



THE CITADEL

Newsletter of the Barony of Cynnabar in the Midrealm

Spring 2017

Chronicler

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This is the Summer 2015, issue of the Citadel, a publication of the Barony of Cynnabar of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA, Inc.)

The Citadel is available from

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251 Stevens Dr, apt 202
Ypsilanti, MI, 48197

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Baronial Chronicler, *Gavriil Petrovich* (above) pictured with Deputy, *Ceara inghean Mhuirgheasa* (elsewhere)

*“Submit (your articles) now, or the next newsletter
will be written in BLOOD!”*

-Gavriil, Cynnabar Chronicler (Jan 1st 2015- April 1st 2017)

It has been a pleasure, truly, to serve the populace as Chronicler. I dearly hope that this publication continues to serve our barony and provide the news and helpful information that draws us closer together. I wish the best to my successor whom I will always grant the benefit of my experience and regard with the dignity that the office bestows.

In humble service, Gavriil Petrovich.

Liquorice

Contributed by THL Johnnae llyn Lewis, CE

Of Lyqueryce

“Lyqueryce is good to clense and to open up the lunges
& the brest, & to doth loose fleume.”

*Andrew Boorde. **Dyetary.** 1542*

“But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys, to smellen sweete”

*Chaucer. **The Miller’s Tale.***

Mention licorice today and often the image, which comes to mind are the hated black jellybeans of childhood Easter basket candy or the red Twizzler twists or the black Dots or possibly the black middle candy in the Chuckles package. The red we liked; the black ones, well, not so much. We know licorice today as these and other sweets comprised primarily of sugar and gelatin. We certainly know what we think the flavor of licorice is, but in reality, modern licorice sweets are mostly made with something other than the root of a true licorice. Back in the medieval period, licorice was a matter of medicinal taproots and branch roots. Sometimes one chewed the root in a raw state to extract an obvious sweetness, but more often the roots were boiled and processed into concoctions and extracts for a variety of conditions and illnesses, ranging from coughing to congestions, ulcers, and stomach ills. So how did the medicinal plant dating back to ancient Assyria, China and India and Alexander the Great become the modern sweet?

The Word

“Glycyrrhiza called in latin Radix dulcis is named in english Lycores,
in duch Sueszholtz, or Lycoris or Clarish.”

*William Turner **Names of Herbes** 1548*

“Of Licorise. Lycorise is so saide, especially through the Greeke word,
for that it hath a sweete roote.”

*J. Maplet **Greene Forest.** 1567.*

If we begin with the word licorice, we find it has two common spellings in modern English. **The Oxford English Dictionary** lists both liquorice and licorice. The former is the preferred version in England; the latter is

used in America. The word may refer to the plant, the root, or the “sweetmeat” or candy. In terms of etymology, it derives from Anglo-Norman *lycorys* and Old French *licorice*. If one traces back far enough, one reaches the Latinized *glycyrrhiza* meaning “sweet root”. Just to make things interesting with regards to research and keyword searching, **OED** lists a full paragraph of variations with regard to how the word was spelled in Middle English and later sources. (I counted thirty-nine variations. **The Middle English Dictionary** lists perhaps half that number of variants.) For the sake of the reader, I shall try to use just licorice and liquorice, except when dealing with historical material. We’ll start our exploration with a brief look at the botanical side before moving into medical remedies and sweets, primarily concentrating on English works and contributions.

The Plant

the root is straight, yellow within, and browne without:
of a sweet and pleasant taste.
Gerard, John. **The Herball**.

Glycyrrhiza glaba or the licorice plant is best described as a perennial shrub, growing to be one to three feet tall. It’s native to southeast Europe and western Asia and still grows wild from across southern Europe, into Russia, the Middle East, and then into Afghanistan. It’s a member of the pea family but doesn’t form vines. The taproot, branch roots, and runners can spread from as much as three feet to as long as twenty feet. Those roots are harvested after growing four to five years. Sources indicate it was being grown in Italy in the thirteenth century, followed by France and Spain with it appearing in Bavaria in the fifteenth century. Licorice is still grown commercially today in Spain, Turkey, Italy, and France. Concentrated licorice extracts are available as syrups, blocks, or powders. Experts or licorice connoisseurs pride themselves on being able to tell the difference between extracts from the different countries.

According to Richard Mabey’s **Flora Britannica**, wild liquorice, *astragalus glycyphyllos*, may be found growing wild on rough grasslands in Britain. True liquorice, *Glycyrrhiza glaba*, was grown as a heavily mucked and cultivated plant but never grew wild in Britain. John Gerard reported it grew “wild in sundry places of Germany wilde, and France and Spaine.” Gerard also reported he grew it in his garden with success. Richard Tomlinson in his translation of Jean de Renou’s 1623 **Dispensatorium Medicum** writes the roots were harvested in July, then purged and brayed, placed in water, percolated, and the juice expressed. The juice was

then evaporated by sun or by the fire and kept. "That is best, which is sweetist, soft, new, pure, tenacious, blackest, and which is totally liquescible upon the tongue." He recommended the liquorice which came from Spain.

In Gerard's time, liquorice was already being grown commercially at Worksop in Nottinghamshire, at Godalming, Surrey and most famously at Pontefract, Yorkshire (**Agrarian history**, 175) A late eighteenth century agricultural report from a Mr. Hally, seedsman and nurseryman at Pontefract, described its cultivation in Yorkshire:

The soil most proper for liquorice, is that of a deep, light, sandy loam. It is trenched three feet, well dunged, and planted with stocks and runners in the months of February and March, on beds of one yard wide, thrown up in ridges, with alleys betwixt them, and the beds hoed and hand-weeded. The first year a crop of onions, is taken in the alleys, and the tops of the liquorice cut over every year. The ground is trenched when the liquorice is taken up, and all the fibres cut off. A considerable quantity more than 100 acres, is cultivated in this neighbourhood. It is a very precarious plant, often rotten by wetness, and also hurt by sharp frosts in the spring, and dry weather afterwards. Rent of the land, upon which it is cultivated, about 3 *l.* per acre. Rennie. 1794.

Pontefract's local liquorice production had largely ceased by WW II. Dr. Iona McCLeery states the last commercial crop was grown in 1966. Production, albeit limited, was slated to return to the area according to an article in **The Guardian** in 2012. The liquorice fields and factories once provided regional employment with the local saying for generations having been 'Lads down the pits, lasses into liquorice'. The area still hosts an annual liquorice festival and produces the famous Pontefract cakes, but imported roots have been used for decades as they are cheaper.

The Flavor and Chemistry

Famed food scientist and author Harold McGee notes the roots of licorice contain *glycyrrhizic* acid which is 50-150 times sweeter than table sugar. Most reference sources repeat this claim with most simply stating 50 times sweeter. Cookbook author Mimi Sheraton counters and notes that the acknowledged sweetness is still not enough to offset the bitterness found in true liquorice. McGee notes licorice can soothe coughs but it can disrupt "mineral and blood pressure levels." True licorice is not recommended for people with a number of chronic conditions, including liver problems, hypertension and edema. It should also be avoided by pregnant women. The US regulates it as a supplement which means it's largely unregulated as to health claims or purity.

(Checking **WebMD** is a good course of action if one wants to embark upon true liquorice cookery or confectionary.) As a word of warning, not everything sold as licorice is actually true liquorice or *Glycyrrhiza glaba*. The Chinese use an offshoot of licorice, *Glycyrrhiza Uralensis*, in their herbal medicines; it's not the same plant as that used in English sources or cookery. Roots of true licorice can be purchased from a number of places, including of course Amazon.com.

It turns out that what we describe as the sought-after licorice flavor can be achieved from a number of unrelated plants. *Anethole* is the flavor molecule being sought, and it can be found in other plants including anise and aniseed, fennel, sweet cicely, hyssop, the pericarp of star anise, as well as true licorice. To no surprise, we find licorice combined with these other plants or products early on. Perhaps this was done to stretch the supply of licorice or to better enhance the sought-after flavor or humoral benefits.

Recipes illustrating this combining of *Anethole* rich plants include a number from the sixteenth century. **The Garden of Health** from 1597 advises “Drinke powder of Licoras and Anniseedes with possit ale made with Sacke and Ale, for the stuffing of the lungs.” Under fennel, we find “53 Cough extreame, seethe the roots [of fennel] with bruised Aniseed & Licoras in White wine, and drinke a good draught to bedward, and in the morning eat a Figge and a Date roasted, somewhat hote, two or three houres before meat, and doe so three or foure times.” Thomas Dawson offers up a recipe for “An excellent drinke for the Tissicke well approued” which calls for “fennell roots,” “half a handful of Licoris sticks scraped, brused and beaten to a fine powder,” plus Anniseed and Fennell seeds.

Medical Uses

Carry him this sticke of Licoras,
tell him his Mistresse sent it him, and bid him bite a peece,
'twill open his pipes the better, say.

F. Beaumont. **Knight of Burning Pestle**. 1613.

The early medicinal or apothecary literature is quite vast and exhaustive; it also extended into a number of other domestic and professional guides and even into the early printed cookery books. John Partridge's cookery book **The Widowes Treasure** included licorice in recipes for “To take away the Cough or Stitche” and “Against stuffing of the Lungen, but then rather startlingly to our modern senses and ears included it in this

remedy “A drench to plume vp a horsse, and to expell colde, to cleare him of the Glaunders and to open the pipes.” It called for licorice and ale. Finding a cough remedy for a child or senior in a recipe book is one thing, but one that also ventures into and offers up treatments for horses seems unusual even for Elizabethan times. It turns out Partridge’s book is subtitled “**with many profitable and holesome medicines for sundrie diseases in cattell,**” so it shouldn’t be so surprising to find either this recipe included in such a cookery book or the licorice in the recipe.

More typically and contemporary with Partridge, the 1579 **An Hospitall for the diseased** offers a variety of remedies for conditions such as: “To aid in digestion”, “cough of the lunges,” “syrop for a cough”, “medicine for the cough”, and “the whesing, to breake the steame and for the Cough”, and “an easy purgation” all calling for liquorice. The ingredient also appears in this oddly titled for in this remedy:

Against the corrupt ayre.

Take Betanie, Centorie, and Egrimonie, of eache a handfull, and stampe them and straine them with ale and with a Licoras sticke brused, and then boile it, and clarifie it, and make it pleasaunt with Sugar, and drinke thereof euery mornyng blood warme three spoonefulles, three or fower daies.

An hospitall for the diseased. 1579 [The daies may be dates and not days. Dates and liquorice are a favorite combination.]

Here’s another representative remedy which is taken as a powder:

A medicine for the cough and the whesing.

Take a pound of suger Candy somewhat finely beaten, halfe a pound of Licoras seared, and halfe a pound of Anniseedes seared, and an ounce of the powder of Ginger, an ounce of Elicompane rootes, made into powder and mingle these together, and take of the same powder halfe a spoonefull at a time, when you goe to bed and when you rise in the morning. **An hospitall for the diseased. 1579.**

One of the best summaries of the medical conditions for which licorice might be used is located in the description given in William Langham’s **The Garden of Health** from 1597. Liquorice also turns up in other entries in Langham (see above paragraph on flavor), but here in its own entry, Langham begins: “**Licoras.** *Llicoras:* The root is good against the roughnesse of the throat and breast, it openeth and cleanseth Lungs that be stuft and loden, it ripeneth the cough, and bringeth foorth flegme being chewed, and so doeth the iuice of the roote taken in like sort, and for the same cause they make a kinde of small cakes or bread against the Cough with the iuice of *Lycoras* mixt with Ginger and other spices: but the same serueth but for olde and colde Coughs & like infirmities of the Lungs.” Langham’s long and involved list continues with ‘quenishing the thirst, good for

the liver, against ulcers of the kidneys and bladder, and when mixed with honey heals sores and ulcers'. Number 9 states "The fine powder of it put into y^e eares, helpeth the running & sores therof." Number 15 is "Heart burning, chewe *Licoras* and swallow downe the iuice and spit out the rest. bene sodden in." Number 18 continues "A dredge powder: take fine powder of *Licoras* and Anniseeds of ech one pound, suger candy two pound, Peper & Ginger of ech two ounces: mixe them and vse it for most inward griefes." 23 ends with "Feuers generall, seeth a quart of white vineger with Saunders and *Lycoras*, of ech one peni worth to the one halfe, and drinke a spoonefull or two at once." [Langham 1597]

By the mid seventeenth century the Countess of Kent was still calling for "powder of Licorice" in her recipes for "For an extream Cold and a Cough" and for sticks of licorice in "A most singular Sirupe for the Lungs, and to prevent the Consumption." By the 18th century liquorice still appears often in remedies for a variety of conditions. Another key ingredient by these times seems to involve the combination of opium and liquorice. (In his **The New Age Herbalist**, Richard Mabey suggests licorice was used in many historical concoctions because it both sweetened and masked bitter tastes. My thought is perhaps this is why it was being used to mask the opium.) By 1718, the **Pharmacopœia pauperum: or, the hospital dispensatory** calls for liquorice in this remedy titled: D. M—'s Water for the Evil "which was famously said to be good for other conditions, not previously mentioned: *"This also avails considerably in Venereal and Leprous Impurities."*

Drinks

Liquorice was used historically and still is used in the brewing of beers, aperitifs, dark beers, porters, and stout, including Guinness. Famous drinks which taste of licorice or *Anethole* include absinthe, anis, anisette, ouzo, patis, and Sambuca. It was also an ingredient in barley waters which then subbed lemon in for the licorice and or the barley as time went on. In 1597 Langham had advised "and drinke Barley water with Licoras." (A full survey on barley waters, including those with licorice, appears in my earlier **Tournaments Illuminated** article.) For readers here, I will just include this medicinal barley water recipe:

XXXII. For a Cough of the Lungs, or any Cough coming of Cold, approved by many.

Take a good handful of French Barley, boil it in several waters till you see the water be clear, then take a quart of the last water, and boil in it sliced Licoras, Aniseeds bruised, of each as much as you can take up with your four Fingers and your Thumb, Violet Leaves, Strawberry Leaves, five fingered Grass, Maidenhair, of each half a

handful, a few Raisins in the Sun stoned; boil these together till it come to a Pint, then strain it, and take twelve or fourteen Iordan Almonds blanched and beaten, and when your water is almost cold, put in your Almonds, and stir it together, and strain it; then sweeten it with white Sugar Candy; drink this at four times, in the morning fasting, and at four of the Clock in the Afternoon a little warmed; do this nine or ten days together; if you please, you may take a third draught when you go to Bed; if you be bound in your body. put in a little Syrrup of Violets, the best way to take it, is to suck it through a straw, for that conveys it to the Lungs the better. Woolley

Other drinks of sorts were the cordials and syrups. The 1608 **Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen** includes cookery, confectionary and medicinal recipes. In the cookery section, the work includes a variety of syrups which use liquorice, including “Syrupe of Maydenhaire” which calls for “of Liquorish one ounce scraped and sliced” and a “Syrupe of Hore-Hound” which uses another ounce of Liquorish. The **Closet** also offers this recipe for

[82] To make Syrupe of Liquorish.

TAke your Liquorish eight ounces, and scrape it verie cleane, and briuse it verie well, and mayden haire one ounce, Anyseede, and Fennell seede of each halfe an ounce, steepe these in foure pintes of raine water halfe a day, and then boyle it to a quart, then take a pound and a halfe of clarified suger, and boyle it with that liquor, till it come to a Syrupe, and then put it vp and keepe it. **Closet for Ladies.** 1608.

The **Closet** also includes this recipe for Rosa Solis, which was an important distilled cordial of the time.

This version calls for licorice.

[65] Rosa Solis.

TAke Liquerish eight ounces, Aniseed, Caraway, of each an ounce, Raysons stoned, Dates, of each three ounces, Nutmegs, ginger, Cynamon, Mace, of each halfe an ounce, Gallingle a quarter of an onnce, Cubebs one dram, Figs two ounces, Suger foure ounces, bruse these and destill it with a gallon of Aqua vitae as the rest: but when it is distilled, you must coulour it with the herbe Rosa Solis, or else Alkanet roote. Rosa Solis with licorice appears in recipe books for at least another two centuries.

Rosa Solis.

TAKE rosa solis, clean picked, four handfuls, nutmegs, carraway and coriander-seeds, mace, cloves, cinnamon, each half an ounce; ginger, cardamums, zedoary, calamus aromaticus, each a dram and a half; cubebs, yellow saunders, each half a dram; red saunders an ounce, liquorice two ounces, red rose-leaves dried a handful, best brandy a gallon: Infuse for some days, and strain off the clear liquor, in which dissolve white sugar twelve ounces. Mrs. Taylor. 1795?

Gingerbread

There sprung herbs great and small,
the licorice and ginger and many a clove and nutmeg ...
Chaucer. The Tale of Sir Topas.

John Gerard summed up the use of licorice in gingerbread with these words: “Moreouer, with the juice of Licorice, Ginger, and other spices, there is made a certaine bread or cakes, called Ginger-bread, which is very

good against the cough, and all the infirmities of lungs and brest: which is cast into moulds, some of one fashion, and some of another.”

Not all gingerbread recipes called for licorice. Here are two gingerbread recipes which do:

To make course Ginger bread, take a quart of hony and set it on the coales and refine it: then take a penny worth of Ginger, as much pepper, as much Licoras, and a quarter of a pound of Aniseeds, and a penny worth of Saunders: All these must be beaten and searsed, and so put into the hony: then put in a quarter of a pint of Clar|ret wine or old Ale: then take three penny Manchets finely grated and strow it amongst the rest, and stirre it till it come to a stiffe Past, and then make it into Cakes and drie them gently, Markham 1623

CCXXXIV. To make Ginger-bread.

Take three stale Manchets grated and sifed, then put to them half an Ounce of Cinamon, as much Ginger, half an Ounce of Licoras and Aniseeds together, beat all these and searce them, and put them in with half a Pound of fine Sugar, boil all these together with a quart of Claret, stirring them continually till it come to a stiff Paste, then when it is almost cold, mould it on a Table with some searced Spice and Sugar, then bake it in what shape you please. Woolley

Confections Then

O the sugarcandy of the delicate bagpipe there:
and ô the licorise of the diuine dulcimers there.
G. Harvey. [Pierces Supererogation](#) 1593

Now we come to the question of when did liquorice or licorice become merely a candy and lose its medicinal associations. Since the liquorice root can be chewed for flavor and sweetness, should it be regarded as a candy stick of sorts? Perhaps liquorice has always been a candy? References, sources, and food historians may mention the root, but then they vary as to where or when the candies, sweets, or confections began, and truthfully, there may be more than one source or place as to where it all began. Historians promoting Pontefract or Pomfret Cakes assert George Dunhill, a local apothecary, created them first by adding sugar to liquorice and thus invented liquorice confections in 1760. This ignores the fact sugar was already being added to various liquorice items prior to 1760. Sir Hugh Plat included “liquericice” as an option in his general paste recipe which appears in his 1602 *Delightes for Ladies*.

40. To make paste of Violets, Roses, Marigolds, Cowslips, or liquericice.

SHred, or rather powder the dry leaues of your flower, putting thereunto some fine powder of Ginger, Cinamon, and a little muske if you please, mixe them all confusedly together, then dissolue some sugar in Rosewater, and be|ing boyled a little, put some saffron therein, if you worke vpon Marigolds, or else you may leaue out your saffron, boyle it on the fire vnto a sufficient height, you must also mixe therewith the pap of a roasted apple being first well dried in a dishe ouer a chafing dish of coales, then poure it vpon a

trencher, beeing first sprinkled ouer with Rosewater, and with a knife worke the paste together. Then breake some sugar candy small, but not to powder, and with gumme dragagant, fasten it heere and there to make it seeme as if it were roch candied, cut the paste into peeces of what fashiō you list with a knife first wet in Rosewater.

In licorice paste you must leaue out the pap of the pippin, and then worke your paste into drie rolles. Remember to searce the liquorice through a fine searce. These rolles are very good against any cough or colde. Plat. **Delightes**. 1602.

Here is a recipe from the 1608 **Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen** which calls for “liquorish pouder” to be mixed with “suger-candy.”

[70] To make pectorall rowles for the Cough.

TAke liquorish pouder finely searsed one ounce, of the spices of Diatragacanthum frigidum ij. drams, of Gum-arabecke and Tragarant in fine powder, of each a dram, white starch halfe a dram, Aniseeds in fine pouder one ounce mingle with the rest, then take of suger sixe ounces, of Pennits an ounce and halfe, Suger-candy one ounce powdred & mingled with the former powder, then take Gum-tragacant steeped in Rose water and bear it into past, and so make it into long rowles and so drie them, and keepe them. **A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen**. 1608.

As I explained in my annotated edition of the 1608 **Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen**, “a pectoral roll is a medicinal recipe for digestive or respiratory complaints.” It’s an early form of a cough drop, and when is a cough drop not a candy of sorts? (Ask any schoolchild who has attended educational institutions where sweet cough drops were allowed and even encouraged, but actual “candies” were forbidden.) Here is another recipe for a pectoral roule.

To make Pectorall Roules for a Cold.

Take four ounces of Sugar finely beaten, and half an ounce of searsed Licorice, two graines of Musk, and the weight of two pence of the sirupe of Licorice, and so beat it up to a perfect paste, with a little sirupe of Horehound, and a little *Gumdragon* being steeped in Rosewater, then toul them in small roulles, and dry them, and so you may keep them all the whole year. Countess of Kent.

So is this a candy recipe since one is instructed to boil, dry, and then mould the finished product with sugar? When does the medicinal become the confection? Still later in the seventeenth century, there appears this recipe for another moulded licoras cake.

CXXII. To make the black Iuice of Licoras.

Take two Gallons of running Water, three handfults of unset Hysop, three pounds and half of Licoras scraped, and dried in the Sun and beaten, then cover it close, and boil it almost a whole day in the Water, when it is enough, it will be as thick as Cream, then let it stand all night, the next morning strain it, and put it in several Pans in the Sun to dry, till it will work like wax, then mould it with White Sugar Candy beaten and searsed, and print it in little Cakes, and print them with Seals, and dry them. Woolley

Professor Ken Albala in his entry on “Licorice” in **The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets** mentions early licorice confections as being those of the mid eighteenth century. These 1749 recipes included ones like these:

The Juice of Liquorice is prepared several Ways whence we have many different Sorts of it. One Sort is brought from Spain in black hard Cakes or Rolls and covered with Bay Leaves. It is extracted from the Root by boiling it in Water and evaporating the Decoction to A due Consistence. The other Sorts are prepared in the Shops. These are white and black Juices and that of Blois. Thickness. 1749.

The Liquorice Juice of Blois is prepared thus: Take of Gum Arabick grossly pounded lbiv, Sugar lbij, Liquorice dried, scraped, bruised lbij. Infuse the Liquorice for 24 Hours in lbxxx of Water. Divide strained Liquour into three Parts, in two which dissolve the Gum Arabick over a slow Fire and pass it through an Hair Sieve; boil it with the remaining Part of the to the Consistence of a Plaister, adding Sugar towards the End, and stirring it continually to make it white. Thickness. 1749.

Albala explicitly mentions that licorice candies usually include sugar, and binders, including cornstarch, gum Arabic, gum Senegal, gelatin, and gum tragacanth, to make them chewy. If binders are needed to make the licorice items into confections, then the 1608's **Closet's** recipe for "pectorall rowles for the Cough" including "suger-candy," "liquorish pouders finely searsed" along with "Gum-arabecke and Tragarant" should be a liquorice candy. The Countess of Kent's 1653 recipe for "Pectorall Roules" calls for "sugar," "searsed Licorice," "sirupe of Licorice," and "a little *Gumdragon*." It too has the required elements of sugar, binder and liquorice. Even Plat's paste of 1602 mentions gumme dragagant, sugar, and licorice. Are these not liquorice confections?

This may be an academic argument as there are the earlier historical confections known as comfits. Comfits are panned confections where seeds, spices, nuts, or even shaved pieces of roots are coated with the thinnest layers of sugar syrups. They are a painstaking operation as the coats of hot sugar syrup are built up slowly and allowed to dry before the next coats are added. While Sir Hugh Plat mentions various spices being used in the creation of comfits, such as coriander, aniseed, caraway, cinnamon bits, et cetera, he does not seem to include liquorice. Other sources including the **Oxford Companion for Sugar and Sweets** mention shaved bits of licorice roots have been used as the centers of comfits for centuries. The Italian sweetmaker Amarelli, established 1731, still produces tins of licorice sweets with hard candy shells. (Les Anis de Flavigny creates a licorice flavored comfit but uses anis seeds as the centers.) Candywarehouse.com offers assortments of licorice comfits, including Tidbits.

Confections or Candies Now

In the twentieth century licorice candy becomes a confused mix of types and forms, altered by mass production. It appears in a variety of penny candies and concession or theater counter candies. Poured licorice treats of an artisan nature are still made in starch lined boxes. Extruded licorice treats are created on a mass scale by extruding

the candy mixture through small nozzles to form ropes, twists, and soft sticks. Licorice is also shaped into Scottie dogs, cats, cigars, pipes, coins, and buttons. There are hard licorice balls with black and white swirls, and sugar coated panned candies with licorice centers. Hammonds still creates hand pulled licorice sticks and canes. There are also a variety of licorice saltwater taffies. Chocolate licorice treats may be licorice centers dipped in chocolate or chocolate centers surrounded by soft licorice exteriors. Ingredient wise, most of the modern candies do not contain any real licorice. A look on the packages reveal the modern candies are made with natural or artificial extracts, corn starch, gums, gelatin, sugar, salt, water and flour. Flour or wheat starch and gelatin make the candy pliable. (Think extrusion.) Food scientist Richard Hartel describes them as “starch jelly candies flavored with licorice.”

Read the package if in any doubt.

Quick Notes on the Candies We Grew Up With

America

Once the nineteenth century begins, it is somewhat easier to trace the development of modern liquorice candies or sweets. In America, licorice was taken to New England early on to be used primarily within households as a remedy or cure. By the nineteenth century, there was an increasing demand that could not be met by domestic production but that use was not confectionary. By 1876, Susan Benjamin reports it was being imported in large quantities, because it was overwhelmingly being used to flavor and mask tobacco. Twenty million pounds were being used in the tobacco trade, according to a newspaper article in 1888. (Benjamin 63)

The late nineteenth century saw the rise of licorice candies in a number of forms. Black Jack Gum dates to 1884; Black Crows date to the 1890s. Good & Plenty began in 1893. The original producer of Twizzlers, Y&S (Young & Smilie) was founded as a licorice maker in 1845. The original product was a black licorice. The Twizzler name appears in 1929. In the late 1970s the company created their popular red varieties featuring strawberry and cherry flavors. Necco Wafers date back to 1847 when the company was the New England Confectionery Company. The black Necco wafers are of course licorice flavored. Red Vines, a product of the American Licorice Company, date to 1914. Red Vines originated as black licorice sticks but the red won out over the black in the 1950s. Chuckles with its mixed jelly candies dates to the 1921. Jelly beans also date back to the 1890s, but the question with them has always been are the black ones flavored with anise, licorice, or artificial licorice extract. There are of course also the licorice pieces found in Bridge candy mixes.

For the most part, American candies are now made with artificial or synthetic flavorings and/or anise, and large numbers of licorice candies have gone by the wayside as companies been swallowed up by bigger corporations. There's even a global element to the licorice trade. Kookaburra is an Australian soft licorice which is now made in either the USA or imported from Australia. The website states "Kookaburra Liquorice uses real liquorice extract from Israel! Liquorice is also known as liquorice root, sweet root or gan zao (Chinese licorice)."

Britain

Pontefract or Pomfret have already been discussed. The company is now owned by Haribo. Allsorts or Liquorice Allsorts, produced by George Bassett, were created in 1899.

Continental

Haribo, famed for its Gummie candies, was founded in 1920. It began creating liquorice candies in 1925 and bought up other companies as the century passed. Panda in Finland creates an all-natural licorice using only molasses, wheat flour, licorice extract, and aniseed oil. According to Clarissa Hyman, one kiosk in Helsinki sells an amazing 91 varieties of salmiakki. Lakerol from Scandinavia is another one, using salt for part of the sugar. Skolekridt Liitulaku still makes a licorice crayon. Ammonium chloride is used in some Scandinavian countries to create a distinctive salmiac liquorice candy. Lakerol from Scandinavia is one. Iceland makes both chocolate and marzipan covered licorice.

Abomination or divine, licorice has tempted the palate with the promise of possible cure or remedy for various health problems and survives to this day in the popular form of candies or confections. A little something to think about when we next pass on those black jelly beans or munch down on those Australian licorice bits.

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Kookaburra. <http://www.kookaburralicorice.com/>

Necco Wafers. <http://www.necco.com/candy/wafers.aspx>

Taveners Liquorice Comfits. <https://www.aquarterof.co.uk/pascalls-liquorice-comfits.html>

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Candy Warehouse. <http://www.candywarehouse.com/flavors/licorice-candy/>

Oldest Sweet Shop in England (established 1827) sells a variety of liquorice sweets, including soft, hard, sticks, and continental. <https://www.oldestsweetshop.co.uk/>

Davesgarden.com can advise as to which stores are currently carrying licorice plants or seeds for sale.