

The origins of J Stone & Company (Holdings) Limited lay in events in 1831, when Josiah Stone, a member of a shipbuilding firm, started his own business to manufacture copper nails, rivets and other fastenings for ships being built on the south side of the River Thames. The business was located at Deptford and, later, its scope was widened to include the manufacture of fittings for railway locomotives. After Josiah Stone died in 1867, the two young men he had taken into partnership – George Preston and John Prestige – added to the scope of the business further types of marine and railway equipment. Over the years other forms of mechanical and electrical engineering were undertaken so that by the time J Stone (Holdings) was absorbed by Platt Brothers (Holdings) the group of Stone subsidiary companies was making multifarious products in factories in the UK (chiefly in London, Southern England and the Glasgow area – although there was, at Oldham, the Wallwork factory on Blasby Street) and certain of the products were also made, in Stone factories, in India, Canada, Australia and South Africa. The products ranged from ships propellers – weighing from fifty tons to a few pounds (great liners such as the ‘Queen Mary’ and ‘Canberra’ were supplied) – and included ships windows, watertight doors, marine air-conditioning units, yachts and cabin cruisers, lighthouse and buoy equipment, foundry equipment, equipment for railway locomotives and rolling stock right down to the original nails, rivets and washers, which items, were supplied in huge quantities to the aircraft and structural engineering industries.

Signs of things to come appeared in the first twelve months after the Company changed its name. The sixty-first annual general meeting of the (1898) Company was held in London and not at Hartford Works, the Registered Office, as had been customary. Shortly, the administrative headquarters was moved from Oldham to London and housed, in the what had been London office of Platt Brothers (Holdings), at 1A Cockspur Street, off Trafalgar Square. Soon it was moved to 25 St. James Street, SW1, to which address the registered office was transferred. With that transfer the shift of the Company's centre of power,

