



The current **clean-cut distinction between licit and illicit drugs** is a rather recent phenomenon brought about by the **awareness of the devastating social effects of some substances**, such as cocaine and heroin, as well as by **conflicting economic interests**, as with the cultivation of hemp propounded by Henry Ford in competition with the newly-born industries of plastic and rubber in the 1920s – a competition that Ford lost and which deeply affected the social view on the consumption of marijuana, a hemp derivate. Back in the Victorian era, this distinction didn't exist: **cocaine** was widely used (Freud was a famous user) and popular in many pharmaceutical products, including **Coca Cola**, patented in 1886 as a cure to morphine addiction, neurasthenia and impotence. **Opium derivatives** (such as laudanum and morphine) were equally popular in treating such ailments as depression or hysteria, and **heroin** was used for treating addiction to these substances. It shouldn't come as a surprise, then, that in 19th-century Britain **opium for babies** was marketed under the innocent names of *Infants Quietness*, *Soothing Syrup*, or *Royal Infants Preservative* and that **children were administered cocaine** against toothache.

Click on the pictures above to access a **BBC DOCUMENTARY** on the Victorian Pharmacy