

# Brunner Mond

Who was John Brunner and how did he shape the history of Northwich?



## John Brunner and the Brunner Mond company

John Tomlinson Brunner (1842–1919) was born in Liverpool, and at the age of 15 started to work in an office in the city. In 1861 he moved to work in the office of an alkali factory and became the manager of the office. The factory manufactured alkali by the Leblanc process, but this was an inefficient method for producing alkali, and was very damaging to the environment. One of the chemists working in the company, Ludwig Mond, knew of a different process for making alkali.

By 1871 Mond had decided to build a factory to produce alkali by this process and in this project he was joined by Brunner. In 1873 Brunner Mond was set up and they bought the Winnington estate near Northwich in Cheshire.

By about 1892 the company had become the largest producer of soda ash in the world which is a key chemical used in the manufacture of glass, textiles, soap and paper.

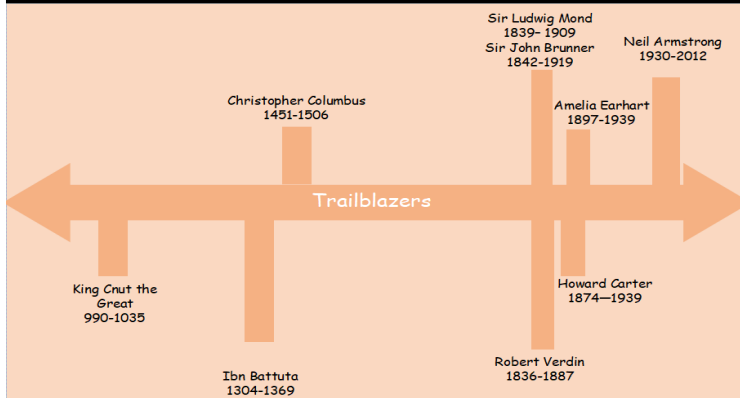
In 1891, Brunner had become the chairman of the company, and he retained that position until April 1918, 14 months before his death.

## How did John Brunner and Brunner Mond improve the locality and campaign for change?

John Brunner was well-liked locally for his charitable works. Brunner Mond Ltd had made him very wealthy, and he used his money for good works. He became a benefactor on many projects and he funded The Northwich Library, Winsford Guildhall, Sir John Deane's Grammar school and Barnton school, to name but a few.

During the industrial revolution the development of factories led to increasingly dangerous working conditions and it was commonplace for people to work a 15 hour day and without paid holiday, allowances for sickness or compensation for work-related accidents. Most notably Brunner and Mond believed they needed to do more for their workers. They introduced sick pay, one week's paid holiday per year and the eight-hour working day for those working for Brunner, Mond and Co. As well as believing in these for humanitarian reasons, Brunner also believed that treating workers well increased the productivity and efficiency of business.

He was a member of parliament and supported workers' rights on a wider scale not just within his own community and workplace.



Key Vocab	Definition
Reform	make changes in something in order to improve it
Parliament	In the UK it is the highest legislature
Industrial revolution	a period of technological and scientific progress that transformed societies

