

Henry Cleere, a pillar of the World Heritage Convention

Tue, 11 Sep 2018

The IUCN World Heritage Programme mourns the loss of Professor Henry Cleere, who recently passed away at the age of 91. Prof Cleere is remembered as a major figure in the history of the World Heritage Convention and in the conservation of archaeological heritage.



Henry Cleere worked alongside IUCN as World Heritage Coordinator for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), one of IUCN's sister Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention. In this role, he evaluated several hundred cultural sites in over 70 countries, many of which are now on the World Heritage List, and carried out numerous monitoring missions.

Jim Thorsell, who was Henry Cleere's counterpart in IUCN coordinating work on natural World Heritage for many years, recalls their complicity. Both men had to present the Advisory Bodies' recommendations to the [World Heritage Committee](#).

“Henry and I were yin and yang for many years and shared similar views on the importance of World Heritage conservation,” says Thorsell. “I keep many fond memories of our collaboration and our complicity during Committee meetings and joint field missions. My heartfelt condolences go to his family.” David Sheppard, who was Head of IUCN's World Heritage work from 1998 to 2008, remembers Henry Cleere as a great contributor to the World Heritage cause.

“Henry had a great sense of humour and fun, but was always principled and clear in his remarks and always focussed on what was good for the World Heritage Convention. It was a great pleasure and honour to work alongside him,” says Sheppard. “Sincere condolences to Henry's family, and many thanks for his wonderful contribution to a better planet.”

Born in the outer suburb of London in 1926, Henry Cleere has been described as a founding figure in the field of archaeological heritage and his work is regarded as highly influential. During two decades as director of the Council for British Archaeology, his understanding of the critical need to rescue heritage drove many initiatives. He helped establish the International Committee for Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM) in 1984 and was a leading figure in drafting the 1990 Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage for ICOMOS. His work was also instrumental in discussions that led the European Council to establish the 1992 Malta Convention on the protection of archaeological heritage.

More recently, Prof Cleere was an Honorary Professor at the University College of London and worked as a World Heritage consultant in countries as varied as Bahrain, China, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Tunisia, and Ukraine.

Henry Cleere leaves an invaluable legacy in the field of heritage conservation and we join his family in celebrating his life.