

For bad breath, dandruff or cleaning floors

By Brian Williams¹

Bad breath has been a problem throughout history and various preparations for its cure have been suggested, including mouthwashes and rinses. The Greek physician Hippocrates (460 to 277BC), famous for the *Hippocratic Oath*, suggested a mixture of salt, alum and vinegar. Roman writer Pliny the Elder (23 to 79AD) believed salty water taken in 'uneven numbered mouthfuls' was the answer. The Chinese, in their enormous eighteenth century *Golden Mirror* encyclopaedia, advised the use of children's urine. So, too, did Pierre Fauchard, the father of modern dentistry, in his 1728 text *Le chirurgien dentiste* – although he didn't specify that of children. Mass-produced mouthwash can be traced to the late nineteenth century. The market was ready for mouthwashes after bacteriology research by Robert Koch and Louis Pasteur in the 1880s and W. D. Miller's work on the factors that caused tooth decay a decade later. Wands **1** was a well-known retail and manufacturing chemist in Leicester in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries before closing in the 1950s. Sanoram **2** was invented by Dr B. Kritchevsky and manufactured in Paris. His antiseptic tablets were suitable as a mouthwash, for treating burns and for various gynaecological conditions. Other manufacturers went further and sold their mouthwashes as general antiseptics, as a treatment for dandruff or even as a floor cleaner. Manchester-based James Wolley & Co **3** did not claim the same extensive uses as had Sanoram and others for its mouthwash, Phenate. Genozo **4** was established in London in 1906 as a subsidiary of a Germany company manufacturing the tonic Sanatogen. In 1919, it was thought politic to change the company's name to remove the Germanic association so it became Genatosan, an anagram of Sanatogen. Odel **5** was another German company to enter the UK mouthwash market. Its product was launched in 1893 in a distinctively shaped, white glass bottle and Bakelite cup, which later became a glass one **6**.

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