

UK Project Management Round Up



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INTRODUCTION

I had planned to base this edition around the theme of “*Moving On*” because there have been some major changes in the UK environment. There are, however, other matters to bring to your attention that do not sit comfortably under that banner so the first part is “*Moving On*” and I leave it to you to identify a theme in the remainder. I feel I should also warn you that there are no trigger warnings despite some challenging matters in this report. As you are involved with the Project World, I believe you to have a robust attitude so such warnings are not necessary.

MOVING ON

➤ **Coronation of King Charles III**



Most readers will have been all too well aware of a major project that took place in London on 6 May. Press coverage was staggering, a significant project in its own right so people around the world were able to see what here in UK was an historic event. The Coronation of HM King Charles III was certainly the most complex project seen in this country for many years.

Royal observers will recall that HM Queen Elizabeth II died in Scotland on 8 September and after an elaborate journey arrived in London on followed by lying in State until her State Funeral on 19 September 2022. This set in motion planning for the Coronation.

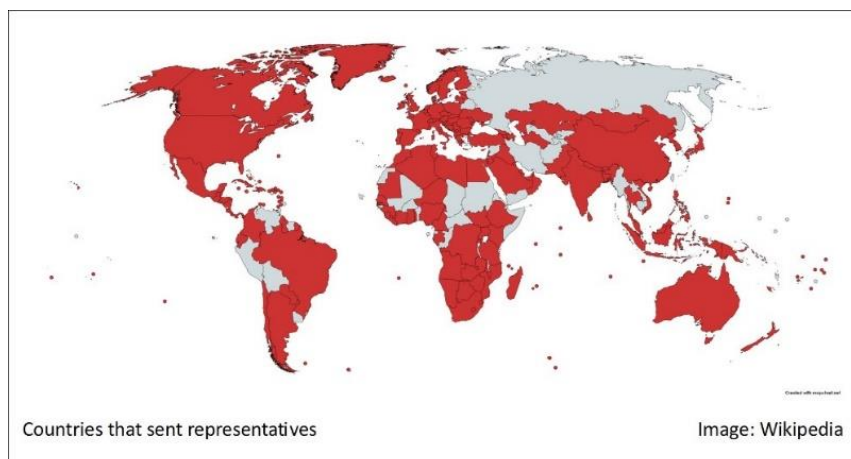
Image: Getty Images

During his mother’s reign, planning meetings under the banner of Operation Golden Orb had been held annually for many years. Plans were provisional and were updated periodically, a classic example of scenario planning. Schedule planning was driven by several constraints including the need to ensure sufficient time to mourn the death of Queen Elizabeth II, adapting to the requirements of King Charles and more mundane matters of dress and updating invitations. It would be interesting to see the Work Breakdown Structure of the Coronation, which at the top level would have needed accounts for ceremonial, religion, protocol, security, security. No budget has been reported but press speculation put the cost at around £100 million. This seems very conservative when compared to the official cost of the Queen’s funeral was officially announced as £162 million.

Clearly detailed planning critical and not a second will go unscripted. While the Queen’s coronation planning took 14 months, this was reduced to eight months. There is no rule as to when a coronation has to be held. While historical precedent remains the yardstick for the planners, the last coronation was more than 70 years ago and much has changed since then.

It was widely reported that the King’s coronation would “strike a different note” from his mother’s, acting as a “page-turning moment” that moves Britain on from the Elizabethan age. An example of the difference was the opening of the ceremony at Westminster Abbey which began with the King telling a chorister that “*I come not to be served, but to serve*”. Instead of the traditional epistle from Peter’s gospel about the monarch being “supreme”, a reading from Colossians will pray for the King to be “fruitful in every good work” with God’s guidance.

“Elf n Safdee” struck a note by restricting attendance at the ceremony to only 2200 guests. Invitations were extended to 850 community and charity representatives, including some 450 holders of the British Empire Medal and 400 young people, half of whom were nominated by the British government. Heads of State from more than 200 countries were invited and most attended as can be seen from the map.



The military element always catches the eye on these ceremonial occasions. This time, it was significantly reduced but even so more than 6,000 men and women of the United Kingdom's Armed Forces took part in the procession with another 1000 lining the route. This presence symbolises the allegiance of the Armed Forces to the Monarch, not any politician or civil servant. There were contingents from 40 Commonwealth nations with some providing close escort to the Coronation Coach.



Image: Reuters



Image Dan Kitwood/Getty Images



Late night military rehearsal

Image MODUK/Army

Despite the weather (come on, you know British weather!) most people considered the event a success. There were, of course, a small minority who protested about the concept of a monarchy but by and large, the King seems to have a mandate. Many of the younger generations see him as someone who listens, understands and makes serious efforts when it comes to conservation and global warming – he has a significantly longer track record in this respect than Sir David Attenborough. And so we move on from the Elizabethan era to the Carolinian era.

➤ **Political**

This is a case of *not moving on*. I was reminded of practical logic last month when I reported the outbreak of common sense when the Government let slip news that the bonfire of “EU laws” promised under OIL (Our Illustrious Leader Johnson for those of short memory) would be abandoned and case by case decisions would be taken in slower time. Despite the predictable outcry from Brexit zealots, the UK Senior Management Team have stood their ground. Perhaps they have taken note of the words of *Mark Littlewood* (Director General Institute of Economic Affairs) who pointed out the following:

Brexit has allowed Britain to “take back control” in many areas. But that is no guarantee that this control will be used wisely. If the UK performs poorly, this will be down to poor policy-making rather than the outcome of the 2016 referendum. We would only have ourselves and the politicians we elect to blame.

This seems to fit very well with how project managers see the world.

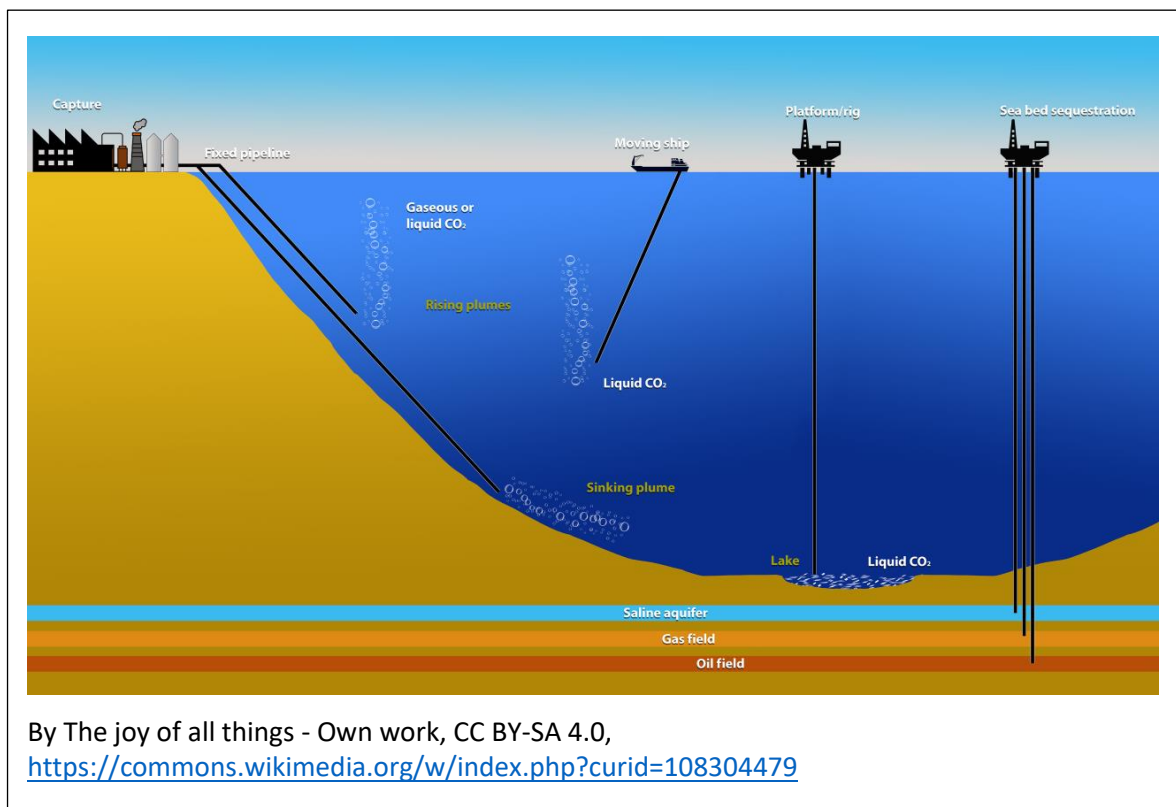
But moving on, again, comes news that **Great British Rail**, another brainchild of OIL (See above) that promised to fix the creaking rail system. According to “a source” – those working on plans for the project have been told it’s now unlikely to get a legislative slot, and it will not feature in the King’s Speech. As it requires primary legislation, this means the new body is virtually dead in the water. Press speculation favours a weakened body to emerge with little power to tackle the major issues, particularly around infrastructure improvements – Network Rail’s portfolio of construction projects. According to a report in *The Times*, rail bosses insisted that the work of the Great British Railways Transition Team, created to work on behalf of the government to set up the new organisation, was ongoing and would continue “until told otherwise”.

➤ **Energy**

Moving on yet again, we bring you the latest on **Carbon Capture**. This process takes CO₂ from burning fossil fuels, compressing to turn in into liquid then injecting it into suitable underground formations. Some of those formations could be depleted oil and

gas reservoirs but storage in saline aquifers is another option. UK has a lot of these in our old North Sea oil fields.

The UK government plans to establish four industrial clusters around the North Sea, Grangemouth in Scotland; Teesside, Net Zero Teesside (NZT) and Net Zero Humberside (NZH) in England; and Port Talbot in Wales. The intention is to trap, transport and store carbon to prevent emissions into the atmosphere by 2030. NZT and NZH are on target to be online by 2025. An important step was announced in May with the announcement of provisional award of 20 licences for Carbon Capture.



The sites could make a significant contribution to the aim of storing up to 30 million tonnes of CO₂ annually, according to The North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA). This would account for approximately 10% of UK's total carbon dioxide emissions in 2021. About half of the licences are for storage in depleted oil or gasfields, the rest plan to use aquifers.

The 12 winning companies must now apply to the Crown Estate for seabed leases to enable them to proceed with developing the projects. These projects should be able to make use of the extensive expertise built up over the life of North Sea oil exploration and production. It is expected that some are likely to hinge on government subsidies.

Still in the Energy field, I note that competition in the small modular reactor (SMR) market has hotted up. First, we have **Newcleo**, a British-based nuclear company

based in London, with links to Italy's Agnelli family, announcing plans to raise nearly £900 million to advance a plan to build a fleet of SMRs in Britain. **Stefano Buono**, Newcleo's chief executive, said that Newcleo plansto build a plant a year up to 2050. These would eventually generate 4 gigawatts of electricity, which is more than the 3.6 gigawatts output for the large nuclear plant EDF's Hinkley C.

Now we have **Bill Gates** joining the fray with **TerraPower**, which is preparing to throw its hat in the ring for a new government-backed competition. Gates set up TerraPower in 2006 to provide an "affordable, secure and environmentally friendly form of nuclear energy". Others known to be competing include Rolls Royce who have considerable experience in the field with their work for the Royal Navy, GE-Hitachi and Bechtel. Should be quite a competition!

One wonders how useful these will be as we seem to be relying even more on wind turbines. Onshore and offshore turbines accounted for 32.5% or 24 terawatt-hours (TWh) of Britain's electricity in Q1. Gas-fired power plants contributed 31.7%, according to data from Drax Electric Insights. Generation was 3% ahead of Q1 2022 despite a lack of wind. This is attributed to the start up of more than 350 new offshore wind turbines in British waters. Total capacity increased by 14% year on year, more than offsetting the lower wind speeds. In the same period, electricity from gas-fired power plants fell by 5% to 23.4 TWh, as demand fell by about 4% because of the milder start to the year. In 2014, coal was Britain's biggest source of power generation. but has now been almost entirely phased out and now only contributed only about 1.3% of supplies in Q1 2023.

➤ **Changes at APM**

My Society Imp tells me there have been some senior level changes at the Association for Project Management. Head of Membership, **Rebecca Fox**, has left for pastures new. Another move is **Daniel Nicholls**, the Research Manager, who has done a great deal to bring APM into the area of PM research. He was particularly active on the University scene where he encouraged several significant research studies on matters as diverse as climate change and PhD research seminars.

CLOSING REMARKS

In the absence of any wildlife project to report, I bring you a novel project on which to close. The Missing Pieces Project is aimed at filling in gaps in the nation's story. Historic England, the government adviser, is asking the public to fish out its sepiatoned holiday snaps and make its mark on history.

The National Heritage List consists of more than 400,000 places in England and Historic England are asking visitors to share their knowledge and experiences of these historic places. The results will feature on each property's official listing. Contributions

can be made via the Historic England website. The aim is to crowdsource an ongoing history of the buildings while rediscovering stories and moments that have been lost over time.

Well, we have moved on to the end of this report.

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. His consulting work has taken him to Japan, Taiwan, USA and Russia. 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 was, for seven years, 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 is currently Chairman of the British Standards Institute project management committee. 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.