In the summer of 1803 the twenty-two-year-old John Sell Cotman visited the north of England in the company of his fellow watercolourist Paul Sandby Munn. For a week in early July they stayed at Brandsby Hall, north of York, as guests of the Cholmeley family, to whom they had been introduced by the polymath and picture collector Sir Henry Englefield, who was Mrs Cholmeley's brother. Cotman found the stay rewarding, for it brought him an invitation to return as drawing master to the four Cholmeley daughters, once he had undertaken a three-week tour of Yorkshire and County Durham with Munn. The subsequent visit lasted six weeks, and it permitted Cotman to make some impressive works, including the view of Gormire lake exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1804, and two fairly large commissioned views of Newburgh Priory, displayed in the same show.

Cotman was much liked by Mrs Cholmeley. Accordingly, in the summer of 1804 the young man was again invited to Brandsby, where he based himself for some seven weeks. Although this sojourn was not as artistically fruitful as the previous one, it did lead to the creation of a number of large pencil studies of trees that deepened Cotman's understanding of arboreal form. And in July 1805 he returned to Brandsby, which he used as a base for about eighteen weeks, well into the autumn. From there he made drawing excursions to some of his most inspiring subjects, including Duncombe Park and the environs of Kirkham. More crucially, for most of August he and Mrs Cholmeley's son, Francis, stayed near Greta Bridge, at Rokeby Park, County Durham, the home of J.B.S. Morritt, who is today perhaps best remembered as an owner of The Rokeby Venus, which he would purchase in 1813. So enamoured was Cotman of the environs of Rokeby that after the Morritts had gone elsewhere he put up at the nearest inn. He also spent ten days in Durham before returning to Brandsby Hall.

It has long been recognised that Cotman's 1805 stay in...
Despite such occasional controversies, one element has remained constant: Coke’s commitment to keeping its own secret. Speculation about the recipe has been a popular talking point for more than a century, proving good for business. The company has reacted to the This American Life story in a way that has been typical of its commercial strategy since the 19th century. “Many third parties have tried to crack our secret formula. Try as they might, they’ve been unsuccessful,” Coca-Cola’s Kerry Tressler said. “He has been dead these many hours.” I pushed past him and went into the living-room of the hut. Candles had been lit. One at the head of the bed, one at the foot. I bent over Victor and took his hand. The man had lied to me. Victor was breathing still. When he felt me touch his hand, he opened his eyes. “Did you see her?” he asked. “Yes,” I answered. 11. The weather having changed, we decided to stay where we were. 12. The weather being very warm, the closet window was left open. 13. And the wind having dropped, they set out to walk. 14. The vessel being pretty deep in the water and the weather being calm, there was but little motion. 15. The resistance being very high, the current in the circuit was very low. 16. This material being a dielectric, no current can flow through it. 17. The next morning, it being Sunday, they all went to church. 18. For the moment the shop was empty, the mechanic having disappeared into a room at the back. 19.