



Dear MPA Members,

For reasons lost in the mists of the MPA's foundation, our business year runs from 1st August until 31st July, so this is an appropriate time to draw some sort of line under another 12 months of activity. Most obviously, we started the year with the departure of Dr Martin Barnes after nine years as the Executive Director and we welcomed John Glanville, previously with Rolls-Royce, in Martin's place.

Other Board changes included the departure of Robert Phillips, former Partner with CMS Cameron McKenna LLP, who served on the Board for ten years, and Norman Haste, OBE, who had been affiliated with several of our member organisations including John Laing, Sizewell B Power Station, BAA plc and Cross London Rail Links Ltd. We welcomed two new Board Members, Mike Nichols, Chairman and Chief Executive of

The Nichols Group, and Mark Richardson, who has a long association with the MPA. In 1993, Mark became the MPA representative for Coopers & Lybrand, which later merged with Price Waterhouse. In 2002 this business then transferred, and Mark with it as a partner, to IBM Business Consulting Services. Who could ever think that the world of consultancy is predictable – other than in the sense of constant surprises? To complete our Board changes, we are delighted that Dr Martin Barnes has accepted our invitation to return, exactly one year after his departure.

On the substance of the business, the input of members' ideas to our 2006–07 programme of activity helped to make this the most popular series of events in our 25 year history. During the year not only did we hold more events than in any previous years, but the number of attendees

has been at an all time high. We intend to build upon this in 2007–08 and have planned what I hope you will agree is a fascinating and very varied programme.

We also welcomed a number of new and interesting member organisations, taking us to an all time record of 84 members. Among these are BBC Projects, London 2012 Programme and the London Development Authority.

Even the not so eagle-eyed will have noticed the changes to our newsletter, which has developed from a hard copy into an interactive, electronic newsletter which focuses on our core activity of seminars and events. This 'MPA Year in Action' is another new initiative which we hope will help us to promote the work we do and to attract contributors to our events.

During the year we have asked for views on a number of issues. We have been collecting these ideas on how we can improve what we do as well as your suggestions for future programmes. In response, we have introduced good quality handout packs of speakers' slides at our seminars (not an insignificant task I am told by our administrative team). Also, we have listened to your comments about the facilities we use and have introduced new, better equipped seminar venues.

At the end of 2006, after two years of highly legal and intellectual fencing with HM Revenue and Customs, we finally convinced HMRC that the MPA is not an educational institution. Amazingly, the impact of this is that the Association continues as 'not exempt' for VAT and therefore no longer had to set aside its reserves – as we did in 2004 – in anticipation of a huge and retrospective VAT bill. Following

this positive outcome, the Board considered various suggestions from the staff on how we might use a sensible part of our reserves to improve the initiation and implementation of major projects. One of these initiatives is the MPA Major Projects Simulator which we have been developing in conjunction with Prendo Ltd – specialists in the field of simulation. You can read more about this initiative in the separate article which follows.

Just to emphasise that change is an ever present feature of all our lives, we have now completed our first – and only – year with John Glanville as Executive Director. It has been a tremendous 12 months...but we all underestimated the immense load that travel to and from his North Staffordshire home would impose on John. He therefore decided earlier this year to stand down at the end of his first 12 months. We will miss him and I

am hugely indebted for all that he did for me and for the Association. The new Executive Director is expected to be appointed in the autumn.

In another major change, Dr Dick Harris has now ended his unstinting support to the organisation of MPA events, and has also asked to stand down from the Board at this year's AGM. It is difficult to express in these few words my admiration and gratitude for Dick's service to the Major Projects Association, and our collective debt for the great contributions from the other retiring Board members.

Finally, you will not be surprised that I want to pay tribute to our staff. Manon Bradley, Maggie Latham and Ruth Feeney are the engine room of the Major Projects Association. Without them, this ship goes nowhere.



**Sir Robert Walmsley KCB**  
Chairman  
Major Projects Association