

PRESENTATION TO THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ROME

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THE ROLE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Our history, our culture

Our heritage is a universal asset – it's for everyone to enjoy and for us all to protect

None of us can do it alone: since the very beginning, public and private organisations have worked together to make things happen

The first legislation for heritage was passed in the UK in the mid nineteenth century to protect extraordinary monuments that were being broken up for building stone or ploughed out by farmers

[PICTURE – STONEHENGE]

That was of course the result of collaboration between the visionary antiquarians and politicians: some (like Sir John Lubbock) even becoming an MP to champion the legislation

By the late nineteenth century there was a growing voluntary movement in the UK represented by the British Archaeological Association, the Archaeology Institute, the Society of Antiquaries, the Commons Preservation Society and the tiny National Trust, founded in 1895. They all had strong views. And so, even when the Office of Works took on statutory functions for heritage in 1910, there was no chance that protecting heritage would be left to Government officials alone.

Indeed all the major advances in UK heritage policy: the safeguarding of country houses, the protection of areas of heritage importance as well as individual sites, the expansion of the definition of heritage to include industrial sites, the protection of historic urban centres etc were all pioneered by the voluntary sector

Similarly, when UNESCO was founded in 1945, partly in response to the terrible damage caused by bombardment, looting and illegal export during the two world wars, it drew heavily on the expertise of academics, voluntary bodies and other experts

One of the earliest collaborations was an international campaign launched by UNESCO to safeguard the Abu Simbel temples, a treasure of ancient Egyptian civilisation, which would have been flooded by the new Aswan High Dam.

[PICTURE – ABU SIMPEL TEMPLE, EGYPT, AND RECONSTRUCTION]

The campaign brought together a multinational team of archaeologists, engineers and skilled heavy equipment operators working together under the UNESCO banner. It cost about US\$80 million (the entire site was carefully cut into large blocks – up to 30 tonnes – dismantled, lifted and reassembled in a new location 65m higher and 200m back from the river, in one of the greatest challenges of archaeological engineering in history). Half of the funding was donated by some 50 countries, showing the importance of solidarity and nations' shared responsibility in conserving outstanding cultural sites.

Its success led to other safeguarding campaigns, such as saving Venice and its Lagoon, the Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro (Pakistan), and restoring the Borobodur Temple Compounds (Indonesia) – and eventually to the signing of the World Heritage Convention in 1972.

[PICTURE MOENJODARO, PAKISTAN AND BOROBODUR TEMPLE, INDONESIA]

So voluntary-sector led partnerships shaped our past

These sort of public-private partnerships were collaborations between the state and the voluntary sector, and are as old as the movement itself.

So we must never under-estimate the role of the voluntary sector. For it is very often the voluntary sector that has seen what is happening and where the risks are, has the best ideas, can innovate and move quickly, and can raise and shape public opinion.

In most countries the NGO sector does not own historic properties and does not have significant financial capital or development expertise, but it is brilliant at stimulating new thinking and creating new opportunities, while the public sector provides the necessary regulation and authority, and – crucially – often enables or directly provides the money.

For example, one of the things I am most proud of in my time at the National Trust was the acquisition of Tyntesfield, a stunning Victorian Gothic house near Bristol

[PICTURE TYNTESFIELD]

It provided the impetus to pioneer a completely new approach to opening and presenting historic houses to the public – the idea of ‘arms open’ conservation. Instead of visitors being simply respectful admirers, they are encouraged to see behind the scenes, get involved and feel part of the story. Though the impetus was ours at the National Trust, we could not have carried it through without the support of our Heritage Lottery Fund and the UK Government, since the HLF needed its approval to give us the largest grant in its history.

[PICTURE ARMS OPEN CONSERVATION AT TYNTESFIELD]

[PICTURE BACK TO BACKS BEFORE AND AFTER RESTORATION]

Another example was the pioneering acquisition of the last surviving Birmingham back to back houses – tiny workers’ houses that had housed generations of Birmingham residents but had, by the year 2000, almost all been demolished. Telling the story of ordinary people’s heritage was a pioneering vision, and again, it was support from the HLF and Birmingham City Council that made this possible.

These kinds of public-private partnerships are all good news.

Can partnerships with the private sector work?

But to many people, the word public-private partnerships means something else. It means private sector money and – possibly – private sector interference which risks undermining the heritage cause. And that isn’t always good news.

For example I know there are mixed feelings here in Rome about the sponsorship of conservation work at important sites funded by multinational corporations. And of course there are risks, especially if the corporate voice is stronger than the heritage voice.

But not even the richest of countries has sufficient financial resources in the public or voluntary sector to own, rehabilitate and maintain all of the heritage buildings worthy of

preservation. And left to themselves Governments don't always do the right things, eg the Government of South Australia wants to sell off the historic house Martindale Hall, which featured in the film *Picnic at Hanging Rock*

[PICTURE MARTINDALE HALL, SOUTH AUSTRALIA]

The trick is getting the right sort of partnership, where the purpose and focus of the project delivers for heritage, with commercial and other ambitions supporting not distorting the heritage goals. That is of course easier said than done, but it's a skill we must seek and learn. Because I don't believe we will be able to manage totally without corporate support, so we need to use and manage it well.

And so, once again, I want to focus on the catalytic role the voluntary sector can play.

The role of the voluntary sector in future

Today I have the honour to chair INTO, the International National Trusts Organisation. We have 66 members worldwide, and all of them share a passion for the heritage of their country.

But they are not all the same. Some are large, long established organisations with large memberships and strong public support [eg NTEWNI, NT Scotland, USNTHP].

[PICTURE OF THESE ORGANISATIONS]

At the other end of the spectrum are tiny, new organisations running entirely on voluntary energy and doing their best simply to get heritage ideas on the agenda eg Czech Republic, Zimbabwe. And all shades in between, such as the Gelderland Trust, Jersey, Bermuda and the NTs of Australia, including some that are closely allied to Governments (such as Fiji and Trinidad and Tobago) and others that are fiercely independent and highly critical of official (in)action such as An Taisce (Ireland), and Malta.

[PICTURE OF THESE ORGANISATIONS]

But what every single one of these organisations agree on is that they can't protect heritage without collaboration with others. They are passionate and full of good ideas, but Governments need to designate the sites they want saved; Governments need to set the right priorities for the heritage departments; and – crucially – influence other parts of Government so that heritage ideas aren't railroaded over by transport, economics or building programmes. And very often they have no money, and this can be provided either by Governments or private sector partners.

As a result, many of our members have been involved in public-private partnerships and some of these have been an outstanding success.

Public-private partnerships that are working

Here are some examples of the best kind of public-private partnerships where the pitfalls have been avoided:

[2016 Award winning Main Streets: Shaw District, Washington DC and Audubon Park, Orlando, Florida]

The USA National Trust for Historic Preservation pioneered its *Main Street* campaign back in 1977. With the vision of retaining and restoring America's traditional mainstreets, which were vanishing as shopping malls and out of town superstores took over, it has inspired

many communities to work with local businesses and town authorities to envision a different future for their towns, in which the historic streets can be transformed into buzzing, vibrant destinations.

From 1980 to 2002, Main Street communities saw a cumulative net reinvestment of \$17 billion, with an average reinvestment of \$9.5 million in each community. More than 57,000 net new businesses and 231,000 net new jobs have been created, with the average cost of a job created only \$2,394. In fact, with each dollar spent on operating the local program generating \$40.35 in return to the community, the Main Street program became the most cost efficient economic development program in the country.

[PICTURE POLLY WOODSIDE]

The preservation of the *Polly Woodside* tall ship in Melbourne, Australia assisted the redevelopment of Melbourne's South Wharf as a new riverside destination. The private sector redevelopment risked being totally commercially focused, but the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) persuaded the authorities that an authentic historic ship at its centre would give the site greater integrity and meaning. Investment has paid off for all parties

[PICTURE MERDEKA STADIUM, KUALA LUMPUR]

The Merdeka Stadium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was built as the venue for the nation's official declaration of independence in 1957 so is of unparalleled significance to Malaysians. But it was nearly demolished, then abandoned in the 1990s, finally being acquired by the Government-led equity trust company PNB to stop it from deteriorating beyond repair. The Heritage of Malaysia Trust put forward a vision for restoring it and creating new sporting uses, which has now been achieved thanks to investment from PNB. They have provided the money, the skill and expertise has come from the charity and political support from the Government.

[PICTURE KOTAGEDE]

The Indonesian Heritage Trust brought together a partnership of heritage bodies, UNESCO and the World Bank to focus on safeguarding the heritage buildings that survived the 2006 earthquake in Kotagede (Indonesia). The aim was to restore the historic buildings, especially those associated with the silver craft industry, that might otherwise have been demolished and create a sustainable future for them

[PICTURE PINGYAO]

The ancient walled city of Pingyao, China, is a World Heritage site and one of China's most popular tourist attractions. Over-visiting caused degradation and damage, yet brought too little income to enable proper conservation. An integrated master plan, bringing together partners from all sectors, and money to invest in conservation, has achieved great progress, in the process improving the tourist experience and developing sustainable income sources.

[PICTURE DELHI]

Many Indian cities have also seen sprawling, uncontrolled growth in recent years resulting in a loss of historic integrity in the historic core. In Delhi, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage has entered into a Public Private Partnership with the Tourism Department to develop integrated heritage tourism circuits – with signs, furniture, billboards, small restaurants and even heritage buses, INTACH seeks to highlight some of the capital's hidden

treasures. Supported by the World Monuments Fund, the circuits use historic sites as the focal point for neighbourhoods and give locals a sense of ownership.

These examples are inspiring reminders that despite the many challenges our heritage faces, we can do things that benefit heritage, people and also contribute to the economy.

What does success look like?

[PICTURE WALCOTT PLACE, ST LUCIA]

Another example of success is Wacott Place, St Lucia. When the Nobel Laureate's childhood home was given to it in 2000, the Saint Lucia National Trust worked in partnership with government and local business to rehabilitate the building and create a museum. Phase 2 of the ambitious project includes opening a café in this previously depressed area and the eventual acquisition and regeneration of a largely abandoned neighbourhood

So what are the hallmarks of successful public-private partnerships?

- first, there needs to be a clear heritage vision. Without this things will go wrong. The clearer the vision the less likely it is that ambitions will be distorted or commercial pressures applied inappropriately
- second, every partner needs to know what they are contributing and what outcomes they seek, and these need to be negotiated openly. Properly managed, heritage conservation and economic development should go hand in hand but it doesn't happen without working at it. And there should be no hidden agendas and no surprises
- third, the project must have public credibility and support. Most places of heritage value are really significant for people eg Merdeka even if in private ownership. Credibility also includes value for money, public accountability and widely shared benefits
- and fourth, long term sustainability is vital. Heritage assets need protection, capital investment and the means to generate income long term. Heritage PPPs can be structured to provide all three, but again it requires a clear focus and working together to achieve success.

Conclusion

Our world is an unstable and unpredictable place at present. Governments throughout the world face uncertainties and political minefields, and nowhere is there enough money.

The risk is that heritage is simply too low on the agenda to count. But by using partnerships, and drawing on our long experience of doing so, we can move forward. The trick is to get the right partnerships on the right terms, and to achieve that the heritage movement needs to be visionary, brave and bold.

Despite what some people think, heritage is about the future, not the past. By working together, with the right objectives and the right partners, we can have the best of all worlds.

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