

Thomas Hollis Hopkins, OBE who was born on 9 May, 1881, died on 30 January, 1967.

Educated at Springfield College, Acton, his practical training was under Mr E. Olander (M), Assistant Chief Engineer, Great Western Railway, Paddington (1898–1900).

He was to become a leading authority on bridging, and the foundations of his future success in this field were laid in his early years when he worked as a draughtsman and surveyor, calculating the strengths of bridges, in engineers' offices at Paddington (Great Western Railway) and York (North-Eastern Railway).

From 1904–08 he was engaged as Assistant Engineer at London Bridge Station, South-Eastern & Chatham Railway, and participated in plans to strengthen Charing Cross Bridge over the Thames, on which project Sir Benjamin Baker was Consulting Engineer.

In 1909 he took up an appointment in the Argentine as Assistant Engineer to the Central Argentine Railway, first at their Buenos Aires head office, then for over two years as Resident Engineer in charge of the quadrupling of the railway line from Buenos Aires to San Martin, under the Chief Engineer, Mr R. Reynolds. This involved replacement of a two-track viaduct by a four-way bank and sections of viaduct with large span skew brick arches and heavy foundation work for steel bridges (1909–12). The following year he joined the Buenos Aires branch of J. G. White & Company as Chief Civil Engineering Assistant, and was engaged on several light and power works.

Throughout World War I he served in France with the Royal Engineers, with the rank of Captain. In 1917 he was appointed Bridges Officer at GHQ, in control until the end of the war of all heavy bridging in France, and consulted by chief engineers of various armies on major bridging operations. For carrying tanks he designed the 'Hopkins Bridge', with a span of 180 ft. He was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the MBE, and in 1919 the OBE.

After the war he became Engineer to the Consolidated Construction Company, London, in charge of the erection of power stations at Blackburn and Leicester and of the first section of the foundations of Barking Power Station (1919–23). He was then appointed Assistant Chief Engineer to the Bridge Stress Committee set up by the Department of Scientific & Industrial Research, of which Sir Alfred Ewing was Chairman, in charge of outdoor experiments, office investigations and drawings, under the Chief Engineer, Conrad Gribble (1923–27). There followed a year with the LCC under Sir George William Humphreys before in 1928 he took up an appointment in Cairo as Chief Bridges Officer to the Egyptian State Railways. During his five-year term of office no fewer than 195 Egyptian State Railway bridges were constructed or renewed, and Mr Hopkins was responsible for the design and construction of some 50 bridges, including the Edfina and Damietta Swing-Bridges over the Nile. The Edfina Bridge carried a rail track and two 3-metre roadways in



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three 80-metre spans, with piers sunk to a depth of 30 metres; the Damietta Bridge a roadway and two footways, three of its four piers sunk with pneumatic caissons to a depth of 32 metres. Though assisted in these massive projects by qualified Egyptian engineers, they were without practical experience and he had the task of training them to work as a team, as well as attending personally to innumerable field difficulties.

In 1933 he resigned his position with the Egyptian State Railways, and thereafter engaged in private business until 1939, when he was made Air Ministry Resident Engineer, in charge of the construction of West Malling Aerodrome (cost about £400 000), which despite severe enemy action and other difficulties was successfully completed in 1941. From 1941–45 he was engaged by the Southern Railway in assessing overbridges for military loads, and from then until 1949 on underbridge survey.

He presented a paper to the Institution, 'The bridges of the Egyptian State Railways'. SEP No. 176 (1935), for which he was awarded the Telford Premium.

A man of character and wide interests, Thomas Hollis Hopkins was greatly liked and admired by colleagues, as much for his integrity as for his outstanding qualities as an engineer.

Elected an Associate Member in 1907, he became a Member in 1932.

He is survived by his widow, two sons and a daughter.

CORRIGENDUM

Yiu, Chan Ping should read *Chan, Ping Yiu*

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