Restored 16th century Riddle's Court opened by



Restored Patrick Geddes Centre for Learning and Conservation

Set behind the Royal Mile, close to Edinburgh Castle, Riddle's Court is one of the earliest surviving courtyard houses in Edinburgh's Old Town and a highly significant A-listed property. As well as a visitor attraction and unique venue for conferences and events, it will become home to the Patrick Geddes Centre for Learning.

The Patrick Geddes Centre will develop an extensive international learning and conservation programme to be delivered from Riddle's Court, based on the educational ethos evolved from Geddes' Vivendo Discimus - By Living We Learn.

The property contains significant architectural features documenting its 400-year history including a rare late 16th-century painted beam ceiling, an early 17th-century plaster ceiling and a late 19th-century painted ceiling by TK Bonnar.

Over the centuries the building has also been a merchant's house, a venue for a banquet held by King James VI, aristocratic apartments, overcrowded tenements, a mechanics subscription library, emergency post-war housing, a community learning centre, and an Edinburgh Fringe Festival venue.

Many aristocratic, influential and creative people have lived or been associated with the building including King James VI, Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Sir David Hume and Sir Patrick Geddes.

As a Fringe Festival venue Riddle's Court has helped put artists centre stage early on in their careers including Dame Maggie Smith and Stephen Fry.

Una Richards, Director of SHBT, said: "We are honoured to welcome His Royal Highness to view our work at Riddle's Court and show him around the new Patrick Geddes Centre for Learning. His interests in conservation, town planning, the environment and learning closely align to the work of SHBT, Geddes and the Centre. It is exciting to bring such an important building back to life, and to find relevant and sustainable new uses for it that will benefit the people of Edinburgh and learners worldwide for many years to come."

Dame Seona Reid, Chair of HLF's Scotland Committee, said: "A remarkable 400 years of Edinburgh's history are encapsulated in the walls of this beautiful medieval building. Thanks to funding from the National Lottery, it has been restored with its features revealed and its social history preserved. Now, reflecting the principles of Sir Patrick Geddes, it will be a vibrant centre of learning for visitors from near and far to explore and enjoy."

Thomas Knowles, Head of Grants and Finance at Historic Environment Scotland said: "It's great to see the Patrick Geddes Learning Centre at this stage of unveiling and we are delighted that the funding from Historic Environment Scotland's Building Repair Grants Programme has helped to establish such a valuable learning hub in Edinburgh. It is important for buildings to find new leases of life in communities and this is a fantastic example of a sustainable re-use of a building as a great community asset."

Councillor Cammy Day, Deputy Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Today's official reopening is a very special day in Riddle's Court's history. The painstaking refurbishment over the last two years has breathed new life into this historic venue, combining sensitive repairs with fully modernised events facilities that will deliver a truly unique learning experience in the heart of Edinburgh's world famous Old Town.'

Notes to Editors

Riddle's Court

The Scottish Historic Buildings Trust project began on site in 2015 and has cost £6m, funded primarily by HLF, Historic Environment Scotland, Architectural Heritage Fund and many other Trusts and Foundations as well as generous private donors. The venue is now open as a Centre for Learning with facilities for conferences and meetings, weddings, private dining, venue hire, events, as well as a tourist attraction.

The Centre for Learning is focused on the life and work of Patrick Geddes, a father of the ecology movement, botanist, town planner and sociologist. For visitors, there also will be various tours, a small interactive interpretation centre and café – Scotts Kitchen - accessed from the Lawnmarket and Victoria Terrace respectively.

www.riddlescourt.org.uk

www.patrickgeddescentre.org.uk

The Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT)

The Scottish Historic Buildings Trust is a charity which seeks to help conserve Scotland's historic buildings at risk by providing them with a sustainable economic future. The charity transforms them into vibrant places for the benefit of local communities thereby encouraging wider regeneration.

SHBT has over 30 years' experience in preserving buildings of historic and architectural significance. Over this time SHBT has raised in excess of £30 million in Funding to provide some 30 buildings across Scotland with a sustainable future.

www.shbt.org.uk

Further information

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