

## **UK Project Management Round Up**



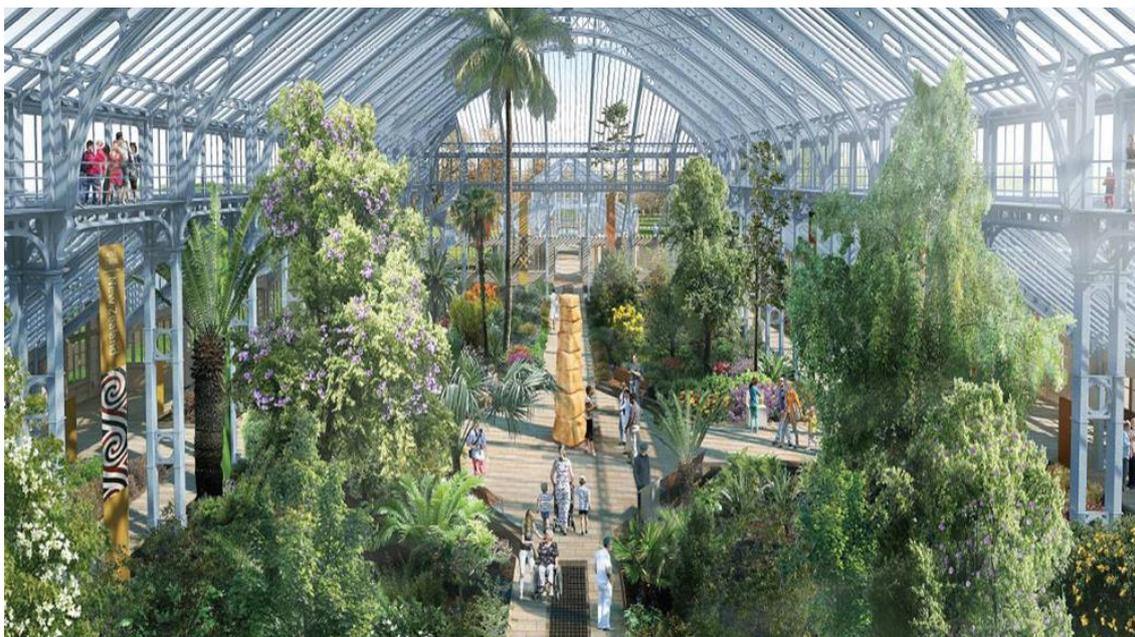
*By Miles Shepherd*  
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### **INTRODUCTION**

This month's report is like a Neapolitan Sandwich – in UK this is an ice cream with vanilla bands sandwiching a raspberry band – with some good news to start, some not so good news in the middle and, finally, some better news.

### **FIRST THE GOOD NEWS**

After a five -ear refit project, the Temperate House at Kew Gardens has re-opened to the public. Note that the “temperate” bit has nothing to do not drinking: it refers to the climate control. The Project at Kew Gardens, a World Heritage site, restored a Grade 1 listed building; the largest remaining Victorian glasshouse in the world – dating from 1863. It also included plans to expand Kew's involvement with communities and schools by providing, new spaces for engaging in community and participation projects.



Artists Impression: Temperate House Kew. Picture: Kew Gardens

This National Lottery supported five-year long undertaking has been truly immense - the entire framework of the building has been painstakingly repaired, and its 15,000 panes of glass replaced, along with its intricate ironwork and expansive paved flooring. Around 500 plants were taken out and housed in a temporary nursery, with an incredible 10,000 going back in. The close out phase has been a lengthy and delicate process that started in September 2017 and was completed on time for the opening in May 2018.

The £41 million restoration project was carried out by Donald Insall Associates. Designed by Decimus Burton in 1860 the greenhouse was dismantled into some 69,000 components, metal parts stripped back to base layers and repainted using more than 5,000 litres of paint. Donald Insall were involved in every stage of the project and prepared the conservation master plan.

Aimée Felton, of Donald Insall Associates, said *“When we tried to put everything back in perfect alignment, we ran tests and found there were leaks everywhere. Of course, the original building had been built by craftsmen rather than robots”*. She went on to say *“So Kew is something of a test-bed for the Palace of Westminster, in that they both offer the same proposition of academic thought versus actual realities. Both have to be living buildings that are made to work efficiently without losing their charm. But at least, unlike MPs, plants don’t have much of an opinion where they’re sent to.”*

## **NOW THE NOT SO GOOD NEWS**

As always, the press has been awash with the bad news, that sells papers, after all. The biggest disaster has been the TSB IT disaster but there are also problems for several high-profile projects that are at the planning stage, BREXIT rumbles on and new nuclear has been enjoying mixed fortunes.

First, TSB. Once part of Lloyds Banking group, it was sold in 2015 to Sabadell Bank, a Spanish firm. TSB has been using legacy IT systems for which it had been paying Lloyds around £1M annually. The migration to Sabadell’s in-house developed system, Proteo4UK, had been planned for years and the final cut over involved moving 1.3 billion customer records from the old system to the new one. The project was planned to save £100m a year as a result, according to the BBC.

However, as soon as the system came back up, customers reported a series of issues ranging from seeing other people’s banking data rather than their own; major security issues such as being able to draw down money from other people’s accounts to being locked out of their own accounts and inability to complete routine transactions such as payroll functions.

Initially, the parent company claimed the change over was a complete success. The CEO, Banco Sabadell chief executive Jaime Guardiola had claimed in December 2017 that *“The integration of Proteo4UK is an unprecedented project in Europe, a project in which more than 1,000 professionals have participated. It would offer a significant boost to our growth in the United Kingdom.”* In all, 2,500 years-worth of labour had been put into the project, he added.

Now, nearly 5 weeks after the cut over TSB are still in chaos. Press reports claim the problems will last for months (The Times Reuters, FT and many others). Outside consultants from IBM have been brought in to advise but in a response to the Parliament, TSB said they need to understand the IBM response before they can fix the problems.

*“The conversion of the systems – the data and the interface accessing the data, which links up to the banking system – clearly has not been well-tested before it went online,”* says Shujun Li, a professor of cybersecurity at the University of Kent’s School of Computing. *“The scale of the problem we saw is incredible. It’s impossible if they had done systematic testing of the system. For me, it’s clearly a case of management, rather than purely a technical problem.”*

The last truly catastrophic incident to hit a bank was in 2012, when 6.5 million customers at Natwest, Ulster Bank and Royal Bank of Scotland were unable to access their accounts for three weeks in June and July. For that outage, the bank was fined £56 million by the Bank of England and the Financial Conduct Authority.

## **Crossrail**

Power supply and signal problems are causing a cost overrun for this major project. The £14.8Bn project, one of the largest engineering projects in Europe is scheduled to open in December so contractors are working flat out to complete the line in time. The overspend comes as an embarrassment to Government when it is dealing with Hinkley “C” (£20Bn) in Somerset, HS2 (£56Bn) and Heathrow’s 3<sup>rd</sup> runway (£14Bn). These all challenge the UK ability to bring in major infrastructure projects on time and on budget. Other areas of the rail network have also been faced with major cost overruns, some the result of poor planning, others to risk issues and some to abysmal contracting processes.

## **SOME NOT SO BAD NEWS**

Sky Scrapers are in the news this month as it has been announced that there are plans to build more than 500 sky scrapers in London. This is a 12% increase on the previous record set in 2016, and for the first time, spills into the suburbs. The report comes from New London Architecture who claim that 115 towers are actually under construction – a 16% increase on 2016. The good news here is that the construction industry will benefit from the jobs and it will help improve their cashflow. The bad news is that many of these new beasts will be ultra-modern piles of glass and steel. Just as well as there is a national brick crisis. The news is not all good, however, as these buildings, all more than 20 stories high, will dwarf many of the historic buildings in the City and along the riverside with the inevitable impact on selling British nostalgia. Did you know that some tourists sued London because the Guards were not guarding Buckingham Palace? It was my old Regiment and we did not have red tunics or Bearskin head dress! Still, only 18 of these monsters were completed last year.

Work on one sky scraper has been halted amid planning concerns following the Grenfell Tower catastrophe. The 67 story Spire London has only a single stairwell serving the upper floors, despite promises to extend a second stairwell to the 54<sup>th</sup> floor in January 2016. Now a design review is taking place to make sure “the most up to

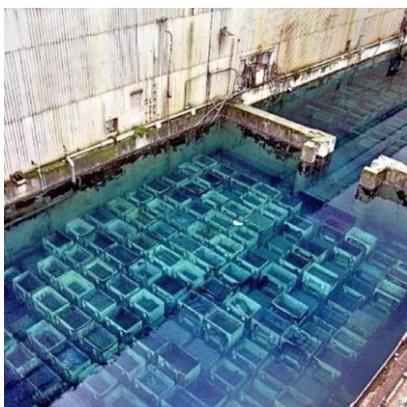
date design specification” is in place. Work is currently at a standstill, and sales halted while the review takes place. The tower was expected to reach its half height this summer (Spring has been so late this year that Summer will be late starting, which should help) and is due for completion in 2020.

Energy projects are still causing concerns with more subsidies needed to make the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon a reality. At £1.3 billion, this is not a cheap electricity plan and the owners are looking for support to bring the guaranteed cost of electricity down to £159 per MWh for 35 years. The project owner claims the best way to cut costs would be to offer a 60 year deal but reduce the indexation: this would, the project team claim, bring the cost per unit down to £92.70 per MWh, under a Hinkley Point deal. Similar deals are in place for new nuclear and off-shore wind farms but under 30-year terms.



Artists impression of the barrier. Image Tidallagoonpower.com

This is a world first project that could generate up to 320 Megawatts at peak using wave power to drive turbines on in-coming and out-going tides.



Sellafield Sludge storage pond.  
Photo: The Ecologist

Old nuclear always brings up long term costs, usually concerning storage of waste and when that is passed up, the next target is safety. Press reports concerning the storage of high level waste in ponds at Sellafield use emotive, and often inaccurate, terms concerning storage of spent fuel and sludges. While no one can deny that the storage of these materials is a concern, the situation is under control. None the less, it is good to see a positive report in the Times about B30, the storage ponds that hold 1,500 tonnes of radioactive

sludge and 1,300 skips of spent fuel rods – see picture left.

Sellafield has had many names since its days as a war-time munitions factory. As Windscale, it was the site for the Ministry of Defence's production of weapons grade plutonium. Adjacent to the Windscale site Calder Hall became the first commercial nuclear power station. Now the whole site is called Sellafield and there is a massive cleanup operation in place to decommission the reactors and to clear up all the waste from its final role as a reprocessing plant for UK and foreign spent fuel. This last task generated a great deal of high level waste that has been sealed in high spec contained and stored in the ponds (see picture to the right).



Spent fuel pond: Photo. The Ecologist

The spent fuel ponds are in much better condition than the outside ponds but both are not only being maintained but being cleaned up. The task for the 'Magnox Storage Ponds clean up is daunting and so far has taken 15 years and £1.5 billion to get to the point where decommissioning could take place. Recent reports show the progress achieved through use of new technology such as remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) to record and clean sludge from the ponds. It is expected that 90% of the sludge will have been removed by 2022. According to press reports (The Times 8 May 18) by 2024, remaining items will be washed of radiation. The ponds will be drained in the 2030's and on current plans demolished by 2050. In an interesting quote from the head of Sellafield's Head of Policy, bringing back management of Sellafield into the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency has been highly effective, mainly because a more flexible planning approach is possible. This sounds very much like an agile approach to decommissioning and allows plan changes to be built into the system and is much less costly than having contract variations which are expensive and time consuming to process. Oh, and the end date for the programme is 2120 – still some way off!

## **BREXIT**

This rumbles on and is ever more depressing. Poor planning in the various Ministries is bad enough but the Upper House is distracting the negotiating team by demanding final decisions being taken in Parliament. While scrutiny is valuable, this is a high pressure negotiating situation. Continually disclosing UK "red lines", demanding rejection if pet projects are not exempted and other similar unrealistic demands all complicate matters. If Parliament thinks it can send the negotiating team back to Brussels to re-negotiate, it simply confirms that most Members of Parliament have problems whistling and walking at the same time. The latest issues revolve around the future of the Galileo project from which British firms are being excluded. Whether we will be able to remove British technology from the incomplete system is doubtful so we are faced with another deeply unsatisfactory situation which voters simply did not consider, how could they when

Ministers had not thought that far ahead. Galileo will not be the only unexpected outcome.

## AND SOME MORE GOOD NEWS

Three items of much better news brings this edition to a close.

First, in this age of snowflake young people, it is reassuring to see that the well-being of robots is being addressed. We all know that robots have emotional problems, just look at Marvin the paranoid android in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe*. Well, now someone at the unlikely sounding Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown, in Lisbon, has come up with some ideas on how to manage depression or other extremes of artificial intelligence emotion. Who knew this would become so important but well done on spotting it before we are flooded with Marvins.

Second, Bletchley Park, where the world's first computers were developed to assist in code breaking during the Second World War, may be repurposed! A consortium led by Milton Keynes College have applied for a £20 million grant to develop an Institute of Digital Technology. Supported by some heavyweight tech firms such as Microsoft and McAfee with management gurus KPMG, the new Centre is intended to create a teaching centre for cyber-qualifications. According to the Time, this will come under the banner of "From breaking code to making code" – catchy don't you think?

And finally, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries have opened at Westminster Abbey. Situated in the space above the nave and previously only used by Broadcasters in recent times, the area has been opened up by the addition of a new tower

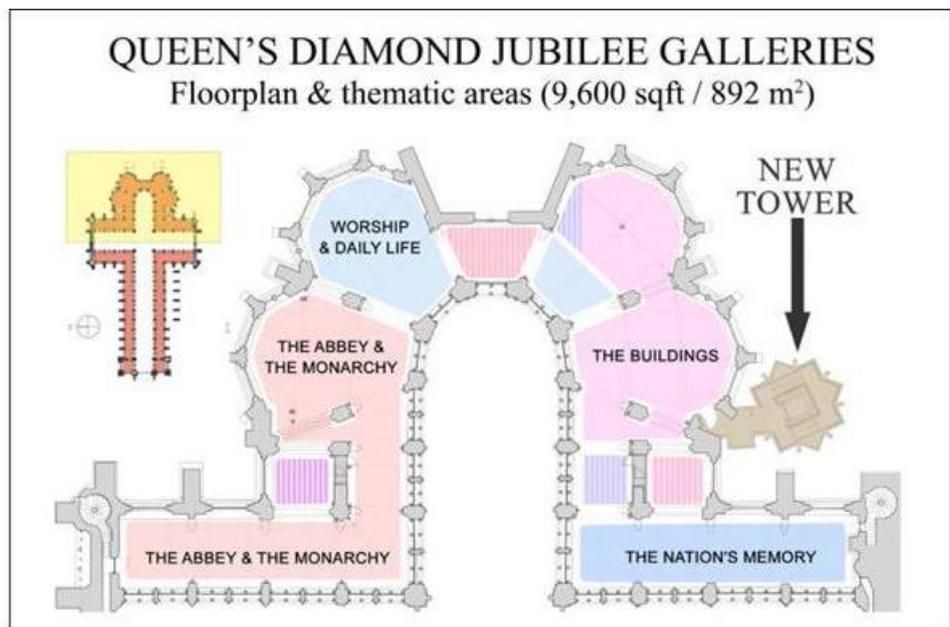


Image: Westminster Abbey



Window cleaning! Photo by Leon Neal/Getty Images)

The new tower is located outside Poets' Corner opposite the Houses of Parliament. Constructed of glass, wood, lead and stone, it is 80 ft high, has 12,000 panes of glass and a 13-person lift at its core. A staircase for visitors winds round the lift structure. The new tower is the first physical addition to the Abbey church since its iconic towers by Nicholas Hawksmoor were completed in 1745.

The new tower, designed by Ptolemy Dean, the Abbey's Surveyor of the Fabric (Consultant Architect) has been named The Weston Tower, after one of the major

donors. The name has been carved in the stone of the tower where visitors will be able to walk across the high-level bridge linking the tower to the Galleries. The total project cost has been £22.9m, all of which has been met by private donors and trusts.



The triforium at Westminster Abbey before work began to convert this space, hidden from the public for 700 years, into a new museum: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries. Picture: Alan Williams

The new gallery and its new tower are due to open on 11th June 2018.

## About the Author



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**Miles Shepherd** is an executive editorial advisor and international correspondent for PM World Journal in the United Kingdom. He is also managing director for MS Projects Ltd, a consulting company supporting various UK and overseas Government agencies, nuclear industry organisations and other businesses. Miles has over 30 years' experience on a variety of projects in UK, Eastern Europe and Russia. His PM experience includes defence, major IT projects, decommissioning of nuclear reactors, nuclear security, rail and business projects for the UK Government and EU. Past Chair and Fellow of the Association for Project Management (APM), Miles is also past president and chair and a Fellow of the International Project Management Association (IPMA). He is currently a Director for PMI's Global Accreditation Centre and is immediate past Chair of the ISO committee developing new international standards for Project Management and for Program/Portfolio Management. He was involved in setting up APM's team developing guidelines for project management oversight and governance. Miles is based in Salisbury, England and can be contacted at [miles.shepherd@m-sp-ltd.co.uk](mailto:miles.shepherd@m-sp-ltd.co.uk).