

from Pat Hodgson
1 May 2012
JHMC

ROBERT (ROY) HODGEN
1928-2004

Early in 1959, at a time when the Government was under pressure to do something to alleviate the increasing transport problems throughout the country, the then Minister of Transport, Ernest Marples, announced to Parliament that he had secured four places on the course in Traffic Engineering and Planning at Yale Bureau of Highway Engineering, Yale University, USA. No comparable courses were then available in UK. Robert Hodgson, better known as Roy, was one of four British civil engineers who attended this course following the Government's initiative. On his return to UK he was to make noteworthy contributions to traffic and highway engineering projects in many parts of the country, but particularly in Scotland.

Roy Hodgson was born in Northern Ireland on 14 July 1928. He was educated at Finaghy Primary School (1933-41), Methodist College, Belfast (1941-46) and Queens University, Belfast (1946-51) where he studied civil engineering. He graduated BSc(1st Class Honours) in Civil Engineering in 1950 and MSc in 1951, his last year at Queens having been spent studying and carrying out research in the then new engineering discipline of Soil Mechanics.

He left Northern Ireland in 1951 to join the UK consulting engineering firm of Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick and Partners (SWKP) in their office in Nyasaland (now Malawi), working there for the next five years as an assistant engineer on a variety of road projects (notably the Lilongwe - Salima road) and a water supply project serving the town of Zomba. On leaving Nyasaland he emigrated to Canada and for the next two years pursued a career as a soil mechanics engineer, first with DeLeuw Cather, then with Cementation.

In 1958, however, Roy was invited to rejoin SWKP as chief assistant engineer in their newly-opened office in Lagos, Nigeria, an invitation which he accepted. He worked there for the next year on a variety of road projects, notably Western Avenue, Lagos, but meanwhile SWKP had opted to sponsor an engineer to take up one of the Government-secured places on the Traffic Engineering course at Yale University. They chose Roy for the purpose. He agreed to go and attended Yale from September 1959 until June 1960 when he graduated. On returning to UK immediately afterwards he embarked on what was, arguably, the most significant project of his career: the preparation of a Highway Plan for the City of Glasgow.

SWKP had been commissioned by Glasgow Corporation "to proceed immediately with a limited traffic study which would produce as a matter of urgency a definitive design of an inner ring road". In the summer of 1960 Roy Hodgson came to Glasgow to open an office for SWKP and take charge of the study, the remit for which was soon extended to cover a road plan for the whole City.

Over the next few years Roy worked on the study with remarkable intensity, effectiveness and directness. Transport surveys were conducted and data analysed by computer, an approach which at the time was new in Europe. Then a practical highway network was planned in considerable detail taking account of all the myriad constraints inherent in developing a new road system within an established major city, such as urban renewal considerations, physical and topographical constraints, town planning considerations, anticipated future growth, problems of property and land acquisition, aesthetic and landscaping considerations, problems of design and

construction and, particularly, considerations of likely costs. The complexity of the work and the detailed manner in which it was carried out is described in a paper later presented to the Institution (*"Recent Developments in Highway Planning in Glasgow"* by R Hodgen & J Cullen, *Proc. Instn Civ Engrs*, 1968, 41 (Oct) 223-245).

The report on the study, which was presented to the client in 1963 and immediately accepted, contained detailed proposals for radical alterations to Glasgow's highway system. It proposed an urban motorway network for the city and a system of associated expressways. The plan also included proposals to pedestrianise the three main shopping streets in Glasgow and to control vehicle entry to the central area by limiting total parking provision, proposals which were subsequently implemented with great success. Adoption of the plan by Glasgow Corporation and its phased implementation over the years has given the city an enviable highway system and spared it many of the traffic difficulties that have beset other major cities. It has also brought about a massive reduction in road accidents in Glasgow. Roy Hodgen's contributions to the study and the plan cannot be overemphasised.

SWKP were appointed in 1963 to carry out the design and preparation of contract documents for the first hub section of the new urban motorway system; Townhead Interchange Stage 1. Roy, by now an Associate of SWKP, was in charge of the work. Construction started in November 1965 and was completed in April 1968, the work being supervised by SWKP's Glasgow office. The whole project from initiation to completion was carried out remarkably quickly.

Meanwhile, Roy was also engaged on another major traffic study, the Greater Glasgow Transportation Study covering the whole Clydeside area, which was completed in 1968. Other commissions followed: two further sections of the Glasgow motorway network, a transportation study for the Teeside area and a similar study for Oxford.

Roy moved to the London head office of SWKP in 1968 to head a traffic engineering section of the firm but returned north in 1970 to take charge of the Glasgow office again and renew his association with the city. In 1973, however, he left SWKP to join Jamieson Mackay and Partners (now JMP Consulting) as a Partner. At the time the firm, which had been established for only a few years, had developed a fairly considerable practice providing transportation solutions for towns throughout Scotland, such as Inverness, Clydebank, Motherwell and Kilmarnock. They needed a Partner to lead the implementation of the schemes by designing and constructing the roads and Roy was happy to take on the role. He was to spend the rest of his career as a Partner of JMP and play a significant part in the firm's growth.

Over the years Roy was responsible for many road projects throughout Scotland. He was involved with urban roads and associated shopping centres in Motherwell and Clydebank. A particularly noteworthy project he dealt with was the design and construction of the Pitlochry Bypass section of the A9 trunk road, work which received a Civic Trust award and was described in a paper to the Institution (*"The Planning, Design and Construction of a Bypass through an area of outstanding natural beauty"* by R Hodgen & C R Ford, *Proc. Instn Civ Engrs*, Part 1 Oct 1985). He was also responsible for the design of and public enquiry for the Edinburgh Western Relief Road which would have bypassed Corstorphine and brought traffic from the west and north into Edinburgh at Lothian Road. Although fully designed and with

contracts let the scheme was cancelled on a change of Edinburgh Council.

His activities were not confined exclusively to Scotland, however. As a result of the recession in roadworks in UK in the 1980's he sought road projects overseas and prepared plans for several roads in Libya - difficult and poorly rewarded work. Following the eventual upturn in work at home he dealt primarily with the reconstruction of trunk roads for the Scottish Development Department, notably the Greenloaning section of the A9, the Collin and Creetown Bypasses on the A75, the Kingussie to Spean Bridge section of the A86 and the Inverness Inner Relief Road. Throughout this time he was effectively Managing Director of the Scottish branch of JMP Consultants. He retired in 1991.

Roy joined the Institution as a Student in 1948, was elected to Membership in 1953 and transferred to Fellowship in 1969. He was also a Fellow of the Institution of Highways and Transportation and a Fellow of the American Institution of Traffic Engineers. For many years he acted for the Institution as a Part C examiner in the specialist field of Transportation Engineering. He was a man of considerable intellect, boundless energy and , in the language of today, was always "a safe pair of hands".

Roy died on 19 September 2004 after a long illness (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy) which he tackled with patience and fortitude. He is survived by his wife Patricia, to whom he was married in 1957, and by his three children and eight grandchildren.

written : by John Holt 01360 550 439
(was in Lagos office)
~ 6 years younger

Baillie Taylor (was lawyer) | behind CIRE.
Charles Murdoch (" ")