

## **UK Project Management Round Up**



*By Miles Shepherd*  
*Executive Advisor & International Correspondent*  
*Salisbury, England, UK*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Well, the “Silly Season” is over for another year! This means we can begin to get back to some serious happenings in the Project World but not before the final word on summer starting projects. On a more serious note comes news of some major rail projects and the completion of a new bridge in Scotland.

### **RAIL PROJECTS**

Waterloo is not just a battlefield in Belgium (where Napoleon lost to Wellington) but a major rail terminus in London. It provides more than half a million passenger journeys a day and 230 million a year making it one of the busiest railway stations in the UK. Like most commuter stations, it suffers from overcrowding so the £800m (approximately \$1.18bn) investment plan for station upgrades announced in March 2016 came as a great relief. However, there was a sting in the tail – the station would partially close-down for most of August.

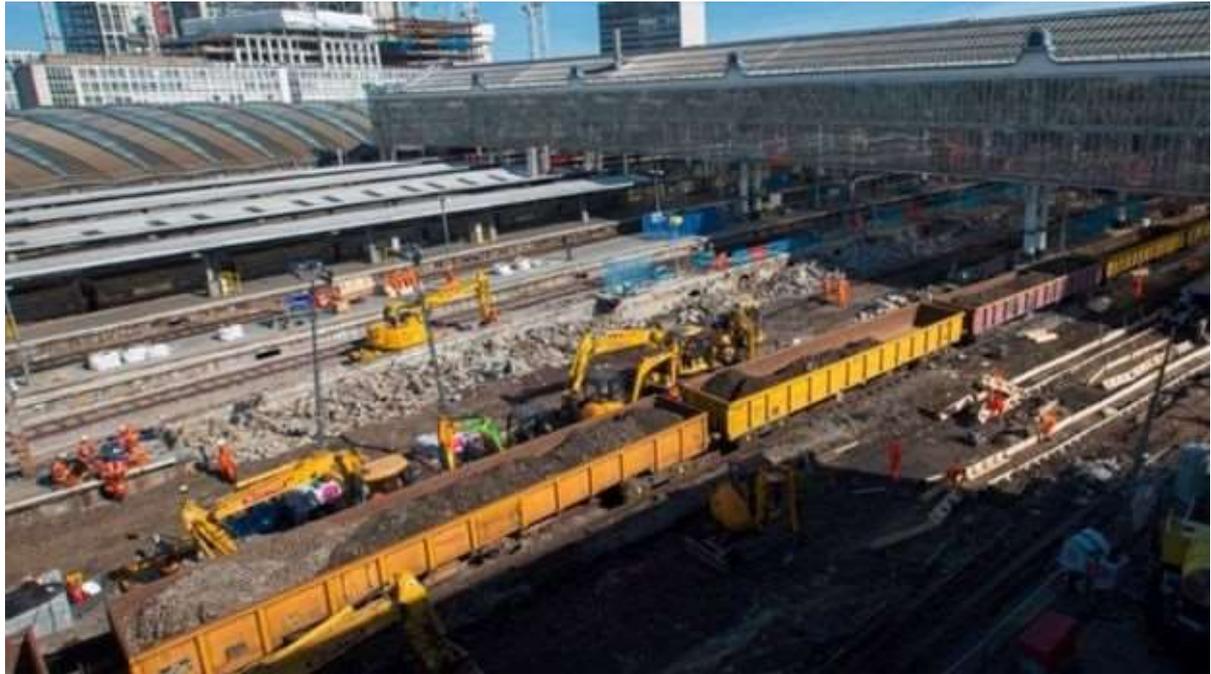
The upgrade is a part of the £1bn (\$1.5bn approximately) Wessex Capacity programme that includes spending:

- £274m (\$406.1m) each on track renewals and signalling enhancements;
- £182m (\$269.8m) on bridges, tunnels, major structures, culverts, footbridges and earthworks;
- £127m (\$188.2m) on building improvements;
- £88m (\$130.4m) on electrification;
- £33m (\$49m) on telecommunications, and
- £23m (\$34.1m) on plant and machinery.

Site preparation works on the station upgrade began in October 2015 and construction works began in December 2015. The Waterloo International station was closed for all trains services in April 2016 for construction but came back into use while the main platform closures took place. The International Station platforms are incredibly long and will be re-purposed next year as part of the overall Wessex Programme.

Network Rail said Waterloo had fully reopened following one of the "largest and most complex" upgrades in the station's history.

A spokeswoman said a 1,000-strong team of engineers and trackside staff had been working 24 hours a day for nearly four weeks to complete the work, which would boost capacity at the station by 30% by December 2018, providing space for another 45,000 passengers at morning and evening peaks.



Day 1 – demolition of old platforms Photo courtesy Network Rail

Work was carried out by a consortium consisting of Skanska, Colas Rail, Aecom and Mott MacDonald. They were awarded a £400m (\$592.08m) contract to upgrade the Waterloo station in January 2016. The contractual scope includes bringing the international terminal at the station back into use for domestic train services and increasing the length of certain station platforms. It also includes delivering track alterations, signalling, communications, buildings and civil infrastructure along the Wessex Route and at Waterloo, Vauxhall, Clapham Junction, Richmond, Wimbledon and Surbiton stations.

New Siemens-built Class 707 Desiro City trains equipped with free passenger Wi-Fi, air-conditioning, and improved on-board train information systems have already been introduced on some routes with full roll out planned to be complete by mid-2018. Some 150 new carriages will come into operation over the next year.

In the midst of the construction work, the operating company changed as South West Trains became South Western Railways. SWR is part of the First Group, perhaps best known as the owners of the Hongkong MTR. Shortly before the transfer, there were further delays to trains as a derailment and news came that

same day that season ticket prices would rise by 3.6%! Interesting times for those involve in Stakeholder engagement (was management)!

As might be expected in such a complex project, handback was delayed due to signaling problems which did not endear the new operators to their public.

## **TRANSPORT PROJECTS**

One of the more spectacular transport projects of recent times is the New Queensferry Bridge – or Crossing as it is reported in the Press over here.

The Queensferry Crossing replaces the Forth Road Bridge built in 1964 and opened by HM The Queen. She opened the new crossing exactly 53 years to the day after she opened the Forth Road Bridge.

The old bridge has had its share of maintenance problems but will still be used by cycles, pedestrians and eventually buses. As can be seen in the picture below, the 19th Century Forth Bridge, which carries the railway over the river, still stands, just a mile away.



Aerial Photography Solutions/Ken Whitcombe

The pioneering design is a balanced cable-stayed bridge. At 1.7 miles, it is the longest three-tower, in the world. Taking more than six years to build, at a cost of £1.35 billion, it is described as “an incredible feat of civil engineering”. The man behind the project, Michael Martin described it as “one of the world’s great bridges”. The new crossing will become the main road route between Edinburgh and Fife, and is expected to carry over 24 million vehicles a year.

Original estimates put the cost at £4.2bn for a much wider bridge with dedicated public transport lanes but cost savings were found by using the existing Forth Bridge for buses, cyclists and pedestrians. The new crossing is pretty big – 207 metres, or 683ft, above high tide. This puts it 50 metres, 164 feet, higher than the Forth Bridge and also the Humber Bridge, previously the two highest in the UK. Some 150,000 tonnes of concrete and 30,000 tonnes of steel were used during construction. The combined steel required for North and South viaducts weighs 7,000 tonnes

The bridge has attracted a lot of public attention in Scotland and there has been an official vote to name it. According to the Sunday Post, more than 35,000 votes were cast and 7000 different names suggested for the bridge. Caledonia, St Margaret’s, Firth of Forth and Saltire were all popular. But Queensferry, with 35% of the vote, pipped Caledonia’s 31%. However, there was a lot of support for naming the bridge after the Glaswegian comic Kevin Bridges. Some of the younger generation may feel that the real Kevin is a Minion.

## **OTHER NEWS FROM THE PROJECT WORLD**

- Digging up the road will cost £2500 an hour. This is not the rate for the project but what local Councils will charge utility companies to compensate local people for the disruption. After a month of major traffic jams outside my house, I think this is an excellent idea!
- In the unlikely event that Hinkley C goes ahead, the use of so-called T-Pylons has been rejected as too expensive. This news should lead to £840 million being shaved of the latest estimates. Announced at the same time was the rejection of plans to combat flooding that may never happen – does this sound familiar to people in Houston?
- Defence Minister Sir Michael Fallon is poised to announce a competition to design a new class of warship for the Royal Navy who must feel it is Christmas come early after the launch of HMS Queen Elizabeth. Expect to see Babcock and BAE Systems slugging it out over the design for the new Type 31e Frigate.

## **FINAL SILLY SEASON NEWS**

The Chief Reporter of the prestigious Daily Telegraph, Robert Mendick, has told the world that Big Ben should not be silenced! Avid readers will recall that the Houses of Parliament need refurbishment to tune of between £3.5 and £7 billion (depending on your choice of newspaper) and one of the first things to go has been Big Ben’s chimes. This is heralded as a measure to save the eardrums of the modern contractor.

However, as Mendick reports, the clockmaker who knows the clock better than anyone claims that “there were no great barriers to striking the bell during renovation work”. This supports the view of the Project Manager, Rodney Perry, who oversaw the Elizabeth Tower’s last major renovation, in the mid-1980s, apparently said it was “absurd” to silence the bell.

In an era of maximum “Elf and safety” we must do all we can to preserve the hearing of the workforce but have due regard to the disappointment of the tourists who have travelled many thousands of miles just to hear the famous chimes. MPs have demanded a debate of this topic and news will follow so keep reading these pages!

---

## About the Author



### **MILES SHEPHERD**

Salisbury, UK



**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 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@misp-ltd.co.uk](mailto:miles.shepherd@misp-ltd.co.uk).