Community Heritage, St Andrews, November 2019.

**A place for heritage – the Ecomuseum.**

**Peter Davis**

The UK organisation Common Ground pioneered the concept of local distinctiveness, “that elusive particularity”, the rich local heritage that often we take for granted. Common Ground argue that these features of our cultural and natural landscapes - the commonplace, the everyday heritage elements in the places we inhabit - are important in providing a sense of place and supporting local identity. They argue that ‘every place is its own living museum’ with its own ‘cultural touchstones’ that make it unique. The idea of ‘place as museum’ – exploring, identifying, valuing, and celebrating the heritage (culture, nature, intangible) within a defined territory is a central tenet of ecomuseum philosophy and practice. Equally important to the concept is community empowerment - local people decide what heritage features of ‘their place’ are important and take responsibility for their safeguarding. Peter Davis will explain the origins of the ecomuseum, and describe how it has become a global phenomenon, giving examples that show how a malleable concept has led to many diverse forms of heritage projects that utilise the term ‘ecomuseum’.