



Maurice Watson in 1976

Maurice transferred from SWK London to Highway Planning at 4 Park Gardens, Glasgow c1961 for the initial highway planning exercise. Later, Maurice became Partner responsible for Traffic and Highway Planning in London and Basingstoke.

Maurice found it difficult to deal with the sometimes madcap ideas of then Senior Partner, Geoffrey Williams. Sometime around 1976, after listening to Geoffrey wittering on at one of the Partners' meetings about his latest idea for a second cross harbour tunnel [sinking a series of, presumably specially modified, disused oil tankers (there was a glut of them on the market at the time) to the bed of the harbour and joining them end to end to create a new tunnel similar to the existing one], Maurice made some sort of outburst about Geoffrey and 'Boys Own Engineering'! Maurice did not remain one of the Partners for much longer! The outcome was that Geoff French, Maurice's Associate, rose to stardom overnight and became a Partner himself at an earlier age than usual, paving the way to his eventual role as Senior Partner [in those days, the succession came by date of became a Partner].

When I was resident with Scott Wilson Hong Kong, Maurice, by then with another consultant, would occasionally drop into my office for a chat. We really didn't know one and other very well but he was an 'operator' who liked to hear the gossip and find out which way the wind was blowing. I don't know if he also called in to see the HK Partners on these visits or how he got to know about me and where I was located in Star House and later Ocean Terminal. There may have been a residual camaraderie through John Cullen and John Stamper which drew him to the Glasgow men abroad. Whatever it was, I enjoyed the occasional chat and the flattery that came with them!

JP McCafferty July 2015.

