

Bullough premises at Accrington. Some quarters in the Company had questioned the wisdom of moving the sales offices away from Oldham. The arguments had been that, irrespective of the Company's decision to jettison the new building (the reasons given were conflicting and obscure), the sales offices should be re-housed in some part of Hartford Works because the textile world knew the Company as Platt Brothers of Oldham and it would be folly to break the link. Furthermore, Oldham was proximate to Manchester where most of the customers from overseas chose to stay because, often, they had a tight schedule to maintain, with suppliers of other textile mill equipment, in and around Manchester and, thus, Oldham was practical and convenient for them. But from the mid nineteen-sixties an anti Oldham faction in the Textile Machinery Division was making the decisions which mattered. The showrooms at Oldham were closed down, the lines of product machines installed at TMM(R), Helmsshore, then being used for showroom demonstration. With the closure of the Oldham showrooms the collection of historic machinery was taken to TMM(R). Later, when the space it occupied was needed for other purposes, the collection was placed, on permanent loan, in the Higher Mill Textile Museum, just a quarter of a mile or so, along Holcombe Road, from the TMM(R) buildings.

The sale of the continuous filament machinery was no longer made through Platt Brothers (Sales), a separate subsidiary company, for that purpose, had been formed at Bradley Fold, under the name Dobson & Barlow Machinery Sales Limited. Similarly, the sale of woollen machinery was placed in the hands of another new subsidiary company – Platt Wool Machinery Sales Limited – which was housed at Hartford Works. The Hibbert Works, at Darwen, was closed down and the manufacture of the sizing machinery was moved to the Dobson & Barlow works where, also, the sale of sizing machines was handled by a further new subsidiary company given the name Platt Sizing Machinery Limited. The change of greatest import was to come, at the end of the decade, when the headquarters of the Textile Machinery Division was transferred from Hartford Works to the premises of TMM(R) at Helmsshore. It has been foretold, this change marked the end of Oldham, in any sense, as a centre of power in the Company.

The move of the Textile Machinery Division's headquarters was the precursor to Stone-Platt re-structuring the Division in 1970. The companies which comprised the Division were consolidated as one single company which was given the name Platt International Limited. The four, now considered branch, manufacturing works were to be used more flexibly than when they were under the control of the TMM Operating Companies and Prince-Smith & Stells, then being devoted almost entirely to the manufacture of the machines which had been

allocated to those companies. The works were: Hartford Works, at Oldham, Bradley Fold Works, at Bolton, Globe Works, at Accrington and Burlington Shed, at Keighley. The Sales Offices were to be situated at Accrington for cotton spinning machinery, at Bolton for continuous filament machinery, sizing machinery and knitting machinery and at Keighley for woollen and worsted machinery. The Longclose Engineering Company Limited was to be indentified as Platt Longclose and remain, at Leeds, as a self-contained sales and manufacturing branch of the new company. The hub of the Company, embracing the head office and research establishment, as had been foreshadowed, was to be at Helmsshore. Additionally, the several ranges of power transmission equipment made by Platt Brothers & Company Limited and similar equipment made by Stone-Wallwork Limited (hitherto, part of the Marine & Mechanical Division) were merged in a single enterprise, at Hartford Works, under the name: Platt Power Transmission. The integrated workforce of Platt International Limited was in the order of 6 000 people.

To ensure that the economy of the flexible manufacturing arrangement, which increasingly was utilising computer management techniques and computer controlled (NC) machine tools, and the liaison with the sales offices was the best possible a thorough programme of standardisation, for the design and manufacturing factors and for the marketing specifications for the product machines, was introduced. The urgency for the requirement was further motivated, if deviations were not to creep in which, later, would have to be eradicated at considerable cost, by the ruling, which had been made in 1969, that all new designs for machinery to be made in the Textile Machinery Division would, from that year, be conducted in the metric system of measurement. The ruling was in accordance with the decision, taken under the guidance of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), that nationally, the engineering industry should adopt the metric system to safeguard its stake in the widest world markets. The move to the metric system also prompted the need for Platt International to participate, through the British Standards Institution (BSI), in the work of the International Standards Organisation (ISO), in order to protect its sound and proven technological bases, which had been established, over many long years, for the proportions of its product machines and the form and sizes of the accessories which were used with them, eg. silver cans and bobbins. There was the danger both these bases could be diluted when transformed into the metric dimensions which the world's fraternity of textile machinery makers was busily agreeing. Moreover, the single company was able to present a stronger front, not only in the matter of standardisation, but in other, equally important, textile industry wide matters, eg.