



Stanley George Elliott in 1965

The story of Stanley George Elliott and his involvement with Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick & Partners will, no doubt, be told in another part of the Scott Wilson History. I have, however, included SGE [as he was known in Hong Kong] in this history because of my involvement with him while I worked with SW Hong Kong.

Some memories of SGE

I first met SGE when he visited Glasgow just before the opening of Renfrew Motorway Stage 1 in October 1976. I was Resident Engineer [Bridges] and was aware that the big downturn in work for SW Glasgow following the establishment of Strathclyde Regional Council might make it difficult for me and others to return to Glasgow Office. Consequently, when SGE, the Senior Partner with Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick & Partners, Hong Kong, invited me to come for a chat about opportunities in HK I decided to hear more. My recollection is that John Cullen knew what was being proposed but am not certain. I duly turned up at The Central Hotel, Glasgow [at Central Station] and was invited to join SGE in his bedroom! Nothing untoward took place and SGE explained that he was hoping I might join SW Hong Kong as Project Manager for, among other things, Tuen Mun Road Stage 2. Tuen Mun Road was, at the time, the biggest single project in the SW firmament. After a bit of questioning and answering, I said I'd probably like to take up the offer and it was agreed that I'd be given more information by Fax. Business complete, SGE pulled back the curtain to let a bit more light in, had a good look at the position of the Sun, glanced at his watch and declared that the sun was over the yardarm and asked if I'd like a drink to cement the [tentative] deal. A bottle of whisky was produced. SGE broke the seal and, having looked around, took his toothbrush and paste out of a tumbler in the bathroom and poured me a generous tot. SGE continued to pace around with the bottle in his hand looking for another glass for himself making small talk all the while. Eventually, his eyes fell on a can of under arm deodorant. He prized the plastic top off, had a quick look inside then poured himself a slightly less generous tot! In due course, having sorted out the details by telex and with my wife Yvonne, we were off to Hong Kong with our two small children in November 1976.

On our arrival in Hong Kong, we were met by Mike Slinn, then Project Manager for Tuen Mun Road Stage 1 and Vic Siddle, the Company Secretary. They duly deposited us at the YMCA Kowloon [according to one guide book, 'for the young and impecunious'!!] and took us up to the roof garden for a drink overlooking the brightly lit harbour; a wonderful sight. The YMCA had been a bone of contention during the discussions about the deal and I had, in fact, not given my forwarding address to anyone at home. However, it turned out that we were in a suite of rooms in the new Bradbury Wing very close to the SW Star House Office. We settled down quickly and were soon in correspondence with the folks back home with a suitable explanation about why we were at the YMCA!!

The morning after our arrival, I turned up at the 17th floor of Star House and was ushered in for an initial meeting with SGE, whose office overlooked the harbour and HK Island. SGE gave me a brief introduction to HK, who I'd be working with [Andrew Maslowicz was to be my Partner] where I'd be located in Star House etc. We then turned to where I might get a flat or a house. SGE explained that traditionally, the SW people lived on Kowloon side rather on the Island because of the potential difficulty in getting to or from Hong Kong should a Typhoon Signal of sufficient gravity be hoisted. The New Cross Harbour Tunnel had reduced the inconvenience but there was also the problem of getting from the Island to projects or offices in the New Territories. Most of the Scott Wilson Projects were located on Kowloon side and in the NT [New Territories] SGE explained that he and the other Partners lived on Kowloon side but that some members of staff lived at Stanley, the 'Mid Levels', which he pointed out on the other side of the harbour, and elsewhere on Hong Kong. He went on to explain, in one of his SGE, slightly amusing anecdotes, that there was a rather snooty attitude towards Kowloon types from those who lived on the Island, especially if they lived on 'The Peak'. 'In fact', he said, 'when I first arrived in Hong Kong, people used to ask, 'Are you married, or do you live in Kowloon'!! We quickly found a very good flat on Kent Road, Kowloon Tong and later, another on La Salle Road, also Kowloon Tong.

SGE and I did meet occasionally and he sometimes asked me to work on some special project or event but, in the main, my main contact among the partners was Andrew Maslowicz, with whom I found myself largely responsible for the major road and bridge projects, particularly Tuen Mun Road linking the New Towns of Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun along very steep and rather unstable mountainsides adjacent to the South China Sea.

Several things stick in my mind about SGE. He was Irish, the son of a Church of Ireland vicar [or higher], a graduate of Trinity College Dublin and, at one time, President of the Hong Kong St Patrick's Society. He was heavily involved in arbitrations, primarily arbitrations involving Scott Wilson such as Brunei Airport and the Plover Cove Dam and water system. He was rather pedantic and there were often long silences part way through sentences, sometimes to the extent that I would find myself interrupting his train of thought as he sought the best or most appropriate word or phrase to insert into the sentence for the best effect! He had a fascination with dropped paperclips, pins and the like and would often break off a conversation to bend down and pick up a bent paper clip which he would then carefully bend back to its correct shape. He was of the view that every paper clip or pin saved was one more that didn't have to be purchased and that was pretty much how he ran his business [the Kowloon YMCA for junior or middle ranking staff was another example of this].

SGE was also a keen scrutineer of letters and memos. In those days, every letter or memo sent from the office had to be signed by a Partner unless authority was delegated to, say, the Project Manager. All letters and memos had file copies in different colours. The pink copies or Pinks were circulated daily to all Partners to ensure they were kept aware of events but, in the main it seemed, to enable SGE and some others to seek out and re-connect split infinitives, grammatical aberrations and, as SGE put it, 'unconventional spelling'!!

In my first few weeks, my Scottish education did not result in many 'observations' and, surprisingly, none, or at least very few from SGE. The offending Pinks would be re-circulated for all to see and gloat over. On one occasion, I was challenged about my use of 'outwith' as in, say, a letter to a

contractor advising that X or Y was **outwith** the terms of the contract and should be removed and reprovided at the contractor's expense'. Someone had scored this out on my Pink and had substituted '**without**'!! As this seemed a quite bizarre correction to me, I sought guidance from my new colleague and fellow Scot, Bill Murray, who advised me to score out the correction and reinstate my original 'outwith', which he agreed was perfectly suitable and clear and write a side note as to where, and in which dictionaries, this word could be found with a sub note 'Scottish Usage'. Splendid, I thought, and immediately put this plan into action with references from the Oxford and Cambridge English Dictionaries! I rarely heard from the pedants again but could imagine SGE thinking 'well done-couldn't have thought up a better wheeze myself!!

JP McCafferty July 2015