

APM Project Management Awards



WINNER'S

CASE STUDY



Category **Project Professional of the Year 2015**

Winner **Stephen Prowse, Artelia Projects UK Ltd**

Sponsor **Atos**

Overview

Once one of the world's best kept secrets, Bletchley Park near Milton Keynes is now one of the most significant heritage sites of the 20th century, so far attracting some 190,000 visitors keen to see where the Enigma code and other enemy signals were cracked, shortening World War II and saving countless lives. It all began in 1992 when the Bletchley Park Trust was set up to preserve and refurbish the buildings where the codebreakers had worked but which had fallen into such a bad state, they were almost beyond saving. With a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources, funding was secured in 2011 for the £8 million restoration project.

The following year in 2012, Stephen Prowse, heritage project director at Artelia, stepped in as project manager. His role was to assist the Trust to create a vibrant, world class attraction by opening up previously unseen parts of the site, improving the visitor experience through new facilities and interpretation.

The rejuvenated Bletchley Park was opened by the Duchess of Cambridge in June 2014, the same month that marked the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings.

Objectives

The project was to create a world class attraction and national heritage site, including new visitor facilities and restoring 13 listed buildings and the landscape, to evoke World War II at Bletchley Park.

Authenticity, right down to door hinge screws would be essential to tell the story, enabling visitors to step back into the sights and sounds of Bletchley Park during the war. As well as creating this unique, permanent tribute to the work of the codebreakers, it was also to be a centre of education, learning and community activities.

The Trust aimed to complete the restoration in time for the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings. Stephen's successful track record in reviving the past proved crucial in meeting both the Trust and project objectives.

"We are all immensely proud of the results. To see the veterans coming out of the huts almost with tears in their eyes that we'd got them back (to how they were), is recognition we got it pretty much right."

Iain Standen,

Chief Executive, Bletchley Park Trust

Challenges

Having been appointed at a late stage of the project meant that Stephen faced some tough decisions to drive the project forward. It was a case of quickly embedding himself within the Trust, learning and absorbing the project detail, gaining the confidence of the project team that was already working on it and completely buying into and understanding the project so as to deliver the Trust's vision. Many unknowns about the state of the buildings leading to programme uncertainty, procurement issues and potentially high contractor costs and risks of delays during some of the wettest weather seen in the UK, were among the challenges before him. If the project was to stay on track to coincide with the D-Day commemorations, clear leadership would be vital.

Not least of the challenges was the need to coordinate a multi-disciplinary team made up of architects, landscape designers, engineers, inclusive access consultants, exhibition designs, package contractors and audio visual specialists, along with funders and multiple stakeholders.

To achieve total buy-in, Stephen needed to draw out and communicate both the constraints and opportunities of the project, define the brief and ensure that everyone understood it and the outcomes. Concepts had to be tested so that there was no scope for wasting time or money and innovative techniques were required to bring about best practice across every aspect of the build.





Procurement

Stephen quickly identified the need for a robust procurement plan as a key challenge. An array of specialist conservation and restoration techniques were called for, which in turn meant that it was essential that the right contractors and suppliers were on board. His 'pain and gain' hybrid plan combined the traditional lump sum route with a two stage process, for areas where there were unknowns that might tempt a contractor to price in a high degree of risk. The two-stages allowed the architect and structural engineer to work with the contractor to first carry out some opening up works to assess what was required.

Results

Thanks to Stephen's project management skills and the team's determination to revive Bletchley Park's history, the Trust's aims and vision were thoroughly captured and translated. It was completed within budget, delivering fully restored and conserved buildings, new landscaping, interactive displays and high quality exhibitions so that visitors can understand and engage with the story of the codebreakers.

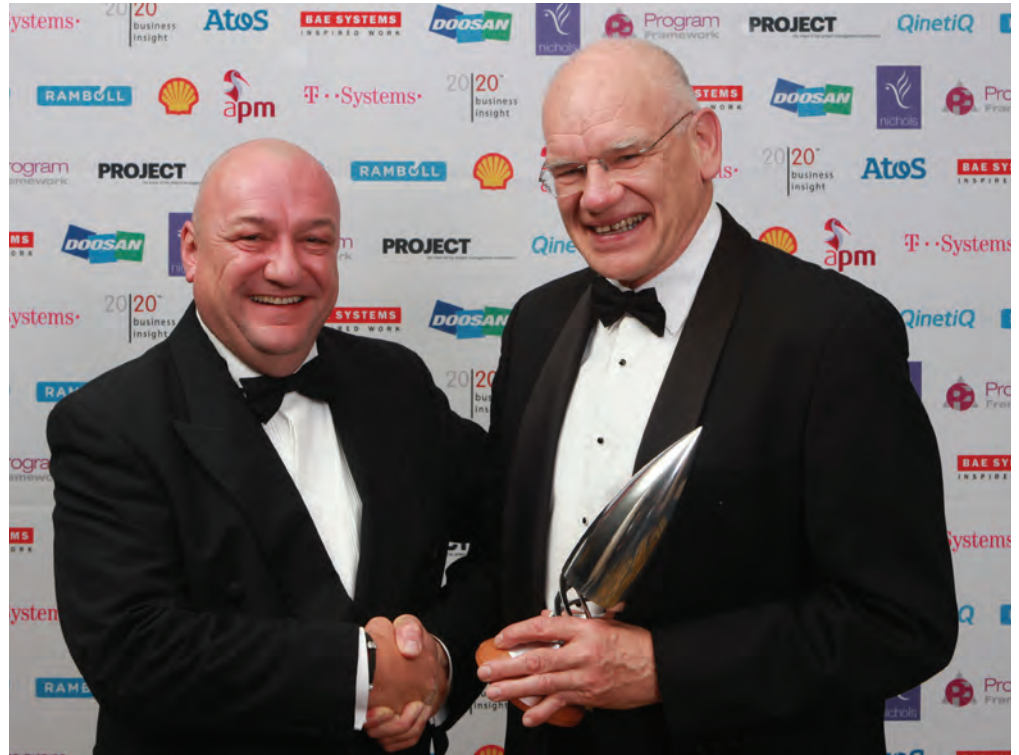
It is a learning legacy, too, for a younger generation with thousands of children participating in workshops on codebreaking, online safety and mathematics as well as learning the wartime story of Bletchley Park.

Collaboration and communication

Sympathetic integration of modern services and technology within Bletchley's listed buildings marked a step change in the quality of exhibition displays and interpretation. This required effective collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders, including high profile Trustees, veterans, conservationists and audio visual specialists.

To help the Trust and its stakeholders envisage how the digital elements of the project would work, Stephen organised a visit to Dover Castle. This was a turning point in understanding what was possible.

The way that he coordinated and communicated with all involved throughout the project ensured that they fully connected with what Bletchley achieved during the war and how their input could help pay tribute to the brave men and women by playing their part in helping tell their story.



The APM Project Management Awards have been celebrating project management excellence since 1993 and the broad range of categories is designed to make entry possible for projects and companies of all sizes and complexity.

The awards reflect the invaluable contribution project managers make in all sectors of society and the event provides an opportunity for industry professionals to meet with colleagues and entertain guests as well as celebrate at one of the year's most exciting events.

Highly regarded in the project management industry, the awards reflect the dedication and talent that helps to shape the project management community and the world around us. The finalists, winners and sponsors of the awards attract national publicity for their achievement and involvement. Winning an award provides invaluable recognition and kudos to the careers of winners.

For more details on the awards and how to enter or attend, visit apm.org.uk/awards or email awards@apm.org.uk

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