Outlook: Exploring Geddes in the 21st Century
18-19 August 2016, Edinburgh
Conference foreword

I warmly welcome this conference, which explores the rich legacy of one of Scotland's greatest thinkers, and I applaud the launch by PAS of its Patrick Geddes Young Placemakers Award to coincide with the event.

The Award, like the conference itself, celebrates Geddes's ideas around education and going out into the world to learn with our eyes and our hearts. The investigation into both theory and practice at this event highlights the importance of moving from careful observation to targeted action.

Our heritage, our culture, our people and our places all contribute to Scotland's rich and varied character and to local and national identity. Geddes encouraged us to consider the ways in which all of these elements work together and his way of thinking continues to have considerable resonance with how we shape our policies for Scotland today.

Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

Patrick Geddes Young Placemakers Award

Here at PAS we are truly excited about our latest initiative – the Patrick Geddes Young Placemakers Award – inviting young people to think about their local places and communities and consider how they can be improved.

Using the new Place Standard Tool, over 180 students from Galashiels Academy and several young people at LinkLiving have taken part, exploring the value of places on their doorsteps.

Today participants from Galashiels Academy and LinkLiving will present their reflections and ideas to Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs.

Supported by PAS’s unique volunteer programme, young people created vibrant plans for their chosen place, all of which are on display today.

Harnessing Geddes's spirit of holistic enquiry, our new Award complements the Curriculum for Excellence - encouraging young people to think about their place as a whole and to question what’s around them.

Petra Biberbach, Chief Executive, PAS
‘Explore the venues for Outlook: Exploring Geddes in the 21st Century’
Henry McLeish, Former First Minister
Since retiring from professional football and politics, Henry has lectured widely in the United States while working as a consultant. He is an expert on European-American relations and the EU. With a planning degree, Henry continues this work as a PAS Patron.

Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs
It is Fiona’s belief that a good education and a solid foundation to life help the individual and society. Prior to her current role she was the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Life-Long Learning and has been responsible for developing visionary policies in these fields.

Ian Gilzean, Chief Architect, The Scottish Government
Working within Planning and Architecture Division, Ian is responsible for ‘Creating Places’, the Scottish Government’s policy on architecture and place. Actively involved in education for 25 years, Ian is a Visiting Professor at the University of Strathclyde.

Mike Small, Editor, Bella Caledonia
Mike is the founder of the Fife Diet local food movement, which aims to take back control of the food system. Mike is an activist, writer and publisher focusing on experimental democracy, ecology and innovation. He is Editor of Bella Caledonia.

Malcolm Fraser, Architectural Consultant
Malcolm is a Director with Halliday Fraser Munro Architects. His work with his former practice, Malcolm Fraser Architects, was celebrated for its ability to understand and promote the culture and vigour of a place. Malcolm was recently Chair of the Scottish Government’s Town Centre Review.

Phil Denning HMI, Deputy Director, Education Scotland
Phil has responsibility for links to local authorities at Education Scotland, the national body supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education. He has been closely involved in the piloting of the Place Standard in new HMI inspections.
Day 1: Session 3

13.30

Art, Space and Nature MA/MFA workshops
Students from the Art, Space and Nature MA/MFA course at Edinburgh College of Art lead three hands-on, creative workshops for participants exploring themes of place, sustainability and the urban landscape.

15.15

Professor Kiyoshi Okutsu, Emeritus Professor of Humanity at Yamaguchi University
Events related to Geddesian thought include Edinburgh-Yamaguchi (2004, Publication of the report “Patrick Geddes: By Leaves We Live” (2005 and the “Yamaguchi Valley Section” series of events held between 2009 and 2015.

15.35

Professor Bashabi Fraser, Artist

15.55

Yoshihsia Nakano, Artist and Professor at Yamaguchi University
Vice-chairperson of YICA and organiser of N3ART Lab. Heavily influenced by the work of Patrick Geddes, the theme of his presentation will be the Yamaguchi Valley Section and the revitalisation of Akiyoshidai KARST area through art.

16.15

Symposium and panel discussion exploring the relevance of Patrick Geddes today

What sparked your interest in Patrick Geddes?

“I grew up with my father telling me that PGs ‘Cities in Evolution’ remained an inspiring and prescient statement on urbanisation for all urban researchers and planners. My geographer parents met his son, Arthur Geddes, when they were researchers in the 1960s. When Murdo Macdonald pointed me to the Geddes-Tagore friendship and correspondence, there was no turning back for me.

Today I feel very close to the Geddes family, sharing their many concerns about our jeopardised planet. He is the embodiment of modern Scottish Enlightenment and a liberal humanism which is so relevant today in a world threatened by a wave of right-wing exclusivist politics.”

- Bashabi Fraser

“PAS sparked my interest in Geddes! In my By Leaves We Live PAS residency I discovered a man who had hitherto escaped me, perhaps because his vision is too great and original to be enclosed by the fences of our intellectual fields.”

- Andrew Sclater

“Growing up in Edinburgh, I attended the modernist Portobello High School and the view from the upper floors of the school was like having our own outlook tower over Edinburgh (or at least Portobello and Duddingston). This no doubt helped to spark my interest in the geography of people and place. Since that time, in my academic and professional life I’ve been fortunate to have the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the connections between folk, work and the economy as advocated by Geddes.”

- Ian Gilzean

“The great Town Planner had trained and taught as a Botanist! Here was someone who understood that the urban world was an ecosystem..”

- Malcolm Fraser
Day 2: Geddes workshops at Tweeddale Court

Step patterns, knotwork and spirals with Jade Buniak

The Evergreen Studio: 10.00 - 11.30
Use simple tools to re-create a Celtic knotwork design, inspired by one of the most famous illuminated manuscripts: ‘The Book of Durrow’. Join Jade and Sourer Fattahi later that day to transform your artwork, and poetry, into hand-bound books.

Surveying place with Stuart Watson & James Thomson

Tweeddale Court: 10.00 - 11.30
Experiment with innovative tools for surveying places and engaging communities. A chance to get to grips with the new ‘Place Standard Tool’ developed by the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture & Design Scotland.

Geddes Trail of Old Town with Hamish Neilson

Tweeddale Court: 10.00 – 11.30
Tweeddale Court: 14.00 – 15.30
Join landscape architect Hamish Neilson on an intuitive tour of Geddes landmarks. Bring walking shoes, a sketchbook and camera phone, and contribute your findings to the mapping installation at Tweeddale Court.

Mindfulness in architecture with Eileen Hall

The Saltire Society: 11.45 – 13.15
Practice mindfulness and place-awareness through an architecture lens with Eileen Hall, and pilot a new device for surveying place. Eileen runs the ‘Open-Close’ project, finding ways to adapt and improve Edinburgh’s historic closes.

Day 2: Workshops Continued

Geddes’s Thinking Machine with Dr Mairi McFadyen

The Evergreen Studio: 11.45 - 13.15
Join a conversation about the relevance of Patrick Geddes’s Thinking Machine to planning and our development as citizens. Mairi’s post-doctoral fellowship explored the relationship between place, local culture and storytelling.

Folk music writing with David Francis

Scottish Storytelling Centre: 11.45 - 13.15
Make folk music with musician, historian, educator and storyteller David Francis (TRACS). Set within the tranquil Geddes inspired gardens of the Scottish Storytelling Centre. Come and have a go – no previous musical experience required.

Paper folding and bookbinding with Sourour Fattahi

The Evergreen Studio: 14.00 -15.30
Inspired by Geddes’s legacy of experimenting, observing and learning as a device to construct and re-construct a concept, this workshop is focused on papers, and folding and unfolding, as a simple yet powerful method to creating handmade books.

Make poetry with Ken Cockburn

The Saltire Society: 14.00 – 15.30
Wake up your imagination with Edinburgh based award-winning poet Ken Cockburn. Experiment with Haiku & renga – Football haiku – Mesostics – Riddles and one-word poems. All ages and poetic abilities welcome.
Sustaining Patrick Geddes’s legacy through education

By Leaves We Live, 2013

By Leaves We Live looked at innovative approaches to raising awareness of the connection between taking planning decisions and sustaining Scotland’s natural spaces: from urban woodlands to the natural landscapes of our national parks.

Marking the Year of Natural Scotland 2013, PAS teamed up with artists and with planning professionals to reflect on places and develop a new language, and set of tools to capture public knowledge.

The project themes included Forest Restructuring, Biodiversity & Coastal Challenges, Urban Forests and Renewable Energy.

Through sculpture, drawing, poetry and photography we enabled a wider discussion on what is important to people in everyday life in relation to Scotland’s natural resources.

Place Work Folk, 2014-15

Place Work Folk introduced young people to planning and placemaking, by looking at how their own area’s heritage has led to the development of local places. Through inter-generational interviews conducted by young people, the project explored and shared the experience of older people once active in their communities.

The goal of the project was to educate young people on the historical and cultural heritage of their area, as well as to inspire them to become ‘active citizens’, while older people benefitted from handing on their knowledge.

In the Footsteps of Geddes, 2016-18

Combining modern digital technology such as 3D scanning and 360° photography, with pop-up exhibitions in project areas, participants (aged 11-25) will spark conversations about the future of their heritage.

Young Placemakers will present their illustrated plans to local communities, showing how particular heritage assets can be employed to revitalize specific places.

In line with the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence participants will have an opportunity to develop a set of comprehensive skills through group work, supporting their personal and educational development.
Identity + Belonging!

Aren't all these people accepted?


Are people proud that Glasgow is their home?

people don't really celebrate their History or culture.
Event hashtag: #OUTLOOKED

Twitter: @PAS_Tweets

Instagram: pas_place #366daysofplace

Event Partners