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DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR ANALYSIS, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR OF MASONRY ARCHES

by

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SUMMARY

Masonry arch has a long history of usage since it was first used by Egyptians 5000 years ago. The 12th & 13th centuries saw the greatest developments in stone masonry arch in U.K. and Europe. It possessed great advantage in structural applications, but its usage has been retarded with the advent of tension carrying material. Nowadays it is only viable for small span bridges where aesthetic considerations govern the choice. However in Sri Lanka too, a large number of old masonry arches, some of medium to long span, are still in use as road bridges or rail bridges. Therefore, Bridge Engineers still have to deal with them and their task is extremely difficult due to lack of design or other guidance through Codes of Practice. Hence, a comprehensive study of masonry arch bridges covering analysis, design, construction, maintenance and repair was considered opportune to provide the much needed guidance.

In the analytical study, previous theoretical studies available in literature were reviewed and fundamental theories, which have been derived, were used for the computation of influence lines for moving loads on masonry arch bridges. Elastic method was found to be the most satisfactory method and guidance was developed for the conduct of vertical and lateral load analysis. For the engineers who favour the use of the finite element technique, studies were conducted to determine a suitable element and mesh capable of providing an economical solution, which does not deviate by no more than 5% from the exact solution. The MEXE method was found to be the best approach for routine strength checking of existing masonry arch bridges, and its details were presented for local usage. Study of secondary effects led to the development of methods to consider secondary effects in masonry circular arch analysis from basic principles and also using finite element techniques.

Bridges in use where structural construction drawings are available were studied in detail. The available type drawings were checked for viability for suitable modifications if necessary, and all available empirical rules for proportioning arches and various design approaches were reviewed. The study led to the recommendation of an empirical formula for proportioning the arch, as well as a detailed design procedure for the maximum utilization of the BS 5628, which gives little specific guidance on design of masonry arch bridges.

Previous construction methods available in literature for arch construction now long forgotten were studied. This review led to the recommendation of methods suitable for Sri Lankan conditions.

Finally, various defects and repair methods recommended in the available literature were studied in detail, and repair methods suitable for Sri Lankan conditions were recommended.



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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
TITLE	i
SUMMARY	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
NOTATIONS	xiv
TERMINOLOGY	xv
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 General.....	2
1.2 Need for Research	5
1.3 Objectives of the Investigation.....	6
1.4 Methodology.....	7
1.5 Main Findings.....	7
1.6 The Presentation of Chapters.....	8
CHAPTER 2 - THE INVESTIGATION OF METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND THEIR USAGE	10
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Survey of previous research into analytical methods of arch structures.....	12
2.2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2.2 Classical Arch Theory.....	13
2.2.3 Plastic Hinge Method.....	16
2.2.4 Finite Element Method.....	20
2.2.5 MEXE (Military Engineering Experimental Establishment) Method	21
2.2.6 Line of Thrust Method	25
2.2.7 Correlation between Theoretical Results and Model Testing	27

2.2.8	Conclusion from Literature Review.....	31
2.3	Bridge Engineering Requirements for Analysis of Arch Bridges	35

CHAPTER 3 - VERTICAL AND LATERAL LOAD ANALYSIS

	APPLIED TO ARCH BRIDGES.....	43
3.1	Vertical Load Analysis of Masonry Arch Bridges	44
3.1.1	General	44
3.1.2	Application of Elastic Method based on Classical Arch Theory	44
3.1.3	Application of Finite Element Method	48
3.1.4	Comparison & Conclusion.....	50
3.2	Wind Load Analysis of Masonry Arch Bridges	51
3.3	Main Conclusions of Structural Analysis of Arch Bridges	53

CHAPTER 4 - LAYOUT AND PROPORTIONING OF

	MASONRY ARCHES	153
4.1	Introduction	154
4.2	Review of Previous Literature	154
4.2.1	Type of Structure	154
4.2.2	Layout	155
4.2.3	Proportioning	156
4.3	Results of the Study.....	158
4.4	Conclusions	159

CHAPTER 5 - DESIGN

5.1	Introduction	167
5.2	History	168
5.3	General	171
5.4	Modes of Failure.....	183
5.4.1	Sliding	185
5.4.2	Overturing	186
5.4.3	Crushing	186
5.4.4	Snap Through.....	187
5.4.5	Shear	188

5.5	Recommended Method of Design	188
5.5.1	General	188
5.5.2	Design Process	189
5.5.3	Design Checks.....	191
5.6	Conclusion	192
CHAPTER 6 - CONSTRUCTION OF MASONRY ARCH BRIDGES		193
6.1	Introduction	194
6.2	Review of Previous Literature on Construction of Masonry Arch Bridges	194
6.3	Selection and use of Voussoir Units and mortar	199
6.4	Centering	210
6.4.1	General	210
6.4.2	Design	211
6.5	Construction Method	216
6.6	Detailing	218
6.7	Conclusion	219
CHAPTER 7 - REPAIR OF MASONRY ARCHES		230
7.1	Introduction	231
7.2	Review of Previous Literature on Repair	231
7.3	Important Considerations in a Preliminary Survey of a Bridge Needing Repair	240
7.3.1	General	240
7.3.2	Aims of Repair	241
7.3.3	Facts for Consideration	243
7.3.4	Preliminary Clearing	244
7.4	Recommended Repair Methods	244
7.4.1	Saddling	244
7.4.2	Pointing and Grouting	245
7.4.3	Guniting of Soffit	245
7.4.4	Overslabbing	246
7.4.5	Replacement of Edge Voussoirs	246
7.4.6	Stitching Longitudinal Cracks	246



7.4.7	Part Reconstruction	247
7.5	Conclusion	247
 CHAPTER 8 - CONSIDERATION OF SECONDARY EFFECTS IN ANALYSIS		
	ANALYSIS	255
8.1	Introduction	256
8.2	Review of Previous Literature on Consideration of Secondary Effects	257
8.3	Recommended Methods for Consideration of Secondary Effects	261
8.4	Suitable Values for Key Variables	262
8.5	Determination of Secondary Effects using a Computer Package	265
8.6	Conclusion	265
 CHAPTER 9 - MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION		
	FOR FUTURE RESEARCHES	276
9.1	Main Conclusions of the Study	277
9.2	Recommendation for Further Research	280
 APPENDIX A - Structural Effects due to Temperature fall, Horizontal Movement of Support (Outwards) and Shrinkage		
		282
 APPENDIX B - Structural Effects due to Vertical Movement of Support .		
		286
 APPENDIX C - Structural Effects due to Rib Shortening		
		290
 REFERENCES		
		297

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
2.1 Arch Layout	37
2.2 MEXE method Nomogram for Provisional Axial Load	38
2.3 MEXE method - profile factor	37
2.4 MEXE method - span/rise factor	37
2.5 Influence of material strength on the zone of thrust.	39
2.6 Effect of arch strength on wingwalls, spandrels and fill thrust.....	40
3.1 Idealisation of a Circular Masonry Arch.....	55
3.2 Forces and Moments applied and the illustration of the notations used.	56
3.3 Known solution - Influence line for Horizontal thrust.....	57
3.4 Known solution - Influence line for fixed end bending moment.....	58
3.5 Influence lines for vertical reaction	59
3.6 Influence lines for fixed end bending moment	60
3.7 Influence lines for Horizontal Thrust.....	61
3.8 Shear force influence lines at crown.....	62
3.9 Shear force influence lines at quarter point.....	63
3.10 Axial force influence lines at quarter point.....	64
3.11 Axial force influence lines at crown	65
3.12 Axial force envelope for rise = span/8	66
3.13 Axial force envelope for rise = span/4	67
3.14 Axial force envelope for rise = 3/8 span.....	68
3.15 Axial force envelope for rise = span/2	69
3.16 Shear force envelope for rise = span/8.....	70
3.17 Shear force envelope for rise = span/4.....	71
3.18 Shear force envelope for rise = 3/8 span.....	72
3.19 Shear force envelope for rise = span/2.....	73
3.20 Bending moment influence lines at quarter point	74
3.21 Bending moment influence lines at quarter point	75
3.22 Bending moment envelope for rise = span/8	76
3.23 Bending moment envelope for rise = span/4	77
3.24 Bending moment envelope for rise = 3/8 span	78
3.25 Bending moment envelope for rise = span/2	79



3.26	Finite element mesh arrangement, load application, stress & deformation variations - 8 element mesh.....	80
3.27	Finite element mesh arrangement, load application, stress & deformation variations - 32 element mesh.....	82
3.28	Finite element mesh arrangement, load application, stress & deformation variations - 128 element mesh.....	84
3.29	Maximum fixed end hogging moment for selected spans	86
3.30	Maximum fixed end sagging moment for selected spans	87
3.31	Maximum sagging moment in the arch ring for selected spans.....	88
3.32	Maximum hogging moment in the arch ring for selected spans	89
3.33	Behavior of arches on application of concentrated horizontal loads	90
3.34	Torsional & Bending moments due to wind moment and the Illustration of the Notations used	91
4.1	Typical Examples of Brick Arches	161
6.1	Some Typical Bond Arrangements.....	221
6.2	Details of centering for spans 25 - 35ft.....	221
6.3	Details of centering for spans 30 - 40ft.....	221
6.4	Details of centering for an elliptical arch of 60ft. span.....	222
6.5	N-truss type centering for spans 70 - 100ft.....	222
6.6	Sequence of pouring arch voussoirs.....	222
6.7	Components of Masonry arch.....	223
6.8	Typical drawing for Arch Bridges	224
6.9	Drwg. of Bridge over Railway - 2 nd mile Gampola Road.....	225
6.10	Photographs of Brige over Railway - 2 nd mile Gampola Road.....	226
6.11	Available drawing for centering for 25ft. span	228
6.12	Available drawing for centering for 10-20ft. span and 5-10ft. spans	229
7.1	Stockport viaduct on Birmingham - Manchester Railway	249
7.2	Sectional elevation showing strengthening of cracked arch.	250
7.3	Typical details of widening of narrow arch bridges to two lane width - type 1	
7.4	Typical details of widening of narrow arch bridges to	



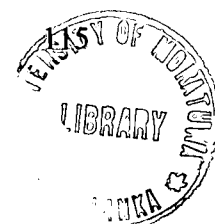
	two lane width - type 2.....	252
7.5	Proposed retro-reinforcement for a typical single span masonry arch bridge.....	253
7.6	Repair method - saddling.....	254
7.7	Repair method - application of a slab.....	255
7.8	Repair method - overslabbing.....	256
7.9	Repair method - stitching longitudinal cracks.....	257
7.10	Repair method - part reconstruction.....	257
7.11	Repair method.....	258
7.12	Lime house viaduct strengthening.....	258
8.1	Arch layout for horizontal thrust due to change of span length.....	267
8.2	Arch layout for horizontal thrust due to thermal moment.....	267
8.3	Arch layout for horizontal thrust due to rib shortening.....	267
8.4	Arch layout for horizontal thrust due to increase or decrease in temperature.....	267
A1	286
A2	286
B1	290
C1	297




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List of Tables

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
2.1 MEXE Method - Barrel factor	41
2.2 MEXE Method - Fill factor	41
2.3 MEXE Method - Width factor	42
2.4 MEXE Method - Mortar factor	42
2.5 MEXE Method - Depth factor	42
3.1 Horizontal thrust and fixed end moments known solution	92
3.2 comparison of the known solution and the results of the study	93
3.3 Fixed end Bending moment of the arch	94
3.4 Vertical reaction at arch support	95
3.5 Horizontal Thrust at arch support	96
3.6 Shear force influence lines at crown	97
3.7 Shear force influence lines at quarter point	98
3.8 Axial force influence lines at crown	99
3.9 Axial force influence lines at quarter point	100
3.10 Axial force envelope for rise = span/8	101
3.11 Axial force envelope for rise = span/4	102
3.12 Axial force envelope for rise = 3/8 span	103
3.13 Axial force envelope for rises = span/2	104
3.14 Shear force envelope for rise = span/8	105
3.15 Shear force envelope for rise = span/4	106
3.16 Shear force envelope for rise = 3/8 span	107
3.17 Shear force envelope for rise = span/2	108
3.18 Bending moment influence lines at crown	109
3.19 Bending moment influence lines at quarter point	110
3.20 Bending moment envelope for rise = span/8	111
3.21 Bending moment envelope for rise = span/4	112
3.22 Bending moment envelope for rise = 3/8 span	113
3.23 Bending moment envelope for rise = span/2	114
3.24 Finite Element Analysis Results for application of unit vertical load	



3.25	Comparison of the finite element solution with exact solution for 6.0 m span for rise/span = 1/2	143
3.26	Comparison of the finite element solution with exact solution for 1.5m span for rise/span = 1/2	144
3.27	Comparison of the finite element solution with exact solution for 18.0 m span for rise/span = 1/2	145
3.28	Comparison of the finite element solution with exact solution for 6.0 m span for rise/span = 1/8	146
3.29	Comparison of the finite element solution with exact solution for 6.0 m span for rise/span = 1/4	147
3.30	Comparison of the finite element solution with exact solution for 6.0 m span for rise/span = 3/8	148
3.31	Maximum structural effects for various rise/span ratios.....	149
3.32	Maximum fixed end bending movement due to unit load	150
3.33	Maximum bending moments in the arch ring due to unit load.....	151
3.34	Result of lateral load analysis	152
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8.1	Methods of computation of secondary effects.....	268
8.2	Structural effects due to unit horizontal deflection at support.....	171
8.3	Structural effects due to unit vertical deflection at support	272
8.4	Comparison of results of the finite element solution with different idealisations and the exact solution.....	273
8.5	Finite element analysis results for application of unit displacements at support.....	274



TERMINOLOGY

Some of the more commonly used technical terms used in relation to masonry arches are as follows:

- Skewback** - This is the surface (generally inclined) upon which the arch ring or rib rests. This surface is the assumed dividing line between arch and abutment and is a purely imaginary plane.
- Crown** - The highest point on the centre line of the arch ring.
- Spring line** - The intersection of skewback and soffit.
- Soffit** - The under surface of arch ring.
- Intrados** - The curve of intersection of the soffit plane and a vertical plane parallel to the centre line of the roadway.
- Extrados** - The intersection of the curved back or upper surface of the arch with a vertical plane parallel to the centerline of the roadway.
- Span** - The clear distance between spring lines measured horizontally and parallel to the centre line of the roadway.
- Rise** - The vertical distance between the spring line and the intrados at the crown.
- Spandrel** - That portion of the structure lying above the arch ring.



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NOTATIONS

R	-	Radius of the arch
U	-	Strain energy
E	-	Modulus of elasticity
I	-	Moment of Inertia
M	-	Bending moment
H	-	Horizontal thrust
V	-	Vertical reaction
L	-	Span of the arch
T	-	Torsional moment
h	-	Rise of the arch
a	-	Horizontal distance from end of arch to load point



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