



The RHM factory was an important site to the Middlewich people. It had been Cerebos and Middlewich Salt before that making the site over 100 years old and saw many generations of families, being employed or enjoying the many social events the company provided.

Middlewich was re-launched in the sixties as the primary site of the new and modern RHM Company; Prince Philip had an official visit here in 1969. Many women were employed in the Bisto section of the factory, the laboratory invented Bisto Granules, and Saxa Salt and Sifta Sam were packaged here. The company had a vacuum plant until the early seventies when it became more cost effective to be supplied by neighbours and business associates British Salt, who is now our only salt company left.

One of the social aspects was the Bisto kids look-a-like competition, this was a national event at one point raising money for Children's charities, (NCH), the overall winner got to meet either the Queen or Princess Margaret, very much the highlight of the year!

The closing of the factory was a blow to Middlewich and the generations of families who worked there. As heritage officer I've been collecting photographs and memorabilia of the site and the workers to preserve for future generations.

Premier foods allowed us to take the last photographs of the factory just before it closed in 2008. It was then that I and my colleague Dave Thompson saw the Bisto Kids on the reception wall, upon enquiring about the sculpture it turned out that it was scheduled for demolition! Premier Foods were contacted and they realised its importance for our community to save it, so they donated the sculpture to the town if we could pay for its removal. Thankfully local builder John Wickham and his associate Rob Moreton were very keen to help us save the Bisto Kids and so we embarked on a perilous journey of removing the Bisto kids from the RHM building and finally placing it in Middlewich Library for display. It was certainly a town effort, although by the time we had got men in place and money, the site changed hands from Premier Foods to Bovale, so we had to start permission hunting to remove the Bisto kids for the second time! Bovale agreed to let us take the sculpture and paid for its removal and the Town Council paid to stabilise it and place a supporting frame around it.

The hard work paid off once we launched the sculpture, the public response was fantastic and our Youth Theatre did a drama piece on the Bisto Kids for the Folk and Boat Festival where we put the Bisto Kids on display for the first time. We heard a lot of people's stories about the Bisto Factory and many remembered the Kids with affection.

The Bisto Kids are now in their new home in Middlewich Library and they are well worth seeing, the last remains of over 100 years of salt and food production.

