

railway and Stockfield Road, which with its store yards, reservoir and railway sidings, alone, occupied an area of some ten acres. The saw-mills were enlarged. Timber was still used, in quantity, for certain (non-structural) parts of the product machines. Much wood was needed to make the patterns for the innumerable cast parts and to make the vast quantity of packing cases in which the machines were transported to the customers. The Company's own agents bought the timber at the growing sites from whence it was received into the Works in log form from which the appropriate items were then fashioned in the various specialist departments of the sawmills. After workshops, a large dining hall (capable of seating close on 1000 men), the new and larger stable yard and terraced houses for the key maintenance, security and stables men had been added on the north side of Arkwright Street, the premises extended from the railway to Middleton Road and to the west, when it encroached on Chadderton, as far as Main Road, Landsdowne Road and Peel Street. When it became the tradition for the directors of Platt Brothers to invite, annually, the Mayor of Oldham to lunch with them, the Chairman of Chadderton Council was invited, too, as an acknowledgement that some part of Hartford Works lay in his urban district. The Works premises spread to the south of the railway when the Company acquired the Oxford Mill and surrounded it with additional buildings and also built a self contained spindle works on the southern corner of Featherstall Road and Railway Road. A prestigious new office block, complete with an ornamental clock tower, 'New Offices', was erected opposite Werneth Station which, by way of a direct footbridge, had a convenient connection with the station. The Oxford Mill had been a working cotton mill and Platt Brothers used some of its floors as show-rooms so that the product machinery could be displayed in an authentic setting. A collection of historic textile machines, several being genuine examples from Arkwright's original mill at Cromford, was exhibited in one of the showrooms. This collection frequently brought excited interest from visitors, especially those from overseas.

To undertake the building programme Platt Brothers manufactured its own bricks. An amusing consequence of this policy arose in the nineteen-fifties when the New Offices block was stream cleaned. Once the grime of decades had been removed it was found a number of the bricks had lost their glazed surface and remained highly offending black rectangles in the now, otherwise, gleaming surfaces. It was decided that these bricks had to be replaced but consternation struck when it was discovered that the Platt brick was smaller than the British standard brick. But, as always at Platt Brothers somebody remembered, there was a boundary wall at the bottom of the brass foundry

yard built from Platt bricks. Forthwith, a section of this wall was carefully pulled down and the best bricks were brought, in triumph, to be inserted in the New Offices. The poor old brass foundry wall was repaired with standard bricks and never quite looked the same again.

At Hartford Works, as has been noted, a railway system, connected to the private sidings, pervaded the premises. Essentially, this served to distribute materials, still in the main line vans and waggons, directly to the departments in which they were required or assemble main line vans and waggons, which had been loaded with product machinery, in the sidings ready for dispatch by the main line. In the course of manufacturing operations a huge quantity of materials and product machine parts had to be moved around the numerous departments. The smaller loads were transported by an army of labourers, using purpose built hand barrows and trucks, whereas heavier and larger loads were transported in horse drawn carts and waggons, the latter also being used, outside the Works, for the local collection and delivery of goods. The Platt Brothers horses were an object of great pride and admiration. They were carefully selected in Cheshire and North Wales and their stables, at the works, were extremely well equipped and arranged around a courtyard off Lake Street. The Company owned some lush fields, in Cheshire, where the horses were taken, during the Oldham Wakes Week, to spend their well earned annual holiday. However, so large had Hartford Works become and so great was the amount of material being transported about it, the decision was taken, in 1897, to lay down a narrow gauge railway system to raise the efficiency of internal transport. The trunk line of the system was housed in a, white tiled, subway beneath the Works, from which lines passed into exceedingly long hoists so that the materials, particularly heavy castings, could be lifted and lowered, in situ on the conveying waggons, to and from the appropriate departments. The lines were continued in the departments, so the engine, too, was carried on the hoists to take the loads directly to the point they needed to be in the departments. One spur of the subway railway burrowed under the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company's main line to connect the north and south sides of the Works. Electric traction was used on the subway railway as an environmental measure, the type of engine adopted being popularly known as 'the pig' because of its rotund appearance. Platt Brothers had been the first company in Oldham to install electricity, in 1881. The main services: water, steam, gas and electricity were routed via the subway to provide simple access in the event of attention being needed.

In its peak days, Platt Brothers & Company Limited took possession of three collieries: Butterworth Hall Colliery, at Milnrow, Jubilee