

Charles Holtzapffel Memorial

Mr. Charles Holtzapffel devoted himself assiduously to the acquirement of scientific and practical knowledge, which he applied in the direction of his father 's business, in which he was associated at an early age, and he introduced into their productions many improvements. Both at that period, and subsequently, he was extensively engaged in the construction of machinery for printing bank notes, of lathes for cutting rosettes, and for ornamental and plain turning, of machines for carving, and numerous other branches of mechanic arts, as well as in constructing instruments, which, from their delicacy, should almost rather have fallen within the province of the mathematical instrument maker; of these may be mentioned - the Indicator, used by Professor Moseley and Mr W Pole (Assoc. Inst. C.E.) for experiments upon the engine at the East London Waterworks, and which was exhibited at the meeting of the Institution, in March 1842.

His attention was not, however exclusively devoted to these matters of business; he exerted himself to introduce a system of definite measures, based on the decimal subdivision of the standard inch, instead of the usual arbitrary method of working by gauges, and he found leisure to collect the materials for a voluminous work on "Turning and Mechanical Manipulation" of which he published two volumes, treating of the nature and quality of materials, their modes of preparation, the method of their manipulation, and the tools best adapted for all the purposes to which they can be applied. These volumes have been received in the most favourable manner not only by the amateur mechanics, for whose use he modestly stated that they had been written, but by professional mechanics and engineers, who find in them stores of information, which they, perhaps, scarcely know where else to seek for.

Mr. Holtzapffel's general character as an upright, kind-hearted man, equalled his reputation in his own peculiar department, and his loss was deeply felt in the Institution, to which he was much attached, and to which, either as an Associate member of the Council, or in any other positions, he delighted to render himself actively useful.

This memorial for Charles Holtzapffel was given by the president of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Sir John Rennie, at the 1847 annual general meeting and later appeared in the annual report. Additional details about Charles Holtzapffel and the Institution of Civil Engineers, and the source for this memoir is in Society of Ornamental Turners Bulletin 111:17-18.