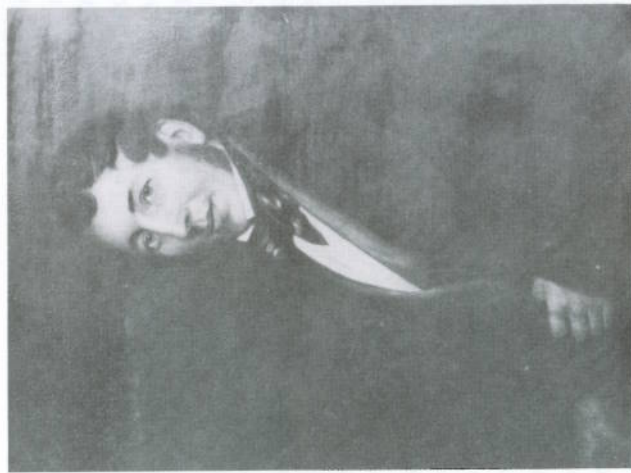




Henry Platt
1793-1842

The creator of the textile machinery making business, at Uppermill, in 1815, which became, in Oldham, in 1822, the firm Hibbert & Platt, 1839 - Hibbert, Platt & Sons, 1854 - Platt Brothers & Company, 1868 - Platt Brothers & Company Limited (Re-incorporated 1898), 1931 - Platt Brothers & Company (Holdings) Limited and in 1958 - Stone-Platt Industries Limited.

growing number of local woollen mills. The name of the blacksmith was Henry Platt. He (christened on 17 December 1732) and James Platt (christened on 19 October 1729), the heir to John Platt of Butterhouse, were brothers.

Henry Platt's smithy adjoined his dwelling, Bridge House, a property which still exists, bearing witness that it must have been necessary to cut away the stone door-jambs to permit large parts of the machines to be extracted for delivery to the customer. In due course, Henry Platt came to have the assistance of his son, John, who after Henry's death continued to serve the local community, as blacksmith and farrier, whilst extending the range of the textile machinery he made to include "Billies" (a device for preparing the strands of textile fibres, after carding, into a condition more convenient for spinning) and looms. In turn, John Platt was joined in the smithy by three of his sons, one of whom was his grandfather's namesake. This Henry Platt, who had

been born at Dobcross, in 1793, was a young man determined to prosper, so, towards fulfilling his ambition, he removed, in 1815, to nearby Uppermill where, in the building afterwards used as the Waggon Inn, he created his own business. The business was intended to concentrate on the manufacture of textile machines, for the ever increasing number and size of woollen mills in Saddleworth, on a scale which had not been possible in the smithy at Dobcross. But his sights were redirected when a business visit to Oldham resulted in his being asked, by a third party, to make a carding machine for a cotton spinner, in the town, named Samuel Radcliffe, who, later, was to have close ties with the Platts. In Oldham the new cotton industry had already eclipsed the age old woollen industry and was still growing, to those of the time, at an astonishing rate. Moreover, Oldham did not have, as did some of the other Lancashire cotton manufacturing towns, a textile machinery maker of any standing. In Bolton, a firm which had been founded in 1790 could already offer the cotton spinner the comprehensive range of machines he required in his mill. The founder was an Isaac Dobson and the firm, after bearing several names, settled, in 1850, under the name Dobson & Barlow. In 1821, after just six years at Uppermill, Henry Platt along with his wife Sarah (nee Whitehead of Saddleworth Fold) whom he had married, in 1815, at St Chad Church, Saddleworth, and their first two children, Joseph and John, went to Oldham.