



TUESDAY MAY 27, 2025



SCRR/RSE Peter Wilson Lecture 2025

Preserving what matters: Scotland's national collections

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Scotland's national collections are a cornerstone of our scientific, cultural, and societal heritage. They support research, innovation, public understanding, and evidence-based policy. Yet, their longevity often works against them, resulting in them being taken for granted. As funding priorities shift and short-term impact is increasingly emphasised, these long-standing assets risk being undervalued.

This year's Peter Wilson Lecture, co-hosted by the RSE and the Scottish Consortium for Rural Research (SCRR), shone a spotlight on the importance of National Collections and what they reveal about key issues affecting rural Scotland.

Our keynote speaker, Helen Hardy, Deputy Head of Digital, Data and Informatics at the Natural History Museum gave unique insights into how digitising and democratising access to collections can ensure their relevance, with a response from Professor Olwen Grace (Deputy Director of Science (Collections) at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh). Panellists from the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, the Scottish Association of Marine Science, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh spoke about their national collections and the importance of preserving Scotland's collections.

Attendees were also able to explore a curated exhibition at the RSE, featuring stories and items from Scotland's collections that spoke to current rural and environmental challenges, including food systems, land use, biodiversity, health, climate, and sustainable development.

Event details
See rse.org.uk/event/preserving-what-matters-scotlands-national-collections/

Video

Watch the proceedings here:

youtube.com/live/anH9aSmDRtw?si=TwiqnI4nNUgD26SJ

