

## OBITUARY NOTICES

### ROBERT CONSTANTINE GRASEBY

Robert Constantine Graseby (né Griesbach), who died on the 6th December, 1949, was born on the 14th September, 1883. His paternal forebear was a musician in George I's Hanoverian Court Orchestra, while on his mother's side he was descended from Edward III. The artistry and feudalism in his nature were probably due to his heredity. His technical ability was uncanny and, surely, genius, for he was largely untaught and yet knew, as a boy, far more than any classes could teach him. He had inventiveness of a very high order, as users of his products will agree. The artistry in his nature made him scrap, regardless of cost, anything that he did not consider to be the best possible; but that best was usually the simplest, with a minimum of working parts. After being employed by Messrs. Chamberlain and Hookham as a meter tester from 1901 to 1904, he became closely associated with Robert Venner and, about 1906, time-switches began to assume importance. Graseby did the designing, and from 1911 was managing director of the company but had no works of his own until 1915, and then in a small way only. About 1921, the Horseferry-Road premises were bought, and later, as the business grew, the modern factory on the Kingston By-Pass was designed and built. From there emanated the most wonderful collection of mechanical contrivances, all from Graseby's fertile brain, probably conceived while sitting close to the drummer in a music-hall and sketched out on the back of a cigarette package. He had a gift for converting old homes into modern comfort without loss of character, and was also a very keen yachtsman—so much so that when he left Venner's he did some very good work for the Admiralty at Itchenor, but later returned to instrument work in a factory near the earlier scene of his labours. He will be best remembered for his brilliant work at the Venner works. When he began, the staff in his first workshop numbered seven; when he left there were 1 500 employees.

At heart he was a talented amateur rather than a professional, and the artistry and music in his nature very naturally made him a little *difficile* at times and somewhat erratic, but his personality was charming and very interesting. Among other distinctions he was a Fellow of the British Horological Society, a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, and a Freeman of the City of London. He is survived by his widow and a son.

He joined The Institution as an Associate Member in 1921 and was elected a Member in 1933.

E. F.

### GEORGE MARSHALL HARRISS

George Marshall Harriss, M.A., who died at Monkstown, Co. Dublin, on the 31st January, 1947, at the age of 82, was for many years one of the prominent figures in the Irish engineering world. He lectured on electric traction in Trinity College and was an M.A. of Dublin University.

He was educated at Power's School, Dublin, and Conway College, North Wales, and was apprenticed to the late Mr. Thomas Tomlinson, B.E. He subsequently went to Australia, where he remained for six years, being mainly engaged on railway construction work. On his return to Ireland he joined the staff of J. E. H. Gordon and Co., and whilst with them he was responsible for installing the electric generators in the Bray station, which was one of the first hydro-electric stations in Ireland. He remained at Bray for some years as Township Electrical Engineer and left there to go to Carlow as Manager of the Carlow Electricity works. In this position he was the representative of Professor Forbes, the well known hydro-electric consulting engineer, whom he also assisted in other electrical consulting work.

He was appointed Engineer to the Irish International Exhibition which was held in 1907 on the ground which afterwards became Herbert Park. Here he made the acquaintance of the late William Martin Murphy, who engaged him as Resident Engineer on the construction of the Accra railway on the Gold Coast, for which Mr. Murphy was the contractor. On his return to Dublin he was appointed Electrical Engineer to the Dublin Tramways Co. On the death of Mr. Gordon he was made General Manager of the company, a position which he held until his retirement in 1935. In 1923 he resumed his old connection with water-power development when he became a director of the Anna Liffey Power Development Co.

He had the reputation of being a very shrewd business man who generally succeeded in reaching his objective by reason of a pertinacity and perseverance which refused to be defeated. He was of a kindly and amiable disposition, and this contributed not a little to his success. He was particularly happy in his relations with all who worked under him, and he is still spoken of with appreciation and affection by the old employees of the Dublin Tramways Co.

He is survived by his son, George Sidney, and by his daughter, Marjorie. His second son, Dermot, was killed in an accident in Africa six years ago.

He became a Member of The Institution in 1911. He served the Irish Centre (originally the Dublin Local Section, and now the Irish Branch) as an ordinary member of the Committee for various periods between 1912 and 1935, as Hon. Secretary 1915–17, and as Chairman 1916–17. He was also a Member of The Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland, to whose *Proceedings* he contributed a number of papers, most of which dealt with electric traction.

L. J. K.

### HENRY HOOPER

Henry Hooper, who died on the 20th December, 1949, in Birmingham, was born in that city on the 18th September, 1886. After leaving school he was employed in the Locomotive Shops of the Midland Railway Company at Saltley for a number of years, during which time he studied electrical engineering at the Birmingham Municipal Technical College. In July 1908 he entered the service of the City of Birmingham Electric Supply Department as a Switchboard Attendant, and, after a few months, he was appointed a Commercial Assistant, in which position he remained until September 1915, when he joined H.M. Forces. He received a commission as a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers and saw active service in France as a Signal Officer attached to the Artillery, and, subsequently, became a Staff Captain in the Electrical Department of the Air Ministry. On his demobilization in June 1919, he joined Messrs. Veritys, Ltd., as the Manager and Engineer of their Birmingham District Office. In November 1928 he was appointed General Assistant to the District Manager of the Central England District of the Central Electricity Board, his various duties and responsibilities while he occupied this post included dealing with matters appertaining to the standardization of frequency, acting as Secretary to the Central England Technical Consultative Committee for the whole period of its existence and Chief A.R.P. Officer for the Central England District of the C.E.B. during the late war. On the nationalization of the electricity supply industry on 1st April, 1948, he was appointed Secretary to the Midlands Division of the British Electricity Authority, which position he held with distinction until his death.

His unfailing good humour and honesty of purpose endeared him to a very extensive circle of friends and acquaintances in all walks of life, far beyond the boundaries of the Midlands, where no electrical function was complete without the presence of