

## REGIONAL REPORT – UNITED KINGDOM – JULY 2009



### UK Project Management Round Up

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#### British Engineers Speed to Records

This seems to be the year for speed related projects. First, the latest venture to capture the Land Speed Record (LSR) was announced by the Bloodhound SSC team whose car has been designed by students from the University of the West of England, (pictured left). This latest project to aim to break the LSR set by Thrust SSC in 1997, is aiming for an attempt in about 3 years time.



*Photo courtesy University of the West of England*

Then the first steam powered car to attempt the record since 1985 when Bob Barber was announced. Barber used one of the Lear turbines to power a car initially developed by Jim Crank and set a one way speed of 145.607 mph. But after losing a door and a small fire, he was unable to repair the damage in time to complete the necessary return run.

To date, no one has bettered this speed, set at Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah although the official record set by Fred Marriott at Daytona Beach in 1906 in a Stanley is 107 mph. The British Steam Car Team carried out successful tests last month (See picture below).



Runway testing – photo courtesy British Steam Car

Now comes news of the wind powered LSR of the successful conclusion of a 10 year project to capture the record for a wind powered car. British engineer Richard Jenkins driving the Ecotricity Greenbird (pictured below right) captured the record at 126.1 mph (202.9 km/h), eclipsing the old, American held, record almost exactly 10 years after Bob Schumacher in the Iron Duck set it at a speed of 116 mph in March 1999. Both records were set on the 'dry' Lake Ivanpah.

The Greenbird is actually two vehicles – one a land craft and the other an ice craft. The project aim is to break records on both land and ice. The former has been achieved and the new world record has been ratified by NALSA (North American Land Sailing Association). After detailed analysis of the data, the final figure turns out to be 126.2 mph.



*Photo courtesy Peter Lyons*

The team hopes to both better that new record, and continue to work toward breaking the ice record in Winter 2009/10. The project is a partnership between Ecotricity (UK's first & largest independent green electricity company), and engineer Richard Jenkins (founder of the Windjet Project). The team is all British, independent, visionary, passionate and utterly committed to envisioning a zero carbon transportation future.

## Progress report – London Olympics

As project reports go, the latest update from the London Olympic Games Organising Committee (LOGOC) was pretty impressive. The report takes the form of an inspection by the client, in this case the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Coordination Commission which was making its fourth visit to the capital, meeting with representatives from across London 2012 and seeing first-hand the progress being made on construction of the venues.

Speaking after the meetings, Commission Chairman Denis Oswald (pictured below left with Lord Coe) said: 'We have been greatly impressed by the good progress that London 2012 has made since our visit last year, particularly in moving from planning to operational delivery.'



Oswald also praised the attention being paid to ensure value-for-money and a first-class experience for everyone coming to the Games in 2012. This attention has led to changes in the plans for some of the temporary venues.

According to the Times, Instead, the 17-strong delegation from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was greeted with evidence of a £9.3 billion project in surprisingly good order, despite the impacts of the economic downturn. The IOC inspection team saw little visible progress on their last visit, over a year ago and the 500-acre Olympic site in East London consisted mainly of mounds of contaminated soil and a set of plans. This time, the tour of the park took in a hive of activity with nearly 4,000 workers constructing the biggest sports venues, including the 80,000-seat athletics stadium and an aquatics centre designed by Zaha Hadid.

The Times reporter noted that progress is visible, in stark contrast to the economic picture in the rest of Britain. "Even people who have not innately got the Games recognise that this is a pretty important project to have," Lord Coe, the chairman of the London Olympic organising committee, said.

Although progress has been very good with few problems over schedule, planning and legal permissions, the project has not been free of problems. Private investors have been reluctant to come forward to support the £355 million media centre, which has now been nationalised, and the £1 billion athletes' village may go the same way. According to press reports, £2 billion contingency fund has largely been consumed.

There is also concern over security, with some experts claiming that the £838 million budget is inadequate. Home Office intervention with the Metropolitan Police over security planning has calmed some nerves but a successor to Tarique Ghaffur, the former Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Olympics, has yet to be appointed.

## Professionalism - Another Step Closer

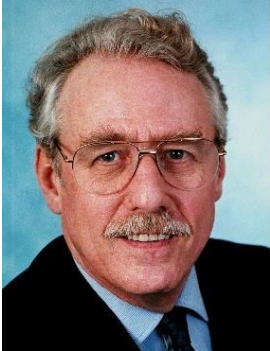
For many years, the field of project management was served only by two journals, both well known to most practitioners, even if they did not read them. Circulation of both the Project Management Institute's *Project Management Journal* (PMJ) and the Association for Project Management - International Project Management Association owned publication *International Journal of Project Management* (IJPM) is little affected by simple membership numbers. Sales to internationally known universities by the journal publishers accounts for the important part of distribution and counts for much of the editorial policy of both journals.

Now comes news from IJPM publisher Elsevier that the *International Journal of Project Management* has been admitted to the ThomsonReuters (formerly ISI) and will be listed in their Web of Science database.

This is very good news for the journal and for the field of Project Management. Up until now many academics in the field of Project Management have not been able to publish their research papers in a project management journal because none of the journals were listed in ISI.

Do not expect to see a change in IJPM's fortunes overnight. There seems to many to be a huge amount of prejudice in the academic management community against Project Management as a subject, and even though IJPM has now been admitted to ISI that prejudice will not be swept away overnight. However, the recognition achieved by Rodney Turner as editor and Elsevier as publisher should not be underestimated since it marks a further considerable step along the road to full recognition that project management is a profession.

APM's campaign for formal recognition by way of a Royal Charter is another such step and project managers world-wide should see this as overdue recognition of our profession.

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**Miles Shepherd** is a global advisor and International Correspondent for PMForum in the United Kingdom. He is also managing director for MS Projects Ltd, a consulting company supporting various UK 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 current chair of the Executive Board of the International Project Management Association (IPMA). He was recently named Chair of the ISO committee that is developing the new ISO 21500 Guidelines for Project Management. He was also involved in leading APM's recently published guidelines for project management oversight and governance. Additional information about Mr. Shepherd can be found at <http://www.pmforum.org/ambassadors/ambassadors.htm#Shepherd>. Miles Shepherd is based near London and can be reached at [miles.shepherd@msp-ltd.co.uk](mailto:miles.shepherd@msp-ltd.co.uk).