

Peter Wheeler (1957–2025)

Peter Wheeler, a deeply influential figure in finance, philanthropy, and conservation, died unexpectedly of a heart attack at his home on Lamu Island, Kenya, on 30 October 2025.

Born in Bristol in 1957, Peter won a scholarship to Charterhouse, where he became Head Boy. Before university, he travelled overland to Mussoorie, India, to teach for a year, an early expression of the curiosity, independence, and global outlook that defined his life. He went on to study English Language and Literature at Christ Church, Oxford, graduating in 1978 with an MA.

Peter began his professional career in corporate finance at Hill Samuel & Co., working in London and New York from 1978 to 1985, before joining Goldman Sachs. In 1991 he relocated to Hong Kong as Head of Non-Japan Asia Investment Banking, becoming a firm-wide Partner in 1994. During this period, he played a pivotal role in Goldman Sachs' expansion in Asia and was among the first international bankers to engage directly with the People's Republic of China, helping to open the firm's Beijing office and serving as its first Chief Representative there.

After returning to London, Peter founded and chaired IPValue, a pioneering patent licensing agency that became a leading global firm helping companies responsibly commercialise and manage their intellectual property. In 2008, he joined Standard Chartered Bank as Head of Wholesale Banking, West, serving as regional deputy to the Head of Wholesale Banking with responsibility across Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas.

Peter was a central figure in the evolution of philanthropy and social investment in the UK. In 2002, he co-founded New Philanthropy Capital and served on its board for over two decades, including as Chairman. He was a board member of Social Finance from 2007 to 2023, where he was a key architect of the world's first Social Impact Bond. Earlier roles included board member of Kids Company (2001–2004); founding board member, chair, and donor of the Charity Technology Trust (2002–2006); Chair of Trustees of The Young Foundation (2006–2012); the first permanent Chair of Futurebuilders England (2004–2007, a public appointment); and board member of Virgin Unite (2006–2010).

Alongside his executive work, Peter held numerous non-executive roles. He served on the board of Actis from 2007 to 2009, was a board member and investor in Climate Change Capital from 2005 to 2011, and from 2014 to 2023 was a non-executive director of Rift Valley Corporation, where he also chaired the Audit and Risk Committee.

From 2013 to 2019, Peter served as Executive Vice President of The Nature Conservancy, establishing its London presence as the organisation's first UK-based executive. As a member of the global executive team, he was a strong advocate for conservation finance and market-based approaches to protecting nature, helping to bridge capital markets and environmental stewardship. In recognition of his commitment to nature and wildlife, Peter was honoured as a Conservation Fellow of the Zoological Society of London.

In later years, Peter worked as an independent advisor, supporting climate-related research and its application within capital markets, driven by a clear objective: contributing to a decarbonised global economy.

Kenya held a special place in Peter's life. For more than twenty years he maintained a home on Lamu Island, where he supported local environmental and social initiatives and built a deeply cherished community. He was particularly pleased by the Kenyan court's recent ruling to halt the proposed 1,050-megawatt Lamu coal-fired power plant, a landmark ruling for the island's fragile ecosystems and a powerful testament to the strength of community-led activism.

An avid outdoorsman, Peter loved the ocean and the mountains from an early age. His adventures included completing the MacLehose Trailwalk in Hong Kong, running the inaugural Ho Chi Minh City Marathon, and numerous climbing expeditions around the world. Sailing was a lifelong passion, inspired by his father, Spencer.

He is survived by his wife, Pascale Reverte, and his children Kathryn, Claire, Charlotte, and Faustine, as well as grandchildren, extended family, and many close friends around the world.

Above all, Peter was a loving husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather, and loyal friend. His warmth, intellectual generosity, integrity, and moral clarity left a lasting mark on those who worked with him and those who loved him.

He will be deeply missed.