

Brief Summary of The Blunders of Our Governments by Anthony King and Ivor Crewe (OneWorld Publications 2013)

The “Blunders” Listed:

- Concorde
- Blue Streak
- De Lorean car
- Football Spectators Act
- Dangerous Dogs Act
- Home Information Packs
- Super casinos
- Poll Tax
- Personal Pensions
- Child Support Agency
- Exchange Rate Mechanism
- Millennium Dome
- Individual Learning Accounts
- Tax Credits
- Assets Recovery Agency
- Rural Payments Agency
- NHS Programme for IT (and other IT programmes)
- Metronet and the London tube upgrade PPP
- ID Cards

The Causes Suggested:

- cultural disconnect - eg gerrycans, collecting poll tax in Brixton, behaviour of child support fathers. So need for pilots if possible.
- group think – leading to intolerance of dissent eg Poll tax review team and Powerpoint brainwashing.
- intellectual prejudice ruling out pragmatism and proper risk assessment.
- operational disconnect – divorce between policy making and implementation
- danger of panic, symbols and spin
- problem over the focus of departments and the centre of government
- Ministerial turnover
- excessive speed and hyper-activism
- lack of accountability and long term audit
- insufficient parliamentary scrutiny
- asymmetry of expertise and skills gaps
- deficit of cross party deliberation on long term issues of difficulty – the “wicked issues”