The Chairman’s letter in this publication is traditionally an opportunity to reflect upon the high points of the previous year, and there have been many. We have held some first class seminars on important topics such as ‘Delivering Public Projects’ and ‘Choosing the Right Delivery Model’, which have enabled speakers and delegates to delve deep into these issues in order to help inform best practice going forward.

In the past 12 months we have held two excellent case study seminars examining the legacy of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games and the planning for High Speed Two. At both of these events we benefited greatly from having senior representatives from both projects on the platform providing a first-hand view of the work.

During the year we also held a seminar looking at the reality of delivering major projects in Brazil. This event was something of an experiment to determine if there was an appetite for looking beyond these shores. We were delighted to have an excellent Chair in the form of Paula Walsh from the British Consulate in Rio de Janeiro and a strong panel of speakers from Mendes Júnior, the Brazilian Development Bank and from several companies with hands-on experience of working in the region. It was a successful event producing very positive feedback and the Board are now considering our future international strategy.

I am always amazed at the quality of Speakers and Chairs that the Association is able to attract – particularly as they usually give up a whole day in order to take part in our seminars. This year our Hall of Fame includes: David Pitchford (Major Projects Authority), Geoff French (URS), Alison Munro and Andrew McNaughton (HS2), Ian Galloway (National Grid) and John Clarke (NDA). It is a list which would be the envy of any commercial conference company.

We were also very fortunate to have Sir David Higgins giving our Prestige Lecture in July 2013. Sir David gave an excellent perspective on the barriers to effective project delivery and called for better strategic planning for infrastructure investment in the UK. We are very grateful to him and to all of this year’s Speakers and Chairmen who work so hard to ensure that our events are of the highest standard.

This letter also allows me to share some thoughts about the future of the Association. As I write this, in September 2013, the Board is part way through the development of a new long-term strategy. We are asking ourselves and our members what sort of an organisation MPA should be in 2015 and beyond, and how we can evolve to that state from where we are now.

I do hope that members will contribute to this process by sharing your thoughts about the future of the Association either directly to me, to my fellow Board members or to the MPA team. We want to ensure that we are continuing to build a strong and effective Association which meets the needs of all of our members.

I look forward to meeting many of you over the coming year and to sharing the challenge we all face of improving the delivery of major projects in the UK and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Tim Laurence KCVO, CB
Chairman
Major Projects Association
FAREWELL TO SIR ROBERT WALMSLEY

Michael Peters, Performance Excellence, Project Management, BAE Systems

The Major Projects Association brings together senior Project Management stakeholders from Industry, Public Sector and Academia to share the lessons and experiences across the major organisations. BAE Systems is an active member of the MPA and the employees who attend these events benefit from the high quality presentations and associated lessons learned. A key aspect is how we can share these lessons across our global business.

BAE Systems is a global provider of defence, aerospace and security products and services with over 88,000 employees spread across Australia, India, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The diversity and complexity of our products and services in the Air, Land, Maritime and Security sectors, along with the geographic footprint and security requirements creates a number of challenges in sharing our good practices and lessons learnt across the global business.

Major Programme execution is fundamental to the success of our business. We are therefore committed to continuous improvement in this area. For us this involves what we call Lifecycle Management, which entails implementation of a series of independent reviews to uncover potential problems early, ensure corrective action can be taken quickly and share good practices from across the business. These Lifecycle Management reviews are supported by a range of Guides and Handbooks (updated twice per year) which document our

With regard to specific events, such as MPA presentations, this is addressed in a number of ways:

1. Attendees often write up their notes from the event and circulate to the BAE Systems UK PM Council for dissemination through each business.
2. Briefings are provided at UK PM Council and Community of Practice.
3. Notes are published on our Global Project Management intranet site so all employees from across the global business can access them.

A key benefit from MPA events and other PM events is the impact it has on the ‘thinking’ of our Project Managers and their professional development. External learning directly influences how we people manage their projects, the guidance and advice they give to our projects during Lifecycle Management Reviews, and how they develop our Lifecycle Management guides and handbooks. For example; the last MPA event looked at lessons learned from the Olympic Games. Whilst initially attendees may have challenged the relevance to managing complex defence projects, there was considerable head across the areas of modelling, planning, risk and opportunity management etc.

In addition to the Lifecycle Management approach, Project Management lessons are also shared through:

1. An annual Global Project Management conference.
2. Regular ‘Community of Practice’ events for specialist areas such as modelling, analysis, planning, risk & opportunity Management etc.

In March 2013 Sir Robert Walmsley retired as Chairman of the Association. Sir Robert served as Chairman for nine years and was instrumental in the development of several new initiatives including his Chief Executive Dinner, which provided senior individuals with an opportunity to discuss issues of relevance to major projects without having to give up a full day to attend a seminar. We wish him all the very best in his retirement.

Sarah Lipscomb attended Rising Stars in January 2013 and was subsequently invited to join the Programme Committee. We asked her to write about her experience.

I initially saw being chosen for the Major Projects Association Rising Stars Seminar as a networking opportunity although I was apprehensive, as I had seen many of the companies involved were clearly focused in the Public, Social Infrastructure and Engineering sectors - where did it fit in?

16 years in the Retail and Retail Banking sector has given me subject matter expertise. However I felt I might be completely out of my comfort zone with this group - what on earth was I going to talk about?

Almost straight away I was clear this seminar was about much more than networking. It included ways to identify what success looks like, finding new ways to deal with the issues that challenge us, looking at our leadership style from different angles and seeking the chance to take time out to really focus on our own development.

The individual seminars were captivating and I realised very quickly that it really doesn’t matter what sector experience you have, everyone encounters the same challenges when trying to carve out their careers - How do I make a difference, challenge myself, make time for my career and how do I make the change? I was coming from a different perspective, and for some of my fellow delegates it was refreshing to hear an alternative view.

Following the course I was delighted to be chosen to sit on the Programme Committee for the Major Projects Association. I have already found my stride and am enjoying contributing to the lively discussions around the courses and seminars provided by the Association.

The Rising Stars event has benefited me in so many ways. Obviously I have grown my network with people I definitely wouldn’t have had the chance to interact with, but unexpectedly I had also increased my confidence in dealing with complex situations, given my own experiences a new lease of life and given me some great tools to help me achieve success.

SHARING FROM EVENTS – HOW BAE MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE CHALLENGE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

This highly respected weekly residential course is held each autumn at Egrove Park, Oxford. Designed for senior managers working in the feasibility development or implementation stages of projects, it is also appropriate for those who wish to improve their understanding of the strategic issues of project definition, finance, organisation and environmental pressures.

Delegates on the course hear from academics and practitioners who are experts in their fields on topics such as:

- Scenario thinking, systems integration.
- Managing stakeholders: emotional intelligence and leadership.
- An opportunity for a number of the participants to present their own project and to share the challenges they face.

There are only 24 places on the course each year so competition is fierce, and those interested in attending should register their interest as early as March for the October event.

Details of all of the professional development opportunities are available on our website:

www.majorprojects.org

RISING STARS SEMINARS

These two-day residential seminars, held in January each year, are aimed at talented people in member organisations who are on track for responsible positions in management. The programme focuses on:

- Analysis of key issues affecting major projects
- Attitudes and ways of thinking
- Establishing effective relationships with clients and professionals
- Marshalling and presenting opinions
- Establishing a network of contacts with high-flyers in other member organisations
- Building business confidence