

# History on Your Doorstep

## Tameside Inventors & Inventions

### Henry Christy - Terry/Turkish Towel



Henry Christy 26/07/1810 - 04/05/1865

- Was the first to introduce the manufacture of the looped Turkish Towel in Britain



- Henry returned from Constantinople with a sample of looped pile fabric which was new to the Western World. After studying the fabric along with his inventor brother, Richard, a machine was created which allowed terry towelling to be produced on a large scale.



Fairfield Mill Droydsden where the towels were first produced

- A year later the first terry towel was in production and they were shown at the Great Exhibition, Crystal Palace in 1851. Her Majesty Queen Victoria was presented with a set of the new towels and she immediately ordered more.



- Henry Christy was also the innovator of using woven silk rather than beaver for the manufacture of top hats



- Christy was also a philanthropist, active in the great famine with other Quakers. He took the approach of buying seeds for other vegetable crops to reduce the potato monoculture
- He travelled and collected extensively. Among the fruits of his first expedition to the East was an extensive collection of eastern fabrics. After 1851 his travelling involved the study of tribal people across Europe, Asia and North America.

- In 1858, the antiquity of man was proved by the discoveries of Boucher de Perthes on flint implements in France; Christy joined the Geological Society that year. He went with the French palaeontologist Edouard Lartet in the examination of the caves in the south of France. Thousands of specimens were obtained, some of them being added to Christy's collection.



Plaques in tribute to Edouard Lartet and Henry Christy Les Eyzies de Tayac, Dordogne, France

- Christy bequeathed his collections of modern objects to the nation. His archaeological collection went to the nation. He also left £5,000 which established the Christy Fund which allowed the British Museum to purchase many more objects