternoon until ten o'clock at night, the attractions on offer were part village fete, part school sports and celebration day, and part variety hall. Across the large open-air grounds, a series of outdoor performance spaces had been constructed, from small temporary wooden platform stages to a large, earthwork amphitheatre designed to accommodate a cast of over one hundred, and audiences of thousands. Revues were staged alongside burlesques, and sports matches and swimming demonstrations were framed and played out within theatrical narratives. Folk dances, brass bands, orchestral and choir performances, and may-pole dancing were also on offer, along with refreshments and fairground sideshows.

Amidst the many diversions laid on for 1914's partygoers was a tableaux-vivants competition; an event that pitted staff teams from the factory's departments against each other to design and stage living pictures created from their bodies, costumes, and props. The winners were B Block top, triumphing with their tableau 'Orinoco Assorted' – an embodied representation of a popular Cadbury's chocolate selection box that won the judges over with its 'prettiness' and its 'originality' (240; Figure 1). 'Orinoco Assorted' was performed by thirty-five Cadbury's employees, all of whom were women. For most of the performance, their bodies were concealed within a custom-made, huge wooden chocolate box. Crouched down and motionless, all that was visible to the audience were parallel rows of swim-hat style headdresses, each designed to look like a chocolate from the popular Orinoco selection line. Together the workers' bodies created

A TABLEAU by "B" BLOCK TOP.

The "chocolates" are the headgear of the girls taking part, who at a given signal turned and revealed themselves. The originality of the idea and pretty effect gained for the tab'eau the first place.

Figure 1 'Orinoco Assorted', *tableau vivant*
Bournville Works Magazine, August 1914

an illusion of one of the products that was made in the factory behind them. Then – in a moment of synchronised movement that marked the end of the tableau – the thirty-five women rose to standing, revealing their identities as members of the factory's workforce, dressed as chocolates. The image was fleeting, yet complex. It simultaneously fused and advertised a well-known Cadbury's product, the firm's well-crafted company image, the identities of staff members, and the familiarity of performance as a means to model and promote the Bournville factory, its people, and its brands. As one event within one works party entertainment programme, 'Orinoco Assorted' is, in many ways, a tiny and momentary flicker in the rich, varied history of the three and a half decades of performance culture at Cadbury's that I explore in this book. There were many examples that I could have selected to open with, but this one tableau vivant – this one moment – neatly captured the combination of people, place, and objective that defined performance at Bournville in the early decades of the twentieth century. Embodied within accounts of this group of female employees contained within a chocolate box are lingering traces of factory

performance's business potential and the significance of performance to Cadbury's industrial operation. 'Orinoco Assorted' offers a recipe for early twentieth-century performance at Bournville.

Staging Bournville

The prominence of theatre and performance at Bournville was made possible by Cadbury's out-of-town factory estate. In 1879, under the leadership of George (1839–1922) and Richard (1835–1899) Cadbury, the firm had relocated their relatively small cocoa production and sales operation from Birmingham's city centre Quaker business district to a marshy greenfield space north of the city boundary. It was a risky move, but one that paid off. Over the next fifty years, the firm crafted a bespoke industrial estate at the place they named Bournville, developing an iconic modern headquarters that was meticulously designed to materialise and facilitate Cadbury's business, social reform, and aesthetic ambitions. It was during these first decades at Bournville that Cadbury's was transformed from a small operation into a globally recognised household name. Theatre was an important part of that story, and an astonishing amount of it was staged at the site between 1900 and 1935. As 1914's summer works party has already indicated, Cadbury's factory buildings and grounds were used as venues and backdrops for entertainments in which thousands of employees participated. Smaller theatrical performances were a popular feature of factory parties and other in-house and external events. Readings, skits, and semi- and fully staged productions of plays were key elements of the content and pedagogy of the firm's adult education programmes and common activities for many of the factory's recreational societies. A wide range of factory staff were involved in these entertainments. Adults and children, clerks, chocolate box-makers, engineers, handymen, typists, the firm's resident dentist, gymnastics instructors, chemists, in-house artists, journalists and designers, forewomen and foremen worked alongside each other to make Cadbury's theatre. Occasionally, these home-grown casts were supplemented by professional performers, playwrights, and producers, a practice that interwove the Birmingham-based Quaker cocoa and chocolate makers with the birth of the city's first repertory theatre company, local visual artists, and wider, national entertainment cultures, celebrities, and trends.

Bournville's theatrical repertoire was similarly expansive. In addition to tableaux vivants, outdoor plays and masques, pantomimes, folk dancing, revues, burlesques, Punch and Judy shows, operettas, comic sketches, avant-garde new writing, concert parties, maypole dancing, ventriloquism,

magic shows, and musical comedies were all familiar fare for Bournville's audiences. Factory entertainments included pieces specifically written for local performers and spectators that were dependent on factory knowledge, in jokes, and representations of familiar Cadbury's personalities, alongside examples that are familiar from contemporary amateur theatre and educational drama repertoires, music hall acts, fairground entertainments, emerging regional repertory theatre programming, and experimental theatrical groups focused on staging new writing. The factory's performance culture was made possible by the creation of a series of inside and outside, temporary and permanent, licensed, and unlicensed performance spaces at Bournville. Between 1900 and 1935, these included an outdoor auditorium on the Girls' Recreation Grounds, proscenium arch stages in the Girls' and Men's Dining Rooms, temporary platform stages in the Lecture Room, the Clerks' Club, the Sports Pavilion, and the Girls' Swimming Baths and the construction of a Concert Hall seating around 1,050 within the factory buildings. The need for these spaces is evidenced by records of the audiences that attended factory entertainments. Even the most conservative of calculations based on *Bournville Works Magazine* accounts of sell-out performances considered alongside the capacities of factory performance spaces indicates that tens of thousands of employees and others watched theatre staged at the factory. The size and demographic of these audiences varied: some entertainments were restricted to factory staff, while others were open, and advertised, to the wider public. Some were free admission, while others required the purchase of a ticket. Audience sizes ranged from 30 to more than 3,500 and represented both quiet, seated auditoriums of spectators and peripatetic, multi-generational, outdoor crowds. To try and capture a sense of those who watched theatre at Bournville it is worth noting that – depending on the event – these audiences could include Cadbury's employees, local residents, journalists, local dignitaries, political representatives, and international specialists in industrial communities, education, human relations, science, technology, town planning, and social reform. In addition to the live reception of these events, several of the factory's entertainments were filmed by the firm and screened to cinema goers in the Birmingham area, and countrywide. Accounts of both the size of Bournville's audiences and the different groups of individuals factory performances entertained indicate the scale, reach and multiple functions of Cadbury's theatrical activity during the first decades of the twentieth century: activity that was deliberately enabled and encouraged by the firm's key business principles, organisational structure, and people and estate management.

Today, Bournville continues to connote a 'golden era' of British industrial heritage – the heyday of British manufacturing. An image that has been sustained despite its merger with Schweppes in 1969 and the hostile takeover by the American company Kraft Foods/Mondelez International that significantly reshaped the brand's story in the early twenty-first century. Early twentieth-century architecture, landscapes, and features continue to prevail in Bournville's factory buildings, green spaces and adjacent village with their now familiar, utopian-inflected Arts and Crafts aesthetic. Lampposts in the distinctive shade of purple that has typified Cadbury's packaging and company image since 1914 demarcate the area. On the surface, Bournville is chocolate box Britain. It oozes a nostalgic charm. A visit is unlikely to prompt an immediate sense that you are occupying spaces that ruptured and redefined thinking around work, life, industry, and social reform in the early twentieth century. But beneath that surface lies an architecturally and socially engineered landscape connected with lingering ideals of a new industrial culture and progressive, employee-focused management, one that has moulded many of our ideas about British industrial heritage and social reform. In this book, I propose that making sense of Cadbury's history – and the wider industrial history it shaped – depends on recovering the intangible culture that Bournville's factory spaces were designed to enable. That creativity, play, and theatre shaped and defined the firm's identity, securing its continuing industrial success and enduring legacy. Factory performances actively contributed to the creation of Bournville as a powerful site that sat at the core of Cadbury's company image, advertised chocolate and cocoa products, and showcased the firm's progressive employee welfare schemes through the active performing bodies of its staff. Theatre shaped and represented Cadbury's. Every Bournville performance was simultaneously work and play.

Playing at Work and Working at Play

Theatre formed part of the extensive range of out-of-work hours recreational and educational activities that Cadbury's provided for its employees. Between 1900 and 1935, Bournville workers could choose from a range of free or heavily subsidised pastimes delivered by the firm that included gardening, cycling, ballroom dancing, literature, gymnastics, motoring, athletics, model yachting, photography, radio, chess, swimming, hockey, netball, cricket, folk dancing, music, and theatre. While a key impetus behind this provision was the Cadbury family's Quaker-led commitment to 'social duty', ethical business practices, and the reinvestment of excess

capital into good working conditions, engaging staff in recreational pastimes was also understood to make good business sense (Cadbury, 1912: xii). The success and familiar public image of Bournville's factory community owed much to the dominant image and practices of Quaker businesses that had emerged in the early eighteenth century and been strengthened during the nineteenth. By the time the founder of Cadbury Bros, John Cadbury (1801–1889), started selling cocoa at his shop in Birmingham's Bull street, Quakerism and ethical, honest, productive business practices were aligned. Deborah Cadbury's C*hocolate Wars,* a history of cocoa and chocolate production, firmly locates Cadbury's within the movement of Quaker Capitalism; a distinctive commercial sector characterised by a network of high-profile family businesses and a strong reputation for ethical business practice (2010: 43–44; see also King, 2014; Turnbull, 2014; Mees, 2016). Beginning with a group of seventy-four family banks that accrued a strong, collective, enduring reputation for honesty and integrity and careful, rigorous day-to-day financial accounting and management, Quaker industrialists came to shape turn-of-the-century British industry with market-leading companies including Bryant and May, Clarks, Frys, Carrs, Rowntrees, and Allen and Hanbury sharing Quaker origins and business practices. To put this in context, Richard Turnbull has noted that in 1850 Quakers represented just over 0.5 per cent of the British population; a striking statistic that further emphasises the extent of their leadership of manufacturing and banking (9–10). Two reasons are regularly offered for this phenomenon. First, that the longstanding prohibition of the Friends (and other non-conformists) from British teaching universities and selected professions that remained in place for most of the nineteenth century drove Quakers towards banking and manufacturing. Second, that the qualities fostered through Quaker practice and the ways in which the faith's central tenets aligned with effective business practice and people management proved a sound formula for commercial success. In his 1912 early business studies manual, *Experiments in Industrial Organisation,* Edward Cadbury (1873–1948) – George Cadbury's son, Managing Director of the firm from 1899 to 1937, Chairman from 1937 to 1943, and devout Quaker – devoted a full chapter to the 'recreative and social institutions' that the firm established and supported at Bournville, opening with the statement that recognising the 'value of the development of the employees socially' was critical to Cadbury's innovative people management, creative product design, and marketing and commercial success (221). Rather than staid and static, the Quaker business model proved adaptive and responsive through generations of Cadbury leadership.

Factory recreational activities took place at lunchtime or after work, in indoor and outdoor spaces, and were delivered through various models. Some were run by specialist members of part-time permanent staff – the firm had gymnastics instructors and musical directors on the payroll. Others were managed by societies and committees comprised of employees, or by factory departments or management. All were facilitated, funded, and monitored to some extent by the firm's senior management teams and executive board through a complex structure of welfare and recreation committees. The logistics and demands on resources that delivering such a large-scale programme of recreational activity required should not be underestimated. Staff numbers at Bournville increased from around 300 on the firm's move to the greenfield site in 1879 to 3,600 in 1902. By 1911, Cadbury's employees numbered 5,700, and further growth took that number to more than 8,000 in 1936. Some of these staff members worked away at satellite sites in Britain or around the world, or were employed as travelling sales representatives, but the majority were based at Bournville and had regular access to the recreational and educational schemes it offered. Edward Cadbury's *Experiments in Industrial Organisation* documented the interest that Cadbury's focus on employee physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health attracted and cemented the firm's reputation as a world leader in innovative industrial approaches. By 1901, the American economist and social welfare specialist Dr William Howe Tolman (1861–1928) had identified Bournville as 'the most comprehensive' international prototype of industrial betterment: a slow-grown model, grounded in trust between employer and employee; an 'application station' where experimental ideas had been established and delivered (928). Industrial betterment was accepted as business as usual at Cadbury's by the time of Bournville's first performances.

Experiments in Industrial Organisation was followed by other texts, published in-house or externally, that offered detailed information about the recreational opportunities Cadbury's provided, and the positive impacts that these were understood to have on business and employee wellbeing. Brandon Head's 1903 *Food of the Gods: A Popular Account of Cocoa* took Bournville as a key case study. Head dedicated ten pages to images and descriptions of the sports and hobbies on offer at the factory, presenting these activities as an 'aggressive sign of the firm's belief in the motto 'mens sano in corpore sano' (a healthy mind in a healthy body) and of the 'thoughtful care abundantly evident in the general air of health and comfort which pervades the whole factory' (54). Interest in the Cadbury's business model continued to grow as the twentieth century progressed, with

business leaders and thinkers paying increasing attention to the firm's ability to ride out periods of economic uncertainty and depression, while their competitors floundered. As Charles Dellheim has since noted, 'the success of Cadbury's is all the more impressive because the company prospered as Britain declined economically' (1987: 14). The firm continued to position recreation at the core of their operation and its ongoing success throughout such challenging periods. In his 1931 business history of Cadbury's, Iola Williams also dedicated a chapter to coverage of the firm's welfare and recreational schemes, celebrating the 'opportunities for a fuller understanding and enjoyment of life [that are] open to those who work there' (190). 1936's *Bournville Works and its Institutions,* published a year after the end date for this study of theatre at Bournville (and produced in-house on Cadbury's printing presses) reiterated, and celebrated, the range of sports, theatre, dance, music, and art activities that were delivered at the factory, alongside information about the firm's education programmes and the material resources and spaces that were freely supplied to facilitate both. In this publication the language framing Cadbury's recreational activities as a business strategy is particularly authoritative and confident. The opening statement records that the publication was prompted by 'frequently expressed demands for information in a concise form regarding the various schemes and institutions connected' with the factory. *Bournville Works and Its Institutions* offered readers no explanation, justification, or discussion of the firm's practices. Its language and contents represent both assured acceptance of the rationale behind offering recreation to employees and the value of recreation to the firm, and a realisation of the firm as *the* model for industrial betterment working practices and structures (3).

The shared consensus of these publications had been clearly articulated in 1926's short book *Work and Play,* also printed in-house and designed to be circulated to factory visitors and journalists. 'Work and Play are two distinct subjects', it opens:

> We think of them, indeed, as things quite opposite. But oppositeness implies a relation, and the nature of the relation on closer consideration is seen to be complementary rather than antithetical. To reach our point in a stride, the main purpose of these pages is to show that, as far as industrial life today is concerned, Work and Play are not only closely related subjects, but *one* subject (1).

At Cadbury's, play was an element of business. Theatre and performance then – as key areas of factory play and playing in the factory – were also a recognised part of Bournville's business, and one that was understood to offer significant public-facing and community-building potential.

Through the examples I introduce and discuss in this book, I will argue that theatre and performance activity at Cadbury's headquarters needs to be understood on its own terms. As its own category. It is tempting to turn to definitions and understanding of amateur performance in relation to activity at Bournville. However, while factory events and activities can be productively aligned with Nadine Holdsworth, Jane Milling, and Helen Nicholson's definition of amateur work as 'an ecology of practices' that 'recognises shared knowledge', creates 'friendships and informal networks', 'shapes lives, defines communities and contributes to place-making', the role of Bournville's theatre in *and as* business simultaneously locates it as part of, and distinct from, this world (2018: 6). Cadbury's theatre and performance did all these things, but it cannot be neatly defined as amateur. Most of the performers may have been amateur actresses, actors, stage managers, designers, or producers (some were not, as this suggests), but they performed those roles as part of their professional work identities and their performances were recognised as beneficial to the business operation. Performers were employees – appearing as themselves and as embodiments of Cadbury's cultural and social values and business strategies. Part amateur, part professional, these performances sat at the intersection of work and play: or, following Cadbury's definition, modelled their fusion as subjects that were not 'closely related', but 'one subject'.

Bodies at Work: Theatre, Sport, and Recreation

If familiar at all, the ideas introduced in the section above are most likely to be recognisable from knowledge of organised company sports. While theatre at Bournville has attracted a small amount of interest in works on performance history, amateur theatre, visual culture, and individuals connected with the firm (Hoffman, 1993; Nicholson, 2004; Holdsworth, Milling and Nicholson, 2018), there has been a recent surge of scholarly interest in recreational sport at factory estates, with publications in a range of disciplinary areas including social history, urban geography, and town planning focusing on Bournville and other industrial communities (McCrone, 1991; Bromhead, 2000; Chance, 2007, 2012, 2017; Crewe, 2014; Vamplew, 2015, 2016). The traces of Bournville's historic sporting culture are easier to detect than any material remains of the factory's performances: sports pitches, pavilions and pools still mark the estate's landscape. Yet, during the first decades of the twentieth century, there was far less separation of these two core areas of recreational activity than we have tended to assume from our present-day perspectives, experiences, and

disciplinary foci. Bournville's sporting and theatrical events were invariably viewed through similar lenses, and they were regularly described in a shared language that concentrated on the display and embodied spectacles they offered. Football and cricket matches, plays, burlesques, costumed dance, and swimming and diving displays were regularly scheduled on the same entertainment programmes, and described as 'acts' within them. Sporting matches and displays framed by theatrical narratives and featuring costumed characters were drawn on to entertain Bournville's spectators, with football and cricket burlesques proving popular attractions at the firm's summer works parties. Faced with the challenge of piecing together remaining evidence to capture past live events, it is all too easy to lose sight of the bodies that created them; but these bodies were critical to Cadbury's. The plays, sporting matches, tableaux vivants, and other entertainments that constituted a significant part of Cadbury's culture of spectacle presented the healthy bodies of the firm's employees in a space designed for, and dedicated to, their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Sport and theatre shared and exhibited visual and verbal languages of display that underpinned and promoted Cadbury's recreational schemes. The firm's belief in the health and community benefits of competitive spirit further entwined theatrical and sporting activity at the factory site. Elements of Bournville's theatre were clearly framed as competitive events. For one clear example of this dynamic, we can return to the inter-factory tableaux vivants competitions, including the 1914 occasion that saw 'Orinocco Assorted' claim first prize. Eisteddfods were also organised for the Bournville community and staged on the recreation grounds. Categories included best departmental production of a set scene, and monologue and duologue competitions. Prizes and Dramatic Arts Scholarships were awarded for playwriting and for acting; a process that involved external industry professionals.

Competition and performance, sport and theatre were familiar playmates at the factory. As late as 1923, theatrical productions were referred to as 'fixtures' in the Cadbury's season (*B.W.M.,* May 1923: 148). Nonetheless, consideration of sport has been notably absent from the brief explorations of the factory's theatre and performance that have appeared to date, and vice versa. Kathleen McCrone's assertion in an article focused on Bournville that 'during the nineteenth century the complicated processes of industrialization and urbanization produced a revolution in leisure and recreation of which sport was the most spectacular' characterises this pattern (1991: 159). Cadbury's sport was indeed spectacular, but it took place within, and as part of, a wider culture of carefully crafted industrial spectacle that was