



PATRICK GEDDES

Evergreen: Patrick Geddes and the Environment in Equilibrium

Newsletter – No. 2

May 2018

WELCOME

Welcome to the second newsletter of the Wellcome Trust Research Resources-funded project ‘Evergreen: Patrick Geddes and the Environment in Equilibrium’. This is a two-year collaborative project between the Centre for Research Collections at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections. 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.

You may have noticed that we have been quiet since our last newsletter in April 2017. This was due to a hiatus in some project activity as a result of staff absence. We are delighted to report that we are now back on track and you can expect more regular project updates from now on.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

We are over 18 months into our two-year project. Our original end date was October 2018, but we will now look to extend to summer of 2019. This change is a result of an adjustment in the work pattern of our project archivist, Elaine MacGillivray, and thanks to generous supplementary funding from our project funders, the Wellcome Trust.

In August 2017 we welcomed our project conservator, Nicole Devereux, to the project. Nicole was appointed to the project for 10 months to take forward the preservation and conservation of the collections. In early March 2018 Nicole was seconded to the University of Edinburgh’s ‘Scottish Session Papers Digitisation’ project for 3 months but will return to complete work on the Patrick Geddes collections in the summer of 2018.



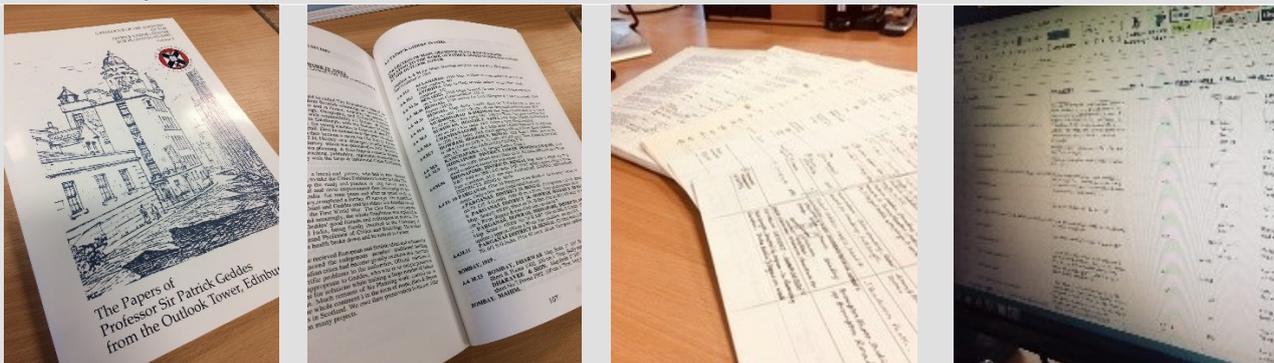
Members of our Project Management Group (L-R, Nicole Devereux, Emily Hick, Victoria Peters, Grant Buttars, Professor Murdo MacDonald) viewing the panorama frieze of Paris by Adrien Berrington, before our May 2018 meeting.

Our core Project Management Group is now complemented by the addition of Nicole, and also Scott Renton (Systems Developer, University of Edinburgh). We are very fortunate to have Emily Hick (Conservator, University of Edinburgh) providing a further advisory role.

Our Project Management Group met for the second time in August 2017, and most recently in May 2018. Smaller interim project management meetings were held twice between August 2017 and May 2018. The next Project Management Group meeting will take place in August 2018.

PROJECT PROGRESS

We have completed an extensive stock-take of 1675 archive collections items located at the University of Edinburgh. We have retro-converted 7 legacy finding aids to a single electronic catalogue dataset which contains 1272 descriptions. From this dataset we have weeded out 45 duplicate descriptions, added 310 new descriptions relating to uncatalogued material, and extracted around 40 items which constitute part of the Papers of the Association for Planning and Regional Construction (APRR). We have identified a number of missing items which we continue to try to locate or establish the reason for their absence from the collections. A crucial element of this work has been establishing, understanding and recording the collection's custodial history from the point of its creation to its point of accession. Consequently, we undertook a survey of 157 boxes of Patrick Geddes Centre records, another of the related collections in our care. A new collections arrangement and numbering system has been developed, building on the extensive work of our predecessors.



The transition from legacy catalogues to electronic datasets containing 1582 catalogue descriptions

Preparatory work to migrate the catalogue dataset to our online archives collection catalogue, ArchivesSpace, is well underway with over 62% of descriptions edited and data-cleansed. Thanks go to our project volunteer, Daisy Stafford, who meticulously and tenaciously edited and data-cleansed over 360 descriptions. We have generated and finessed the mapping of datasets to the General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)) fields on ArchivesSpace. We have also mapped our two project partner cataloguing systems AToM (University of Strathclyde) and ArchivesSpace (University of Edinburgh) to each other. Our systems developer, Scott Renton, is now working on generating a prototype for the merged technical infrastructure and has commenced design of the basic elements of the infrastructure front end.

Outstanding tasks include the generation of around 220 new catalogue descriptions, the completion of editing and data-cleansing processes, and the re-numbering of physical collections items. This work is scheduled to be completed by June 2018.

At the University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections, 11,062 archive catalogue descriptions have been assessed and we have identified 3299 descriptions which will be prioritized for enhancement. Work on enhancing those descriptions will commence in late June 2018.



Volunteers during our Conservation Crowd-Sourcing event in February 2018 at the University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections, and examples of their work and that of our project conservator, Nicole Devereux.

Our project conservator, Nicole Devereux, has achieved some prodigious feats in the months since her appointment. The collection was poorly housed in unsuitable folders and other packaging, and tearing of the paper collections had been caused by years of handling and inappropriate storage. Nicole has assessed and repaired material across 28 plan-chest drawers and 185 boxes across both project partners' holdings. A very successful 'Conservation Crowd-Sourcing' event held at the University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections in February 2018 saw 23 volunteers re-housing material into approximately 1200 archive files and across 143 boxes. Nicole has been exploring innovative conservation processes to tackle challenges in the Geddes photographic collections, where photographs have been found stuck to glass. Nicole's work was ably aided by our colleagues at the University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections, Victoria Peters, Carole Stewart and Dr Anne Cameron to whom we are indebted. We continue to grow our social media profile; don't forget you can follow project progress via the project blog (<http://www.libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/patrickgeddes>) and also via Twitter @GeddesEvergreen

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Our project archivist recently took some time out from cataloguing work to reflect on Patrick Geddes in his native Perthshire environment, visiting his childhood home at Kinnoull Hill, Perth. We continue to discover and re-discover some wonderful collections items, just a few of which are highlighted below.



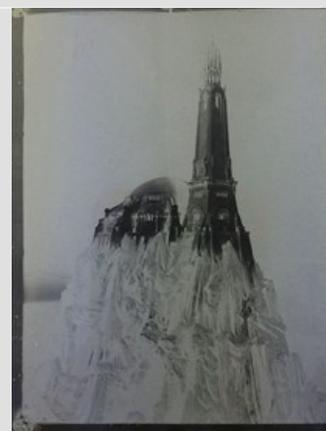
Anna Geddes, Miss Scott, Janet Cuthbertson, Norah and Alasdair Geddes at the garden gate of the former childhood home of Patrick Geddes, Mount Tabor at Perth, c.1898 (Ref: Coll-1869).



Our project archivist, Elaine MacGillivray, at the garden gate of the former childhood home of Patrick Geddes, Mount Tabor at Perth, April 2018.



Our project conservator, Nicole Devereux, discovered some incredible cyanotypes in the University of Strathclyde collections, currently described as 'unidentified plants'. (Ref: T-GED18/6/5).



Our project archivist discovered a series of uncatalogued glass plate negatives, amongst the University of Edinburgh Collections, including this one labelled 'Temple de la Pensi' (Ref: Coll-1167).

In April 2018 we were very pleased to welcome international visitors and descendants of Patrick Geddes and Frank Mears to the Centre for Research Collections. Helen Mears-Bell, the daughter of Sir Frank Mears, visited us from Canada. Marion Geddes, the grand-daughter of Patrick Geddes through his son Arthur Geddes, visited us from France with her colleague, architect and artist, Jean-Paul Andrieu. Thank you to Marion for sharing her invaluable knowledge of the Geddes family history. We are looking forward to hearing more about Marion and Jean-Paul's plans for the revived *Association Patrick Geddes France*.



Helen Mears-Bell and her husband Brian Bell viewing Geddes family photographs at the Centre for Research Collections.



Marion Geddes and Jean-Paul Andrieu viewing WH Lizars' engravings of the Great Fire of Edinburgh, 1824, which form part of Geddes's 'Survey of Edinburgh'.

WHAT NEXT?

Cataloguing work at the University of Edinburgh will wind up in June 2018, and the focus of cataloguing work will shift to the University of Strathclyde collections. Conservation work is scheduled to be completed before the end of the year. Over the summer we will be looking to develop ideas for engagement activity so please watch this space!

If you have any comments or would like to get in touch please do not hesitate to contact our project archivist, Elaine MacGillivray, contact details below.

CONTACT

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