



PATRICK GEDDES

Evergreen: Patrick Geddes and the Environment in Equilibrium

Newsletter – No. 1

April 2017

WELCOME

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Wellcome Trust Research Resources-funded project 'Evergreen: Patrick Geddes and the Environment in Equilibrium'. The newsletter will be circulated quarterly and aims to provide an update on project progress, and to highlight some of the fascinating collection discoveries that are sure to be uncovered throughout the project. Later in the project there will be a number of exciting opportunities for individuals/ groups to engage in more depth with the project and the collections. Please watch this space to find out how you can get involved.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This is a two-year collaborative project between the Centre for Research Collections at the University of Edinburgh and Archives and Special Collections at the University of Strathclyde, which will run from October 2016 until October 2018. The aim of the project is to preserve, conserve, catalogue and virtually reunite two collections of papers of Sir Patrick Geddes held in both institutions.

Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) was a pioneer of the environmental movement and one of the greatest social thinkers of his time. The collections, which are actually two parts of an original whole, separated by historical accident, are of international significance. Combined, the collections contain over 4000 plans, over 1400 photographic items and in the region of 175000 other items, comprised of papers, notebooks, and correspondence, amongst much more. The prolific mass and polymathic nature of the collections reflect Geddes's energy, ideas, relationships and working, and vividly document the development of all Geddes's theories.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The project will employ a project archivist for 2 years, the duration of the project, and a project conservator for 10 months. An experienced project archivist, Elaine MacGillivray, was appointed at the end of October 2016. The conservator will be recruited to begin in post in August 2017.

The core Project Management Group is comprised of the project staff, along with Project Sponsors; Grant Buttars (Deputy University Archivist, University of Edinburgh) and Victoria Peters (University Archivist, University of Strathclyde) and we are advised by Claire Knowles (Digital Development Manager, University of Edinburgh) and we are delighted to be supported and advised by Professor Murdo MacDonald (University of Dundee).

Our Project Management Group held its inaugural meeting on 24 January 2017. The group approved the project plan and heard reports of project progress. The next Project Management Group meeting will take place in April 2017.

PROJECT PROGRESS

Progress to date has seen the retro-conversion of over 750 legacy printed catalogue descriptions to electronic format using a combination of Optical Character Recognition (OCR), re-ordering and re-formatting text in Microsoft Word, and conversion to Excel before applying Encoded Archival Description (EAD). This will allow the transfer of descriptions to the online archive catalogue. Watch this space for updates!

An extensive stock-take of the Edinburgh University collections material is now underway and so far over 43% has been identified, accounted for and catalogue numbers applied and locations information recorded accordingly. This work facilitates an enormous step forward in improving access to the collections.

Over 50% of the University of Strathclyde's 11,000 archive catalogue descriptions have been assessed. The complete assessment, pulling on work undertaken in earlier scoping surveys by archive and conservation colleagues, will inform the ongoing project work-plans and cataloguing methodology.

The project archivist has been out and about, meeting with key stakeholders, building up contextual knowledge regarding Patrick Geddes and all of the current and planned research and activity surrounding Patrick Geddes and his ideas. Thank you to everyone that has taken the time to meet with Elaine, sharing your knowledge, wisdom and ideas - we're looking forward to meeting with many more of you in the coming months.

You can now follow project progress via the project blog (<http://www.libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/patrickgeddes>) and also via Twitter @GeddesEvergreen

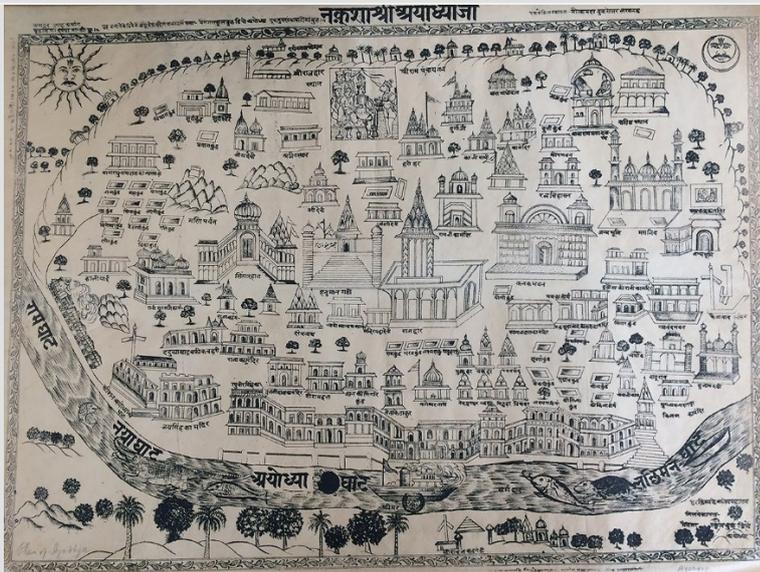
COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

Project staff have been enjoying re-discovering some of the wonderful items within the collection, and also some new previously uncatalogued items. One such discovery is this original brush drawing 'Blue Bird', attributed in the original catalogue to Scottish artist John Duncan (1866-1945).

We were also delighted to discover a set of Hindi pilgrim maps depicting the sacred cities of Ayodhya, Benares and Allahabad in India. Unlike geographical maps they give no distance, size or scale but give factual and symbolic information regarding holy sites, highlighting features of religious significance, characteristically portrayed in exaggerated scale - a view, arguably, better suited to the needs of Indian pilgrims visiting there each year to obtain religious instruction and seek redemption from their sins.



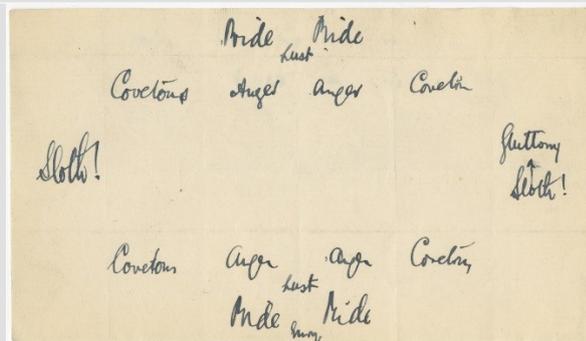
Ref: University of Edinburgh Archive and Manuscript Collections: Coll-1167-A8.6.3 - Original Brush Drawing, THE BLUE BIRD, J.D.



These incredible maps had largely been overlooked because of the minimal description given in the original catalogue: 'Ayodhya. Map. In Hindi'. One of the major aims of the project is to enhance catalogue descriptions just like these so that users can more readily discover and make use of the collections material.

Ref: University of Edinburgh Archive and Manuscript Collections: Coll-1167-A4.M.2 - Ayodhya. Map. In Hindi.

No subject seemed beyond Geddes's consideration and we continually find evidence of the breadth of his interests within the collections material. Here we see an example of one of his visual diagrams, for which Geddes was renowned, from a collection of his notes on the 'Seven Deadly Sins'.



Ref: University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections: T-GED11/1/59 - Notes on Seven Deadly Sins.

WHAT NEXT?

Alongside cataloguing work, one of the next stages in the project will be for the University of Edinburgh's Library Digital Development team to generate some possible options for the online resource technical infrastructure. Both institutions use open source cataloguing systems but with the University of Edinburgh Archives using ArchivesSpace (<http://archivesspace.org/>) and the University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections using AtoM (<https://www.accesstomemory.org/en/>). The peculiar systems, the legacy cataloguing styles and their inconsistencies, and also (by their very polymathic and disparate nature) the collections themselves, will present some interesting cataloguing challenges to overcome. We will require professional and innovative solutions, and perhaps even a Geddesian approach: 'Vivendo Discimus - By Living we Learn: By Creating We Think'.

Much of the early work of the project will focus on stock-taking, cataloguing and conserving the collections. However there will be lots of opportunities coming up for you to get involved in more depth with the project and the collections. If you, your organisation or someone you know would like to receive regular updates about project progress or opportunities to get involved you can request to be added to the e-newsletter circulation list by contacting the project archivist. And you can follow our progress via our project blog (<http://www.libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/patrickgeddes>) and on Twitter @GeddesEvergreen

CONTACT

Project Archivist: Elaine MacGillivray / e: elaine.macgillivray@ed.ac.uk / t: 0131 651 3778