

Collaborating and Connecting with Natural History

AGM & Conference 14th & 15th May 2026 in partnership with The Ulster Museum



Thursday 14th May

10.00 – 10.20 Registration and coffee

10.25 – 10.30 Introduction & housekeeping

10.30 – 10.40 Welcome by Kathryn Thomson, Chief Executive, National Museums NI

First Session

10.40 – 11.25 Lightning talks (5 minutes each)

Chair: Patti Wood Finkle

1. **Recording the social history of the RBG Kew Herbarium and tearoom.** Nina Davies: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
2. **Post-pickling processes: what can preservation fluid chemistry tell us about protein survival in wet collections?** Tiffany Shea Slater: University College Cork
3. **World of wasps: a multidisciplinary research-based collaboration.** Alice Holloway: UCL Grant Museum of Zoology
4. **Data from recently digitised historic herbarium needs specialist cleaning before it becomes usable.** David Goyder: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
5. **Collaborating with museum studies students, to the benefit of all.** Robyn Crowther: Natural History Museum, London
6. **Preparing for mass-digitisation: lessons from Pelham-Clinton's moth collection.** Kate Holub-Swindell: National Museums Scotland
7. **The Kew carpological collection.** Clare Drinkell: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
8. **A mammoth task: stabilising and protecting fossil mammal specimens in a sustainable and access-friendly way for a large-scale collections move.** Lydia Amies & Emanuele Casafredda: Natural History Museum, London
9. **Meet the taxidermist: collaborating for innovative public engagement.** Julie Griffith: National Trust- Calke Abbey & Sarah Burhouse: Birdhouse Taxidermy

11.25 – 11.45 Coffee break, trade stands, & posters

Posters:

The natural science collections at UCC. Fidelma Butler: University College Cork

Collaborative approaches to emergency and salvage planning for collections at the Natural History Museum, London. Lucy Watkinson: Natural History Museum, London

From ice to interface: 3D scanning a woolly mammoth for preservation, movement, and public engagement. Thea Mainprize, Spyridoula Pappa, Tom Ranson & Efstratia Verveniotou: Natural History Museum, London

Second Session Colonial legacies

Chair: Eimear Ashe

11.45 – 12.05 **Reconfiguring the natural with monsters in the Dead Zoo.** Jye O'Sullivan: National College of Art and Design

12.05 – 12.25 **Fossils as Ancestors: building relationships with Indigenous communities at the Canadian Museum of Nature.** Scott Rufolo: Canadian Museum of Nature

12.25 – 12.45 **From Kenya to Kendal and back again: reconnecting communities through Kendal Museum's natural and social history collection.** Joe Rigby: University of Chester/ Kendal Museum

12.45 – 13.30 Lunch & trade stands

13.30 – 14.15 NatSCA AGM

Co-chairs: Jen Gallichan & Tannis Davidson

Reports on the running of NatSCA and elections to the Committee.

14.15 – 14.30 Short break

Third Session Collaborations

Chair: Laura McCoy

14.30 – 14.50 **High and dry: how we collaborate with a stranding network.** Amy Geraghty & Emma Murphy: National Museum of Ireland

14.50 – 15.10 **The dead plant society: a partnership project using Leeds's herbarium collection to reach new audiences.** Clare Brown: Leeds Museums and Galleries

15.10 – 15.30 **'Our Irish Natural History': increasing public engagement with natural history collections through community-driven interpretation.** Adriana Ballinger: National Museum of Ireland (Postgraduate Researcher)

15.30 – 15.50 **Collaborating with external partners to address colonial legacies and challenge the secondary school curriculum in Liverpool.** Olivia Beavers: National Museums Liverpool & Sonal Mistry: Freelance Scientific Illustrator

15.50 – 16.00 Short Break & trade stands

Fourth Session Discussion panel

Chair: Jack Ashby

16.00 – 16.50 Title

Networking and dinner

17.00 – 18.45

Informal get-together at Botanic Inn or freshening-up break

19.00

Conference dinner: Join us at the Bengal Brasserie, Lisburn Road location for dinner. **(Additional advance booking required)**

Friday 15th May

10.00 – 10.15 Registration & coffee

10.15 – 10.25 Welcome & housekeeping

First Session Conservation

Chair:

10.25 – 10.45 **The restoration of Caspian tigers in Azerbaijan for NGO IDEA campaign (International Dialogue for Environmental Action).** Jazmine Miles Long: Independent taxidermist & Bethany Palumbo: Palumbo Conservation

10.45 – 11.05 **“Hide” and seek: display context and remediation of unrecorded historic interventions in taxidermy rhinos at the Natural History Museum.** Lauren Burleson, Claire Kelly, Efstratia Verveniotou, & Erica Read: Natural History Museum, London

11.05 – 11.25 Coffee break & trade Stands

Second Session Education and Outreach

Chair:

11.25 – 11.45 **There are no silly questions – engaging and inspiring with natural science collections.** Nigel Gilmore-Cook: National Museums Northern Ireland

11.45 – 12.05 **Early curators: building connections, confidence and care through cross team collaboration and co-creation.** Lucy Maycock & Jo Hatton: Horniman Museum and Gardens

12.05 – 12.25 **Grass-roots: enterprising students collaborate to develop sustainable herbarium merchandise.** Kelly Hemmings & Katherine Duke: Royal Agricultural University

12.25 – 13.10 Lunch & trade stands

Third Session [Digitization and AI](#)

Chair:

13.10 – 13.30 Storytelling through science: how collaborative doctoral research enriches natural history collections. Cait McDaniel: Queen Mary University of London & National Museums Northern Ireland

13.30 - 13.50 Talk to the animals: using AI to allow visitors to converse with museum objects. Jack Ashby: University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge

13.50 – 14.10 For the curious and interested: collaborations to unlock the botanical collections of Sir Hans Sloane. Mark Carine: Natural History Museum, London

14.10 – 14.30 AI for environmental resilient planting: from herbarium to home garden. Carol Barrie & Yvette Harvey: The Royal Horticultural Society

14.30 – 14.50 Creating a digital collection of snail hosts for Schistosoma parasites for science and education. Adam Cieplinski: Natural History Museum, London

14.50 – 15.10 – Summary, closing chat and thank you

15.25 – 16.45 Gallery Tours (Booking details to follow)