

44th HISTORY OF ASTRONAUTICS SYMPOSIUM (E4)
IAA 50th Anniversary (1)

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THE ORIGINS OF IAA - PERSONAL MEMORIES OF LES SHEPHERD

Abstract

Dr Leslie (Les) Shepherd has been involved in the space field for 75 years, since he joined the British Interplanetary Society (BIS) in 1935. We talked with Dr Shepherd, now 92 years of age, in June this year at his home in Dorset, England about his memories of the early days of the International Academy of Astronautics of which he is the last of the Founding members. The short video of this interview will be played in this session.

Although Dr Shepherd career was in the nuclear energy industry, he has made significant contributions to the astronautical societies and federations to which he belongs. In 1945 he was present at the first meeting of the BIS when it reformed after the Second World War, becoming a member of its Council in 1946. He subsequently became its President in 1954-56, 1957-1960 and 1965-67. He was also one of the BIS Council members involved in the founding of the International Astronautical Federation in 1950 and served as its President in 1956-57 and, as mentioned above, he was one of the founding members of the International Academy of Astronautics in 1960.

He was an ever present attendee at the International Astronautical Congresses until recent years when the travelling became too much although he did attend the Congress in Glasgow in 2008. His interests in astronautics are eclectic but he is probably best remembered for his advocacy of nuclear power to space travel and his interest in the SETI sessions at the Congresses.