

Gwilym Roberts CBE FREng FICE FIMechE

Gwilym Roberts was born in Harlech, Wales in 1925. His parents, who were both fluent in Welsh, moved to Merseyside where Gwilym attended Merchant Taylors' School, Crosby. Having been awarded a State Bursary in 1943 he studied engineering at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where he remained until 1945.

He then entered the engineering branch of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) and undertook his initial training at Devonport, going on to serve on the cruiser *HMS Sheffield*. After demobilisation he served part-time with the naval reserves reaching the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Gwilym entered civilian employment as an Assistant Resident Engineer with John Taylor & Sons, an engineering consultancy, which specialised in water and wastewater engineering, working in their Liverpool and Plymouth offices, before moving to London. He remained with them and their successor bodies for the rest of his career.

He was appointed a partner in the firm in 1956 and subsequently designed water-supply projects in Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia, and sewerage projects in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Iraq – including Baghdad's first sewage treatment scheme.

Continuing his work with sewerage design at John Taylor & Sons he was part of the Anglo-American team that was awarded the Cairo Wastewater Project in 1978, one of the largest public-health engineering projects ever constructed, becoming John Taylors' senior partner in 1984. He became founder chairman of the successor Acer Consultants in 1987, holding the post for five years, during which the group's turnover quadrupled and employee numbers trebled.

During his career Gwilym also served as chairman of the British Geological Survey, the Football Stadia Advisory Design Council, the Second Severn Crossing Technical Adjudication Panel and as a Visiting Professor at Loughborough University.

In 1968, he was elected President of the Institution of Public Health Engineers and in 1986, President of the Institution of Civil Engineers. He was also a member of the Natural Environment Research Council from 1987 to 1993.

He was named one of Britain's four major international engineers of the 20th century by *The Sunday Times Magazine*. He was also a frequent academic author with over 19 articles in recognised journals, sometimes in collaboration with co-authors. His books included: -

- *Engineering Hitler's Downfall - the Brains that enabled Victory* (Technical innovations which contributed to the Allied victory, 2018)
- *Chelsea to Cairo* (a history of water engineering consultancy John Taylor & Sons, 2006)
- *From Kendal's Coffee House to Great George Street*, (a history of the headquarters buildings of the ICE, 1995)

Gwilym was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1987.