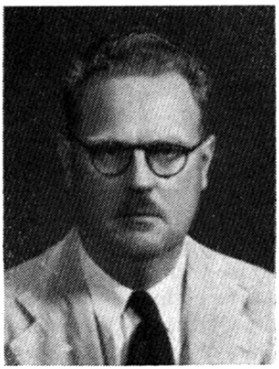
OBITUARY



John Britton Murray, BSc

who was born on 26 October, 1903, died on 20 May, 1969.

Educated at Dunfermline High School, he studied engineering at Edinburgh University, where he received his BSc degree in 1925.

He was to specialize in structural engineering—mainly heavy foundations in harbours and ports—and spent almost his entire career overseas.

After three years' experience with Hunter, Duff and Middleton (FF), Consulting Engineers of Edinburgh, as Resident Engineer for the construction of Perth waterworks, Murray went out to Singapore and in 1928 joined the firm of Gammon (Malaya) Limited, Civil Engineering Contractors. Under their Chief Engineer, H. W. Cowling (F), he was engaged in the design and construction of public works, including the Teluk Ayer quay wall, Singapore—3077 ft long and constructed within sheet steel cofferdams—an immense operation. As Resident Engineer for the contractors he was in charge of various highway bridges on reinforced concrete piled foundations, including the Parit Sulong Bridge, Johore (260 ft long): also a contractors' wharf at Singapore Naval Base, an RAF base at Singapore, a reinforced concrete jetty and a mosque tower.

In 1933 Murray was transferred to Gammon (India) Limited, Consulting Engineers and Contractors of Bombay. Here as Resident Engineer he designed and constructed the foundations of Ahmedabad Power Station, built the 882 ft long Bhavnagar Jetty in reinforced concrete, and two hyperbolic cooling towers. In 1937 he was appointed Chief Engineer to the firm, most of whose designing work was for reinforced concrete bridges, water towers and earthquake-proof buildings.

During World War II he was loaned to the Army for port development work in the Persian Gulf. In November 1941 he was appointed SORE (Docks), with the rank of Major. On becoming Assistant Director of Works (Docks) to the 10th Army HQ and to the newly-created GHQ of the Persian and Iraqi forces he became Lt Colonel, responsible for the planning and construction of all port developments in the Gulf. These included construction of many deep-water and lighter berths in timber and steel sheet piling—work carried out by contract and military labour. During this period he initiated the plan to connect the Iraq and Persian railways by means of a rail and road bridge across the Shatt el Arab at Basrah. His final army appointment was as Assistant Director of Works, GHQ Paiforce.

In January 1944, the Calcutta Port Commissioners embarked on large-scale postwar reconstruction and Murray was recalled from the Army to take charge as Chief Engineer (Construction). The work involved building a deep water jetty, and 13 new berths of varying types, at a cost of £1¼ million. This required extensive piling in reinforced concrete, timber and sheet steel: much dredging and the construction of transit sheds, cranes, permanent way and

roads. At the same time Murray was engaged on the extension of one of the dry docks and on a new coal loading berth with modern conveyor equipment.

He continued with the Calcutta Port Commissioners until in 1949 he rejoined Gammon (Malaya) Ltd, now as Managing Director, in charge of the Company's operations in Singapore, Hong Kong and other parts of the Far East. During this time he invented the Colcrete Pile, which was very successful and was used in many works in the Middle East, the Gulf and West Africa. Ill-health forced him to retire to the UK in 1955, but after convalescence he became in late 1958 consultant and engineering adviser to the Gammon Group of companies operating mainly overseas. Based in London, Murray spent much of his time visiting the various territories in which the Group operates, including Malaya, India, Pakistan and the Gulf, and during this period was actively engaged on the Management Committee of the Group on two large works connected with the Mangla Dam in Pakistan—the Mailsi Syphon and the Qadirabad Barrage. The Mailsi Syphon was the first part of the Mangla Dam Works to be completed and both contracts were finished ahead of time. In 1966 ill-health forced Murray virtually to retire, after a crowded and distinguished career.

He was the Author of 'A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Ceylon', and presented a paper to the Institution, 'The development of the Port of Calcutta for war purposes'. CEW 2, 229 (1948). With special reference to building in the tropics, he undertook some research into the insulating values of materials.

In private life music was perhaps his chief interest and he was an accomplished organist.

Elected to corporate membership in 1929, he was transferred to the senior grade in 1945.

He is survived by a daughter.

[*Courtesy: Vandyck*]

Savile Packshaw, BSc(Eng) who was born on 7 November, 1904, died on 27 August, 1969.

Educated on the Continent, he began his studies at the City & Guilds Engineering College in 1921 and received a first class honours BSc(Eng) degree three years later.

He was a brilliant engineer, specializing in piling, particularly sheet steel piling, and almost his entire career was devoted to the British Steel Piling Company Limited. But his first job was with Freeman, Fox and Partners. After two years in their London office on design and estimates for the North Wales Power Company's hydroelectric scheme under Ralph Freeman (F), he spent a further two years on the construction of masonry dams, a power station and a high-pressure pipeline, under C. T. Wolley (F).