

Professor Al Gillespie from New Zealand presenting Paper 2 of the Valentia UNESCO World Heritage Status Bid during the opening of the 150th Anniversary Festival in July 2016

Good afternoon good evening, I've a bit of jetlag. I'm Al Gillespie. I'm the kiwi in the room. I, (laughs) a little while ago I met my wife in Nottingham and when you marry a wife, you know, you marry a family, and that's good, but as you relationships expand, you start making friends in so many different communities. And standing here tonight, I have friends in this community, I have friends throughout Ireland, and you don't actually get told that at the end point, you end up marrying an entire country. That's where I feel that this is me here and I'm talking about global communications and I want you to start by each taking your phone out and turning it on. I know normally you come to these occasions and they say turn your phone off but tonight I want you to turn it on, because this is the, this is the connection... if it did not happen here 150 years ago you would not have this. This defines in many ways who we are.

The context to what I'm talking about is this person here. It's the new tourist. There are 1.133 billion tourists in the world, one in seven of us are tourists, and the point to note here is not that it's growing by over 3% per year but that the tourist is changing. The dominant tourist in the world today is Chinese, followed by people from South East Asia, from The Middle East, from Russia and Brazil. The market is changing, the discerning tourist is changing. They want to see things. They don't want to see things that are familiar to us, they want to see things that are familiar to them. This means that as much as we like our heritage of Christianity and Celtic heritage and Neolithic heritage, we need to think differently. We need to think what appeals to other people, from other cultures, which is more cosmopolitan. So, when you come to a country like mine, we developed tourism very quickly because in the 1980s we were modeled on the idea that we were little Britain, and the problem was nobody wanted to come to little Britain and so we had to fully divest ourselves and say, well what are we good at? What have we got which is special? And once we sort of let go of our own ideas of what was important and started to think about what we had and what others might

identify with, we took off. The question is why do you do this? Why does a country develop a tourism strategy which changes the way you present yourself or you have perceptions of others. To sing with the angels, you do it because it's the right thing to do, because it's correct. You do it because of social context, of cultural history, the identity of who you are as a community, and these are all true and these are all solid, and you do it for the money, if I'm really honest as well. Tourism today is not just about the ethical component; it's about the financial reward. 1,245 billion dollars per year. If those tourists, at the beginning, go anywhere in the world, and my job, in many places, is to get hold of those people. The question is how do you do it, how do you make something special that attracts these people. How do you become the magnet that takes them from one place to another place and you put that money in the community. And so what we do in this area is we look for megasites, or mega culture. Most of us are familiar with these ideas and you can think of the Acropolis or the Great Wall of China, exemplars of cultural heritage, intangible heritage, or even things like war relics, we know the making of.... And each time we come forward we have to try to work in in my world, which is like a very fine mechanism.

Because the tourists of today, the first thing they want to do is they're going to go online and the second thing they're going to do is they're going to check out what's the value of this place. They're going to look at the reviews everyone else has written, number one, and then they're going to say 'is it valued independently?' And to do that they're going to look at international designations. They want someone independent to have looked at it and said 'this is valuable'. They want someone outside of their community to say 'this is special'. And so in my world, I work through five different conventions, and each convention you can see there going down, is a different type of heritage, a different type of designation. In essence, I'm the guy from the Antiques Roadshow in the sense that people come to me and say 'we've got something, is it valuable'. And I've got to work out where it fits into this mechanism.

To give you two examples of my recent work at home. The first one is E7. E7 was a bird which was pretty much pointless. It existed, it was ugly, no one really liked to take photos of it, it didn't eat anything useful. It couldn't cook well and it didn't taste

nice. And then we discovered – a clever scientist who put a band on it's leg - that it migrated from New Zealand to Alaska to China and back. It's the largest migration in the world. And so the small town, of less than 10,000 people where this came from, suddenly discovered that they had an extra 14 million dollars a year, a decade later. And so, it's about that resource.

The second example, and I was working on this just before I came over. This whale here is called Hun. And Hun here is accompanied by his mate called Thirteen. These whales, we discovered, congregate in New Zealand in a place called Kaikoura, which is just there on the map. That place is a freak of nature. And it's a freak of nature, that's the, that's the underwater map of New Zealand, that's why we get really bad earthquakes, that's the Tectonic plate, you can see there right through my country. As the two oceans collide here and you get hot water coming down from the tropics and you get cold water coming up from Antarctica and you get these whales here and they meet there. Once we'd worked that out, we developed an industry, which is cranking 134 million a year. Before this industry was created, over 50% of the town was unemployed. What you have to do, is think where is the opportunity. And in many ways, this is a difficult topic.

When I was working in the World Heritage Convention in Paris, we had to deal with Auschwitz. Now, Auschwitz as you know is the site of the Holocaust and the Genocide – this is the darkest point of humanity. And the Polish people didn't know what to do with it, you know, should you put it entirely in glass, should we close it down, should we burn it to the ground? Or should we treat it with respect? Should we learn from our past? Should we create a visible and ongoing context from which others will not make the same mistakes? 1.7 million visitors per year. It's the opportunity and the people today in tourism need to be thinking what's the next step?

So these are three sites I've been also working on recently in World Heritage. The site of Tequila in Mexico is now a world heritage site because they have a product of global significance. Port from Portugal, also a world heritage site – a site of global significance. The Champagne region, you need a drink, or something, which has gone

beyond the national identity, which takes it to a global importance and to a flavor of international importance. If only you had a drink like that! So, what you aim for is the World Heritage Convention, and the World Heritage Convention is the, the cream of the crop. Most of us have been to these sites, these are the top 1 – 2% of the world's best heritage. This is the upstanding. This is the stuff which is the treasure of humanity. 1,031 sites, 145 countries, you can see the numbers here. It's a competitive process and I was speaking to the Canadian Ambassador just a moment ago and he was telling me that the Canadian tentative list, has 32 sites on it's tentative list which is like I said, it's a process and countries are engaged with this, continual accumulation because a), it's ethically important and it's good for social identity and cultural importance, and b), it brings in the tourists. So, this is where we start to aim for. Until we come to Ireland. And all of a sudden, you find a complete anomaly. How does a country so rich in culture have only two sites? Not only that, your tentative list is based continually around the continuation of what you've always done well and you should pursue, about Christian sites, Celtic sites, Neolithic sites, and that's good, you should pursue that. But my point is, you need to be thinking larger. You need to be thinking what cultural things do other people want to see, that they can identify with straight away?

Of course the world heritage list has ten criteria. Ten criteria. The importance of the ten criteria means that you can start to think differently about the way you pursue your heritage. Now the one I want you to think about is the industrial revolution. The reason that is upside down is not because I've still got very bad jetlag, it's because I want you to think differently. This painting, by Walter Darby in The National in London, is a very famous painting and it symbolizes the entire period. You have the scientist in the middle, who is experimenting with oxygen and he has a glass bubble around the dove – if he put his fingertip on top of the bubble, which is a small vent, the dove will die. But, you will have proved something very valuable. He's looking to you, in the audience to say should I do it or should I not? To the right over here, we have the philosopher, using the options. To the left, the economist. Here, the two young girls, one's looking at the future, one is scared of the future, and over here, two young lovers who don't really care what's going on. In the corner, we have the

symbol of the Lunesta society, the rise of capitalism. This period, the industrial revolution, changes everything. But the problem with the industrial revolution is that it has a very bad rep. People seem to think of it in terms of air pollution or they think about exploited workers. But, what it really was, was the first time that humanity escaped its subsistent space. We grew as a population, we used energy, we created meaningful agriculture and as part of that, from Britain, it spread.

The importance of this picture here is that as much as we know about the Crystal Palace exhibition in 1851, very few remember the one in Dublin in 1853. My point is simple, is that the industrial revolution permeated through Ireland. The same heritage, the same culture, the same influence. When you look at industrial heritage as world heritage, we discover that there's 45 sites on the world heritage list and the best of these sites, such as the mining sites in Germany, are now collecting 1.5 million visitors per year. Two decades ago, this was brown fields and wastelands. And now through education and tourism, you've created a resource for the community. Now I'm not going to wish 1.5 million visitors on anything just yet but you get the idea of the opportunity that is out there.

Which brings us to this. A subset of the industrial revolution is telecommunications. And telecommunications is the unsung hero and it's unsung because and it's the hero because as much as the energy has largely disappeared, what we started out with, with the steam and as much as the labour conditions and the textiles have moved on, the one technology that is directly related to that period is still in my pocket. There's a clear line from the beginning of the telegraph and the use of electricity right through to today. This development of the telegraph was painted, this is in Congress in The United States in this painting here. They commissioned a great artist in 1857, they said do all of the great inventions of the 19th century so far and at the centre of the great inventions, obviously there's Samuel Morse, is the telegraph. And so why were people in the middle of the 19th Century thinking that the telegraph was the most amazing thing? Because it changed everything. We've always wanted to communicate, but it's always been slow and it's been arduous, until the telegraph and we got near instantaneous communication. The military changed, the media changed,

the stock market changed, people would get telegrams from their relations on the other side of the Atlantic. So everything changed to a point. And the point was when it got to the ocean. And so as much as we had communication in a national setting, and in a European setting, and in a regional setting, it was not international. And by pure luck, this geographical spot we're in today, just over here in the south west corner of Kerry, on the Atlantic, was the point chosen to stretch a cable site across the Atlantic.

This was an achievement unlike anything done before. It was three times deeper, it was three times longer, and it was much more complicated than anything before it. They've had small submarine cables, like the cables that go under the ocean, to cross the English channel and to cross the Irish channel, but no one had dared to cross the Atlantic. The thinking at the time from the best minds available was it was quite simply impossible. But through perseverance, you had an evolution. You had work on insulation, you had work on the floor of the ocean, you had work on the technology, you had the science and you had the capital. If I had to put this into a sound bite, you had English technology, you had American capital and you had Irish science. And together the three aspects came together and they created a (inaudible) over a process of failure, getting up again, failure and getting up again and success. They did what was impossible.

The results were remarkable. The celebrations throughout this period were unprecedented. As you saw previously, this was seen as the eighth wonder of the world. Because now, what was different, and this is my big claim, is that what Valentia changed is that globalization as we know it today, began in the field just over there. And that's because now, we could communicate globally.

Previously, we could communicate nationally, sometimes we could do it regionally, but now, it was global. And the proof of this is, is that following the success of the transatlantic cable, we have the first international agreements that have created the first international organisations, which had to regulate telegraph traffic. And so it

changed, so we could communicate at speed around the world. Globalization began at Valentia.

And this is what I call the ensemble. It's a collection of pieces, some of them are here, some of them are just there, some of them are further, at the other end of the island, some of them are relics, some of them are standing in very good condition, with a bit of paint and a bit of improvement to come. But you have the essence of a world heritage collection in this amount of work here.

So you go back to the criteria. You have ten criteria that you need to work through to show a site as having what we call outstanding universal value. Outstanding universal value says that this site is special to humanity. This makes it an international treasure. I will now give you the six things of why I think you've got a horse in at least six different races.

Your first one, and on the top, I've got the comparison of where the other sites are on the same criteria.

Criterion one: a masterpiece of human creative genius. Heinrich Gorge in Britain, the birth of the industrial revolution, the creation of a process which gave us iron. It changed the world. Was Valentia comparable? The science, the technology, the capital, the result – yes I think it was the same.

Two, criterion two: an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural era of the world, on developments in technology. This is Cornwall at the top, the mining history. This is Varberg station in Sweden. This is, is, there's only one telecommunications site on the world heritage list, one site so far. This is the one in Sweden - it's a radio station, it was built in 1924. In the process of doing the work on the cable station, I came across the radio station on Valentia which was built in.. 1911, 1911. So even if you want to forget the rest of my talk about the cable station, you've already got the radio station which is more important than the one which is listed in Sweden, but here on the cable station you have a technology that was-, it

came in through here, evolved onto this, became the template for being copied everywhere. Do you meet criterion two? Yes, I believe you do.

Criterion three is about civilizations which have disappeared. And that's important (inaudible) of humanity that were once here but have gone and have left a legacy. Um, the silver mines in Japan, of a civilization that was once prominent, but now has just left relics behind. Where are the telegraphers today?

They're not here. It was an entire culture that existed around us, which lived in the houses, which inhabited the town, which had an influence on the markets. It's gone. Was it important? Yes, it was important. Does that meet criterion three? Yes, I think that may meet criterion three.

Criterion four: an outstanding example of a technological ensemble, within a landscape. A landscape. The importance of criterion four is that what you're looking for is the importance of the area of technology that is linked clearly with the environment around it. It's not just buildings that are unrelated to the ecology. And the example here is the Humberstone and Santa Laura Saltpeter mines and industry in Chile. Do you have landscape? Do you have landscape. What a stupid question. Really! Um, no no don't (inaudible). No you've got the landscape. You've got the landscape. If you've got one view – the moneyshot, it's that shot there, where you can actually see through one part of a world heritage site onto a second world heritage site. How spoiled can you guys get?

The criterion I'm not sure about, is criterion five. And this is where you have a human interaction with the environment, especially where it's become vulnerable or at the point of irreversible change. And this is where you had technological development in an environment that became so hostile such as with the copper mines in Norway, that the population could barely exist. You have got an argument, that the population and that the environment and Valentia is hostile but whether it's at the point that you have had to abandon the site, I'm not quite sure, I think a few of you are still here so it's probably quite safe.

But the last one, which I am certain about, is criterion 6. This is where the site is associated with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance. This is New Lanark in Britain and the importance of this site here is it was not only for the development of the factory system, it was for the development of social housing for the workers. And that idea permeated throughout much of the western world. The idea here, what changed? Globalisation. Because now communication went from being national, to regional, to international.

So, here's what I'm saying. You've got to think about tourism differently. It's changing. The tourist is changing. The person is changing. The place that they've come from is changing. The way that they want to look at sites is changing. You have to think about opportunity. You have to look around you and think, what have we got which is valuable? Don't just think traditional, don't just think of the things that have always worked, think about what you need in the next twenty years, the next thirty years. Think industrial revolution. Think telecommunications. Think Transatlantic Cable. It was a genius idea. It changed technology. It was a lost civilization. It's important to humanity. It was about the landscape. And it gave you globalization and an idea of outstanding universal significance. That's it.