

The Newsletter of **ProgM**
The Programme Management Specific Interest Group

July 2008

The ProgM newsletter contains interesting information about events and other areas of interest in Programme Management. **This month we feature:**

- The Lessons of Blenheim
- ProgM spreads the word in Budapest
- Needing your help
- On the job front
- Upcoming Events

The Lessons of Blenheim [Paul Rayner]



Panorama of Blenheim Palace

Inspired by previous Newsletter articles on the programme management lessons of great battles, readers are likely to find that a visit to Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire is an awe inspiring experience. It is built on a scale that is quite breath-taking – almost equivalent to the creation of a whole new city. The fact that it was built as a country residence for one man and his wife, as a token of national appreciation, indicates the scale of his achievements – no less than the saving of Europe from conquest by a brutal dictator.

However, the greatness of Blenheim's first occupant is not just that he repeatedly defeated the armies of King Louis XIV of France, but that these great battles were only a part of an enormous programme of alliance building and of political intrigue designed to defeat the most powerful country in Europe. It is as if his great descendent, Winston Churchill, in World II, had not only led the government and controlled the cabinet, but had also been Commander In Chief of the army and kept nipping off to North Africa to personally lead tanks against Rommel, in between trips to Washington and Moscow to keep Stalin and Roosevelt in line.

No wonder a grateful nation dug into its pockets to create a complex of buildings and parkland on a scale that would now be reserved for the Olympic Games!

The War of Spanish Succession

The Palace was named after the Battle of Blenheim, which took place in 1704 by the small village of that name on the banks of the Danube in Southern Germany. At the time, Louis XIV was at the height of his ambition. He was the absolute ruler of the most populous country in Europe and sought to impose his own puppets on the thrones of Spain and Germany. Every other country feared him. Only the Netherlands and the Holy Roman Emperor dared oppose him, and only if backed up by the armies and subsidies of England, which John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough, controlled.



John Churchill, by Godfrey Kneller

Churchill was the son of a minor West Country nobleman. He was sent to the court of Charles II, where his intelligence, charm and good looks enabled him to gain office. He was quite happy to sleep his way to the top, sharing the monarch's mistress. On discovering Churchill hiding in a royal wardrobe, Charles is supposed to have said "I forgive you because I know you do it for your bread".

Churchill's personal courage and organisational skills led him to the top and he commanded the army that defeated the west-country rebels at the Battle of Sedgemoor. But Churchill was always a skilful politician and, not long after, he secretly transferred his support to William of Orange, who landed at Torbay in 1688 during the "glorious revolution" and became King William III.

William never fully trusted Churchill – after all, a man who could betray one king, could betray another.



Sarah Churchill, also by Godfrey Kneller

In due course, William died and was succeeded by his niece, Queen Anne. Meanwhile Churchill had married Sara Jennings, the Queen's favourite Lady in Waiting. The Churchills became a formidable political couple, like Bill and Hillary Clinton. John ran the army and foreign policy, often away for months on end, whilst Sarah took tea with the Queen and ensured that the army got the resources and support that it needed.

And it needed plenty. Louis XIV had armies poised to invade Spain, Austria and the Netherlands. Churchill used the subsidies that England provided and his tact, charm and, diplomacy to unite his squabbling allies into a single unified coalition. With a strong army, Churchill now felt able to

take on the French - but which way should he attack? If he stayed in the Low Countries, then the French army on the Danube would occupy Vienna and drive Austria out of the collation: yet if he moved into Germany, the Netherlands would be unprotected and likely to be invaded and obliged to sue for peace.

The Blenheim Campaign

Here Churchill's cunning showed. He assured everyone that he was going to attack North East France by marching down the valley of the River Moselle. This approach was supported by the cautious politicians in the Hague and London, and inevitably leaked to the French. But, when his armies reached Bingen at the mouth of the Moselle, they turned South-east instead of South-west, and headed off to the Danube valley, where the French army of Marshall Tallard was moving slowly towards Vienna. By the time that everyone realised that they had been misled, it was too late to do anything about it.

Churchill's march was a triumph of organisation. At every stopping point, camp sites had been laid out, accommodation allocated, field ovens erected and provisions made available. Instead of wilting away from exhaustion and starvation, as normally happened to armies on long marches, the superb organisation helped to weld the Churchill's English, Dutch, German and Danish soldiers into a proud and united fighting force. He attended to the morale of the troops and on several occasions gave lifts to weary soldiers in his own coach. Armed with gold sovereigns, his agents could always find provisions and his soldiers never needed to break ranks to forage for food.

After a march of 250 miles in five weeks, Churchill caught up with Tallard and confronted the French at Blenheim. By subterfuge he foxed the French into diverting their reserves into the one place where he could not attack, and then launched his main force where the French were most vulnerable. By the end of the day, the enemy was destroyed, 30,000 Frenchmen were dead, missing or captured and it was Marshall Tallard's turn to be given a lift in Churchill's coach. Churchill then took time off to scribble a note to his wife on the back of a bar bill "I have no time to say more but to beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know her army has had a glorious victory."

Programme Management lessons

Blenheim was the culmination of a programme of events, all orchestrated by Churchill, that had led an army to surreptitiously cross half of Europe, destroy the French, and free Austria from threat. Had any element of the plan gone wrong or been missing - the procurement of food and provisions, the secrecy of the destination, the availability of gold, the continued faith of the allies in Churchill's generalship - he would have found himself cut off from home and abandoned by his army and his allies. His political opponents in England had promised that if he failed, they would "break him up like hounds on a hare". But, like a thoughtful programme manager, Churchill had calculated the risks and knew that he could cope with them.

The same skills that helped him win the day at Blenheim, - careful preparation, skilful maintenance of political support in London and allied capitals, and the enthusiastic trust and support of allied military commanders such as Prince Eugene of Austria, teamwork with his wife (all the things we now call "stakeholder management") - helped him win many other battles, including Oudenarde, Ramillies and Maplaquet. His administrative skills and attention to detail meant his troops rarely went short of bread, shoes, clothing, tents or billets - when his army arrived at its destination it was intact and in a fit state to fight. Yet all this would have meant little without his enormous reserves of stamina, willpower and self-discipline, combined with the courage to take personal and political risks.

But as others have found, programme management at a high level involves high stakes. In 1711 the opposing political party won the English elections and Sarah's influence over the Queen had waned. As a result, Churchill was recalled and charged with corruption. He eventually returned to royal favour and was able to move into Blenheim Palace in 1719. In 1722, by now made up to Duke of Marlborough, he died, aged 72.

ProgM spreads the word in Budapest

Based in Hungary, Stamford Global is a professional organiser of events, including a range of conferences focussing on project and programme management. Both Paul Rayner (ProgM Chair) and Geoff Reiss (ProgM Hon President) spoke at their "Programme Management Forum" in June in Budapest, to an enthusiastic audience of 50 delegates from Romania, Russia, Croatia, Poland and other Eastern European countries.

Stamford Global aligns with PMI, so they tend to use American terminology. They were very able to tempt an excellent range of speakers, who gave a comprehensive review of our discipline, combined with some very good case studies. The venue, the Corinthia Royal Hotel in central Budapest, was absolutely first class. Companies represented at the Forum included ABN-AMRO, Alcatel, BP, Boston Consulting Group, Ericsson, ING, Nokia, SAP and Siemens and there was tremendous enthusiasm amongst delegates to hear about best practice in programme management in the UK.

The attached photograph shows (from left to right) Geoff Reiss (ProgM), Andrew Harmati (Stamford Global), Mihaly Nagy (Stamford Global) and Paul Rayner (ProgM) reviewing the conference room before the start of the forum.



Stamford Global's next event in our field is the "Nordic Portfolio Management Forum: The Route from Strategy to Benefits". This is scheduled for November 17-18, 2008 in Stockholm. There may well be ProgM representation and there is currently room for case studies.

For more information about Stamford Global, please visit <http://www.npmforum.com/media.html>

Could you help a genuine student by completing a simple questionnaire?

This is what he asks:

"I am a Postgraduate student at Leeds Metropolitan University studying project and programme management."

My Master's dissertation examines "critical success factors in construction management".

So basically I would like to get responses from people in the construction industry. The on-line questionnaire only takes a few minutes to complete and can be found at:http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=uclRKAARtc5Uprz1u835Q_3d_3d.

On the Job Front

ProgM has been approached as a source of high quality programme management specialists by various organisations. ProgM does not at this stage want to become a head-hunter but we do want to present these opportunities to our membership.

If any of the following, currently available, roles attract you please contact geoffreiss@geoffreiss.com who will send you more information so you can make contact directly. We have little information about these opportunities and act only in the role of communicator.

We are aware of organisations seeking:

- 1: Programme Director with a construction background for a major tram system.
- 2: Project Director of Schools Transformation for a North of England local authority.
- 3: Freelance programme management people specialising in the IT for Healthcare sector.

Forthcoming Programme Management Events

Below is an overview for upcoming events. Please let us know about your events, we will publicise anything relevant to our readership.

ProgM Annual General Meeting (AGM) - 8th October 2008

ProgM will hold a formal Annual General Meeting and "get-together" for members in Central London. The meeting will take place at **8 October 2008, starting at 6.00pm**. Drinks and light refreshments will be available from 5.30pm

This will be a chance to meet other members of ProgM and attend the AGM which will include election of the management Committee.

The guest speaker for the evening will be Geoff Reiss, Honorary President and founder of ProgM. Geoff's talk is titled: **The Difference between a Project Manager and David Beckham**.

In this controversial talk he suggests that some teams pay far too much attention to processes and procedures and not enough to progressing their projects. "We have", he says, "a generation taught that

following Prince2, PMBoK or Managing Successful Programmes is enough. This might help dodge the blame for failure but it falls far short of a successful initiative."

Geoff is renowned across the world for his often irreverent views on our profession and on the challenges it faces.

The Agenda for the meeting and a nomination form will be sent out in a separate mailer. Nominations should be returned to the ProgM Secretary, Adrian Pyne, by email on or before 1st September, 2008 at a.pyne@btconnect.com.

Central Government Project Management Conference - 10th September 2008

With a number of high profile project failures hitting the news there has never been a more important time to improve project management knowledge and skills to ensure the successful completion of the projects.

The Central Government Project Management is the UK's premier project management event. The conference is being held at the [Church House Conference Centre](#) in Westminster, Central London and will be attended by over 400 delegates from across the civil service in the UK with most government departments represented.

<http://www.tenalpsevents.com/forthcomingevents/projectmanagement2008london>

Programme Risk Management: 3-5 November 2008.

The PMI Risk SIG is holding a major event in [Nice and Monte Carlo](#).

There is currently a call for papers and the organisers have an interest in receiving proposals for papers about risk in programme management.

Visit <http://www.pmisymposium.lso-intl.com/> to read about the event and to see the call for papers.

Below is a table summary of the upcoming events:

Events	Date	Link
ProgM Annual General Meeting	08 Oct 2008	www.e-programme.com
Central Government PM Conference	10 Sept 2008	http://www.tenalpsevents.com/forthcomingevents/projectmanagement2008london
Programme Risk Meeting	3-5 Nov 2008	http://www.pmisymposium.lso-intl.com/

As usual details of events are on the programme management website at <http://www.e-programme.com>

If you are planning an event, or know of an event, website or publication that other programme management staff might be interested in you can now post them yourself on e-programme.com.

Your feedback is important to us

If you have any feedback on either wanting to participate in events or have views on which of these types of events would be most beneficial for you then can you please inform our Communications Officer, [Tanya Durlen](#).