

# PM World Journal

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## **On Proposed Research into Management of the Crystal Palace project in London in 1851**

11 May 2014

Dear David,

This is in reference to Pat Weaver's great paper about the "[Building of the Crystal Palace](#)" for the London Great Exhibition in 1851, published in the May 2014 *PM World Journal*.

Here is an opportunity that might be of interest to some of your readers. Pat Weaver has kindly offered his research on the details of the Crystal Palace building in London. The project was a great success but the details of the management of the project are a mystery.

"So I have suggested that in the absence of definitive data, why not challenge aspiring young project management students to produce their best efforts in visualizing these three documents. (i.e. the work breakdown, the construction schedule and cost plan). Heck, we might even offer some sort of award for the best (most credible) submissions."

However, as my site is a non-responsive "legacy" site, I think your *PM World Journal* would be more appropriate. What do you think?

R. Max Wideman  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
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11 May 2014

Hi Max,

Your idea could be fun and you are welcome to use the article for a competition.

The big gap in my research around the origins of project controls and project management is on the 18th and 19th centuries. We know the concept of barcharts was fully developed by the 18th century

([http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/PDF\\_Papers/P182\\_The\\_origins\\_of\\_bar\\_charting.pdf](http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/PDF_Papers/P182_The_origins_of_bar_charting.pdf)) and fully implemented by the late 19th century (1896 to 1910: [http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/PDF\\_Papers/P042\\_Barchart\\_Origins.pdf](http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/PDF_Papers/P042_Barchart_Origins.pdf)).

What's missing is information on how time was managed on a raft of major projects during the industrial revolution and how the context of project control from a time perspective evolved to support the fairly rigorous development of contract law and cost controls:

My next target is École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris - they've been teaching civil engineering since 1747 and you cannot build canals and roads efficiently without a schedule.....

Regards,

Pat

Patrick Weaver, Director,  
Mosaic Project Services Pty Ltd  
Melbourne, Australia  
<http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au>  
<http://mosaicprojects.wordpress.com>

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10 May 2014

Hi Patrick,

Nice work on the description of your investigation of the Construction of the Crystal Palace in this month's May 2014 PM World Journal - Volume III, Issue 5.

True it is sad that no records of the management of that construction can be found. However, I have a suggestion.

On my web site I have an extensive section of Case Studies available for use by trainers and academics as exercises for their students. These have varying degrees of useful information for the purpose at hand. But my records show that some of them are frequently accessed for training purposes.

However, in this case it seems to me that you have unearthed sufficient information available on the final building to hazard some genuine guesses as to what the work breakdown, the construction schedule and cost plan might look like — given what we know today about such processes.

So, in the absence of definitive data, why not challenge aspiring young project management students to produce their best efforts in visualizing these three documents.

Heck, we might even offer some sort of award for the best (most credible) submissions.

What say you?

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