

## Professor Emeritus Peter Allan Thompson<sup>1</sup>

1930 - 2021

Peter Thompson had the distinction of being the first person in the UK and Europe to be appointed a University Professor of Project Management, at Manchester, in 1989. He had graduated in Civil Engineering at Queen Mary College, London, in 1952. After army work on bomb disposal he joined a leading firm of consulting engineers and with them had 12 years of increasing responsibility for the design, construction and management of power stations and large water engineering projects.

In 1966 he made the move to research and teaching on appointment as Lecturer in Civil Engineering at UMIST [the University of Manchester Institute of Science & Technology]. He was co-founder of the University's Project Management Group. Under his leadership the Group became recognised internationally as the UK's leading team in teaching and research in project management.

*Photo at right: Prof Thompson on a recent outing.*



Peter initiated pioneering research and conferences with industry on problems of construction contracts and productivity and was co-leader of the research team put together to learn lessons of the management of emergency projects. His 1981 book *Organisation and Economics of Construction* was one of the first to underpin teaching with live research. He planned the innovations in contract payment systems developed and tested by Martin Barnes that led to the first concepts of the *New Engineering Contract*.

With John Perry he led a programme of studies of different types of construction contracts. They undertook a commission from the Institution of Civil Engineers to produce a guide to risk management. Their work for the UK government included training programmes for senior overseas officials and a review of risk management in the impending need to start the removal of large North Sea oil & gas platforms. His doctoral students became professors in several continents.

He had been an active supporter of the Institution of Civil Engineers since his student days and was always a leader in collaborative work with industry and professional bodies. He was awarded two Institution of Civil Engineers prizes. He was an early

---

<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: UMIST Professor Emeritus Peter Thompson passed away in his hometown of Wilmslow, England in late 2021 at the age of 91. This belated tribute has been provided by his colleague and friend, professor Stephen Wearne.

member of the Association for Project Management and elected an Honorary Fellow in recognition of his 30 years work developing project managers and advancing project management practice. He was Chairman of the IPMA's Editorial Board for the *International Journal of Project Management* in its critical years of achieving international recognition as the leading research journal.

Stephen Wearne  
Visiting Professor  
Management of Projects Group  
University of Manchester  
Manchester, UK

## About the Author