



Gorffennol Digidol Digital Past - 2021

HERITAGE ON THE EDGE:

The Role of Heritage in Increasing Global Climate Ambition and Action

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This presentation will explore the communicative power of heritage to stress urgency and encourage climate action. The climate emergency has seen a robust response from many sectors including heritage. The intersections between cultural heritage and climate change are complex and multifaceted and were recently explored by the ICOMOS Working Group on Climate Change and Heritage. Their report – Future of Our Pasts: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action – was released by ICOMOS at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee in Baku, Azerbaijan in July 2019. One of the themes which emerged from the report was the unique communicative power of heritage places, and in particular iconic heritage, to stress urgency and encourage meaningful climate action globally.

In June 2018, members of the ICOMOS Working Group partnered with Google Arts and Culture and CyArk, a California based 3D documentation organisation on the Heritage on the Edge Project. This was launched in January 2020 and explored the relationship between cultural heritage and climate change through the lens of five world heritage site: The Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat in Bangladesh, Chan Chan Archaeological Zone in Peru, The Old and New Cities of Edinburgh in Scotland, The Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara in Tanzania and Rapa Nui National Park. Using 3D capture technology, videos, interviews with stakeholders, infographics and narrative written by ICOMOS experts, the Heritage of the Edge Project explored issues including loss and damage, the recording and documentation of sites at risk, adaptation planning, carbon mitigation in historic structures,

[Digital Past 2021](#): New technologies in heritage, interpretation and outreach | 8th – 12th February 2021, online via Zoom.

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and climate justice in an accessible way using an online portal hosted on the Google Arts and Culture portal. The presentation will provide an overview of the project including examples from specific sites. It will also present results from stakeholder feedback and online analytics exploring the efficacy of the project portal as a communicative tool and suggest improvements for future projects based on ongoing collaboration and knowledge exchange with sites impacted by climate change.

Biography

Will Megarry is a landscape archaeologist, geographical information systems (GIS) and heritage management specialist with over 15 years commercial and academic experience. He has a particular interest in the application and transferability of geospatial technologies to archaeology and cultural heritage site management and protection. In recent years, his research has explored the intersections between cultural heritage and climate change with a particular focus on utilising cultural heritage as an asset to raise awareness and encourage climate action. He is also an active field archaeologist with an ongoing project exploring island landscapes in Neolithic Shetland.