

## FUTURES2023

### WP2 Activities report.

#### Contributing Authors:

Joel Morley, *FUTURES* project manager; Sarah Rogers and Ben Meller, Project Coordinators; Dee Smart, Project Lead; Alison Rivett, Evaluation Officer, University of Bristol  
Dean Veal, University of Bath  
Lizzie Bryant, Bath Spa University  
Lindsey Anderson, University of Exeter  
Grace Williams and Sarah Cahoon, University of Plymouth  
Anna Laila Jost, Agile Rabbit

### Activities Summary

WP2 of FUTURES2023 ultimately comprised 26 different activities and events,<sup>1</sup> designed to offer a wide range of people interesting, accessible, and appropriate opportunities to engage with research, and 350 researchers took part. We delivered a blended programme, with 19 in-person activities and 6 remote activities. This included events that were delivered online such as talks and written Q and As; and included activities that were off-line, such as radio shows; research fairs; hands-on experiments; guided walks; and a mural. This combination of activities and methods of delivery helped to mitigate against digital inequalities and provided varied ways to engage with research. To increase accessibility and inclusivity, all pre-recorded video material had closed captions, and where possible captioning was provided for live video. In total, at least 127,512 people engaged with FUTURES activities. The engagement with individual activities is described in the summary of the FUTURES2023 programme below, and in Table 1: Overview of activities.

### Management of activities

Activities were coordinated by the University of Bristol (UoB) and developed in collaboration with the University of Bath (UoBa), the University of Exeter (UoE) the University of Plymouth (UoP), and Bath Spa University (BSU).

The consortium Steering Group met regularly to discuss the development and evolution of the activities. The consortium built on the strong collaborative ethos developed since 2020 and all consortium members shared their understandings of how online delivery platforms and other methods could be utilised to provide effective engagement. The FUTURES project manager liaised regularly with staff coordinating activities for each consortium member and ensured appropriate activities were delivered in the most effective way possible.

Coordinators were in regular communication with external partners involved in delivering activities. These partners included the S.S. Great Britain in Bristol, numerous radio stations, media content creators, and artists and creative practitioners. Specific expertise was sought where appropriate, for example, when designing with consideration of neurodivergent audiences Exeter engaged expert advice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Some events had more than one session, meaning there were more activity or event sessions in total.

## Researcher Recruitment

Calls to action to recruit researchers were distributed widely to reach researchers from all faculties and career stages. At UoB, UoBa, BSU, UoE and UoP, calls to action were circulated within university-wide newsletters and networks, through university faculties and research institutes, and through groups like the Bristol Doctoral College. UoB, BSU, UoE, and UoP approached specific researchers about involvement in specific appropriate events. UoB and UoBa, UoE and UoP also sent direct emails to all participants in previous FUTURES events, and disseminated calls to action using their Public Engagement Team websites, university websites and social media. In addition, UoBa advertised training activities through the Public Engagement Unit webpage, blog, staff homepage and through social media. This helped recruit researchers who were interested in professional development opportunities. UoB circulated calls to action to recruit researchers through the GW4 Alliance, which brings together four of the most research-intensive and innovative universities in the UK: Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter. UOB also ran two drop-in sessions called 'FUTURES Bite-Sized' which gave researchers a chance to learn more about FUTURES before they applied.

Calls to action for specific activities, such as UoBa's I'm A Researcher, Ask Me Anything, were circulated by consortium partners and beneficiaries. Bath Spa sought to recruit researchers for activities organised by other partners, particularly Bath and Bristol (because of their geographical proximity). UoB and UoBa public engagement staff also promoted FUTURES2023 to researchers who they interacted with in their day-to-day work and used their working relationships with research institutes and their knowledge of on-going projects to recruit researchers. UoP utilised the relationships senior professional services staff have with researchers to invite participation and UoE presented FUTURES to Directors of Research for information to be cascaded.

In total, 366 researchers took part in FUTURES2023 WP2: 195 from UoB, 60 from UoBa, 49 from UoE, 36 from UoP, 9 from BSU and 17 from 13 other institutions. 308 researchers provided information about their gender identity: 122 identify as men; 185 identify as women; and 2 people identify as non-binary or Other.

## Researcher Support

Each partner offered a range of bespoke support and tailored advice to enable researchers to participate in their FUTURES2023 activities. Where relevant and practical partners extended this support to researchers taking part in other consortium members' activities.

All researchers taking part in UoBa activities were provided 1:1 support by the UoBa Public Engagement Unit, including several 'surgeries' for researchers who were taking part in the activities to get feedback and input on their activities as they were developing them in advance of delivery of the events. Public Engagement Unit staff were also available throughout events to assist with any technical problems and support researchers if they had any questions. The Public Engagement Unit held one training session for researchers. The session covered the basics of public engagement and how to create effective activities that engage people with research. There was an additional training session which was hosted by Steve Cross for those researchers who were participating in Science Showoff that focused on science comedy techniques. All researchers taking part in UoBa activities were able to access the Public Engagement Knowledge Hub, an online set of 8 e-learning resources, covering topics including 'How do I manage my event?' and 'How can I facilitate a workshop?'. Researchers taking part in the *I'm a Researcher Ask Me Anything* events were provided with a

briefing explaining how Reddit AMA's work and giving guidance on how to have productive interactions with reddit users.

All researchers taking part in UoB activities were given the opportunity to discuss and develop their engagement plans with the FUTURES Team and UoB Public Engagement Associates, and were encouraged to attend activity briefings where researchers could share their knowledge, ask questions and trouble-shoot problems. They were also provided with a briefing document for the activity/ies they were participating in which explained the aims and structure of the activity and offered suggestions about how they might approach it/engage their audience. Researchers were also signposted to a range of pre-recorded video modules which covered specific areas of public engagement skills and techniques which were an important feature of FUTURES, such as our module "Engaging at Festivals and Fairs". 10 researchers who were part of Researchers' Tales took part in a two-day storytelling training that integrated technique, story and scientific content to make research as accessible and impactful as possible. A full rehearsal was also held, supported by the UoB PE team. 22 researchers taking part in the Saturday Research Fair, Up Late and Schools Research Fair took part in training about how to create an engaging exhibit, and were inspired to find new ways to identify the hook in their research and gained confidence in creating an engaging exhibit through new tools and skills demonstrated in the training. 24 researchers who were doing an exhibit at the Saturday Research Fair, Up Late and Schools Research Fair took part in communications training, enabling them to practice their communication skills with peers and learn how to engage different audiences. With increased knowledge of different audiences, researchers gained a greater awareness of how to engage people at their exhibit stand. The UoB FUTURES Team provided a number of one-to-one sessions with Research Groups, and hosted two further drop-in sessions for researchers to develop their exhibit design further. Public Engagement Associates (PEA) in the Public Engagement Team at UoB provided extensive one-to-one support in developing activities as part of all our activities. PEAs also provided extensive support to researchers in refining and redrafting their material.

All researchers taking part in UoE activities were offered 1:1 support, including the opportunity to discuss and develop their engagement plans with the Agile Rabbit team, and they were signposted to online videos and written guides to help them with public engagement ideas and how to make their activity as engaging as possible. They were also given advice about how to make their offering accessible to neurodivergent visitors. In addition, a four-hour workshop, run by Maarten Koeners and Adam Lusby, was offered to researchers on 28 June at Exeter's Creative Quadrant on behalf of Agile Rabbit, and Exeter Science Centre delivered a free two-day training opportunity on Meaningful Public Engagement on 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of July. The training was funded by the Public Engagement Team and took place in-person on Streatham Campus. Agile Rabbit also contributed to Walkie Talkies by providing routes for two walks, and leading walks. The University of Exeter also covered travel and accommodation costs for UOE researchers based in Exeter to enable their participation in events in Falmouth, approximately 100 miles away. Travel was also difficult due to train strikes.

The UoP FUTURES team helped researchers to formulate their activity by providing 1:1 guidance, for example, ensuring the talks and exhibits delivered were accessible, engaging and relevant.

Researchers involved in BSU events met 3 times or more with BSU's project coordinator to discuss their activities and progress, and to answer any questions.

All partners assisted researchers with transport, logistics, and provision of necessary equipment.

## **Changes to the original programme**

### **Alterations**

#### **Pop-Up Curiosity Shop of Science and Culture – UoE-23-19-SHOP**

The Pop-Up Shop was originally planned to take place at Make Tank, a creative, community venue in the centre of Exeter. However, with the British Science Festival being held in Exeter from 7-10 September, and uncertainty about the availability of the venue, the decision was made to move the event to the vibrant, community and art space The Cornish Bank in Falmouth with UoE's Truro and Penryn Campus being nearby. This allowed UoE' researchers from all four campuses to attend the event.

Leading up to the event, one researcher cancelled their lunchtime talk 'Living Amongst Multi-Species Communities'. Another researcher had to cancel their stand 'Mapping Emergence' on Saturday morning due to a medical emergency.

#### **Why Do People Believe in Conspiracy Theories? – UoE-23-22-ODD**

The subject of the talk changed from 'An Ocean Odyssey' to 'Why Do People Believe in Conspiracy Theories?' as one of the key intended speakers for the topic withdrew her participation. To maintain FUTURES2023 presence in Exeter after the Pop-Up Shop was re-located to Cornwall, it was decided to hold the event at Exeter Phoenix instead of St. Petroc's Church in Bodmin.

#### **The Big Talk – Bridging the Divide - UOP-23-23-BIG**

The planned 2023 speaker, Professor Annika Bautz, left UOP between the bid submission and the event. The Big Talk was taken over and very successfully executed by Dr Angela Piccini, whose research spans histories of urban video art and their relationships with port planning and infrastructure.

#### **How the Sea has Shaped Us - X-UOP-23-28-SEA**

The intended venue – The Box – was not available, nor were suitable alternatives, so the decision was made to host another Voyage of Discovery event, as this has been very successful in previous years.

#### **Walking Tours – the first woman to..... UOP-23-26-TOUR**

The intended researcher was not available to deliver this walking tour. It was replaced by Dr Jodie Fisher's 'Stories in the Stone Geo Trail', a guided tour of Plymouth Royal William Yard, which had been popular in the past. The event sold out very quickly again this year and had very positive feedback from participants.

#### **Pub-lic Conversations COMBINED YR1 - X-UOB-23-13-PUB**

As per the Year 1 report, Pub-lic Conversations was originally designed to be informal talks in pubs across the city. The scope and remit of this activity changed from the bid as it was not viable option to run as many events in the new format as was listed in the bid. In Year 2 no activity occurred as the

decision was made to combine 2022 and 2023 and bill the activities as a series. This would enable us to recruit more researchers and be able to offer a larger programme to the public.

### Additions

#### **Wild Tribe Family Festival - UOP-23-31-WILD**

UOP capitalised on an opportunity to expand the FUTURES programme by adding this event, which also served as a “feeder” event to promote activities later in September across Plymouth.

#### **FUTURES Walking Tour: Research Lives and Legacies, UOB-23-30-WALK, (leaving from Cabot Circus Shopping Centre ending in Royal Fort Gardens) Adults (Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023 11:00 – 16:00)**

This brand-new activity was created as an opportunity for FUTURES to showcase the lives and legacies of research happening at the University. With a deep and rich history of research in the city, much of its murals, plaques and artwork are often not clearly understood and attributed to research and researchers at the University. Using a professional Walking Tour Guide the FUTURES team were able to ensure a range of research topics and researchers from Social Sciences, Health Science, Arts and Physics was covered during the sessions.

#### **NEXTComp Sessions with Young Bristol, UOB-23-37-NEXT, (Community Settings around Bristol) Older Children (Various dates)**

This brand new activity resulted from a conversation between a PE PEA and a research group that has engaged in many FUTURES and PE activities. The Discover Composites Sessions evolved from an exhibit at Up Late and WP3 activity Discover and Discuss and was further evolved through a new partnership with Young Bristol a Bristol-based charity. Delivering this pilot has enabled us to see how creating sessions in an agile way, creating feedback and improving the sessions can make them more sustainable and deliverable by partner organisations who have the foundations needed to reach areas of multiple indices of deprivation and young people who live in hard-to-reach areas of the city and in rural communities where there is currently no youth provision.

### Cancellations

#### **Pop-Up Walkie Talkie –UoE-23-20-WALKTALK**

Agile Rabbit scheduled guided walk and talks around Falmouth. One walk had to be cancelled three days before the event due to the researcher withdrawing. In future years, the aim is to replace lunchtime talks with more walk and talks and alleviate researcher’s hesitations by mapping routes in advance and offering to act as a walk leader.

#### **Big Quiz - X-UOP-23-27-QUIZ**

The decision was taken to cancel, due the rising costs of holding the event “in-person” (venue hire, quiz master, prizes). There was limited researcher interest and attendee sign-up. Resources were instead used to increase the scope of more impactful activities.

#### **Get the Dirt on! 2023 X. UOP-23-24-DIRT**

Due to the ReCon Soil project finishing, our specialist researchers were not available. We took the learning and the values around research in soil and made sure this was included in Voyage of Discovery.

### **Research without Borders exhibition - X-UOB-23-12-BORDERS**

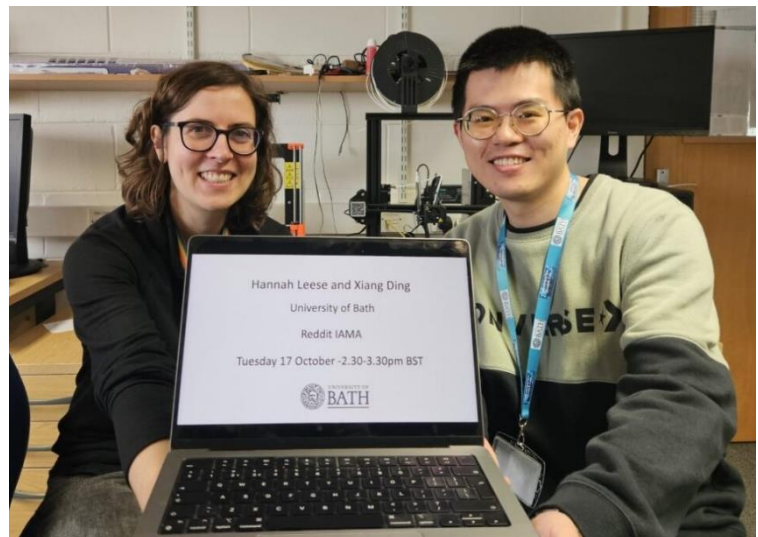
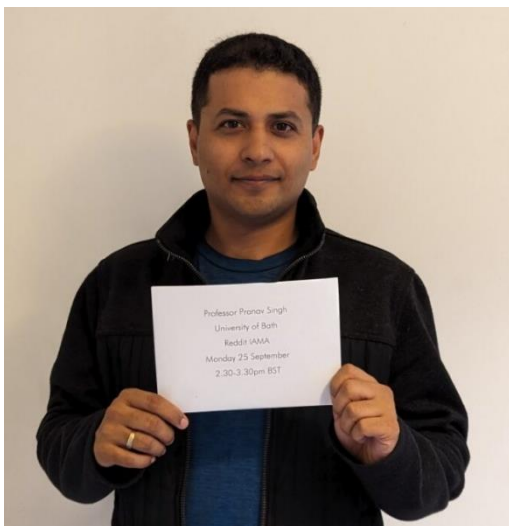
The Research without Borders exhibition was due to be delivered in 2022 and 2023 as an online exhibition focusing on online interactions, enabling the public to ask researchers questions inspired by images. This activity was due to be organised in partnership with UoBs Bristol Doctoral College (BDC). Unfortunately, due to staffing changes, BDC did not have the capacity to support the development and delivery of this event in 2022 or in 2023.

### **"Bridging Divides" activities at Up Late @ SS Great Britain Bridging Histories/Citizens Researching Together – Decolonising Memory dance workshop, Up Late, UOB-23-10-DIVIDES (SS Great Britain) Families (Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 18:00 – 21:00)**

Bridging Divides is one of four projects involved in the Citizens Researching Together (CRT) project. This sees Citizen Researchers, Community Ambassadors, Teachers and Collaborators working alongside UoB Researchers. In 2022 we delivered a programme of short talks, poetry readings and creative workshops around the topic of 'Bridging Divides'. In 2023 this programme was planned to take the form of Dance Workshops around the topic of 'Decolonising Memory' acting as a memorial to African descent people and their connections to Bristol. Sadly due to a potential planned UCU Strike the activity was cancelled by the researcher and a suitable replacement could not be found in time.

### **FUTURES2023 programme**

### **I'm a Researcher Ask Me Anything, UOBA-23-4 – Adults (Mon 25 Sept, Wed 4 Oct, Mon 9 Oct, Tues 17 Oct & Fri 3 Nov, various times)**



Users of the r/IAMA Reddit pages were invited to ask researchers questions about their work on several dates over the Autumn. Researchers then logged in and spent one hour answering questions and having conversations with Reddit users. The sessions included a range of research including artificial intelligence, developmental language disorder, fibre optics and the futures of mobile communications, quantum technologies and biomedical research specifically the creating of artificial red blood cells. In total six researchers engaged with 1,537 Reddit users.

**FUTURES Invention Challenge, UOBA-23-3 – Families with children under 12 (premiered Tues 23 Oct)**



In collaboration with the popular YouTube channel Kids Invent Stuff (62,500 subscribers), children and young people were invited to submit an invention for the *FUTURES* Invention Challenge. 11-year-old Summer's submission of an octopus wind turbine was selected by the Kids Invent Stuff team with hilarious consequences. The team worked with University of Exeter PhD student Vikki Reid to explore the features of the octopus wind turbine. The film has received 4,700 views and continues to attract views on the [Kids Invent Stuff YouTube channel](#).

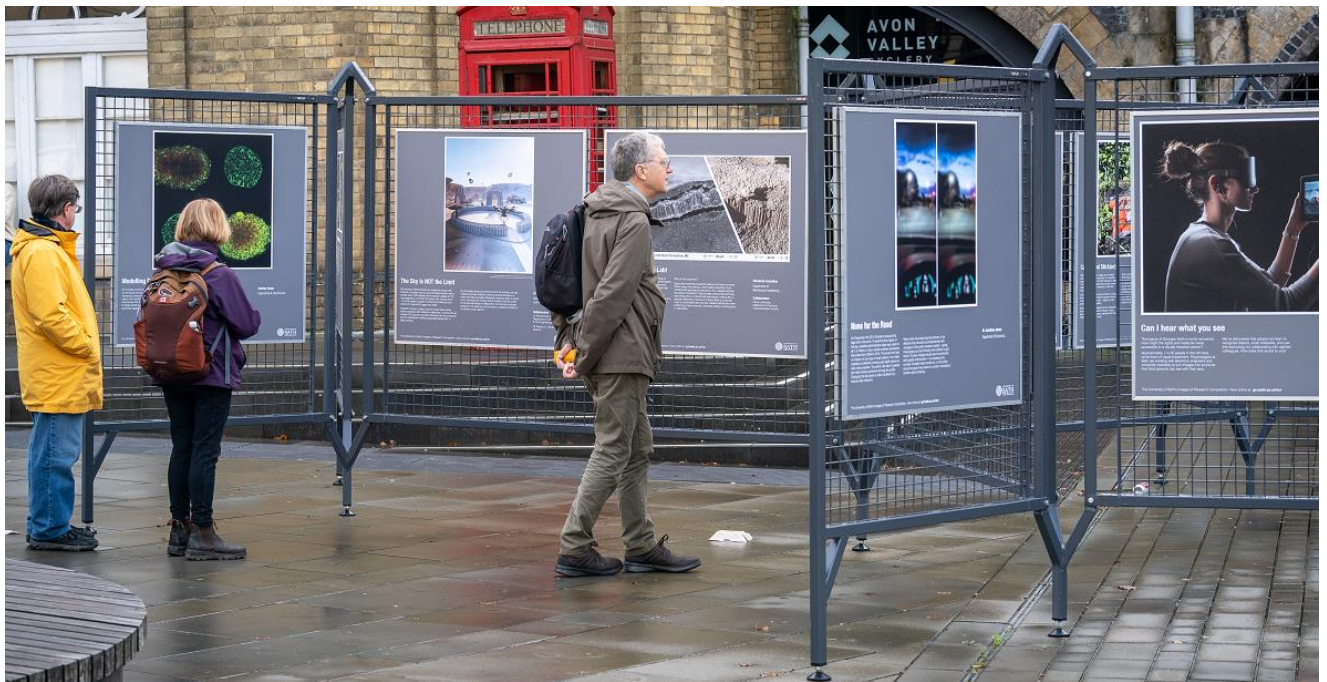
**FUTURES On Air, UOE-22-1 – Adults (various dates Sept to Dec)**



In 2023 the *FUTURES on Air* team developed an approach and a programme that built on the work since 2021 and become more responsive to the needs of both community radio stations and the programme makers. The core project team included radio practitioners Stellaria Media, Deputy Head of Public Engagement at the University of Bath and community groups from six community radio stations. The 2023 edition of *FUTURES on Air* began with a skill sharing and programme making residential weekend for 57 participants in Dartmoor on 15 and 16 September for the programme makers from the community radio stations, Stellaria Media and some key researcher collaborators. Over the course of the weekend programmes were broadcast on a dedicated channel via Totnes-based Soundart Radio. Working with three researchers and using participatory methodologies, community programme makers co-created a series of three radio programmes that explored their shared interest in a number of topics explored during the weekend including right to roam and affordable housing. A further five community radio stations across the South West from the Isles of

Silly to Bristol, were part of this project and were *FUTURES on Air* broadcast partners who broadcast these programmes and archived *FUTURES on Air* programmes across over October and November. It is estimated across the live broadcast weekend in September and the with broadcast of other *FUTURES on Air* shows on the 11 stations involved, 10,500 listeners tuned into the shows.

**Images of research, UOBA,-23-33 Adults (Weds 27 Sept – Weds 25 Oct).**



*Images of Research* displayed the results of a competition that challenged University of Bath staff to use visual imagery and a simple short description to tell people about their research and its benefits to society. 33 researchers' entries were shortlisted for the Images of Research exhibition. Originally hosted on the University campus, the exhibition moved to a central location in Bath city centre outside Bath Spa railway station and attracted an estimated 12,000 visitors over a four-week period between Wednesday 27 September and Wednesday 25 October.

**Test Tubes and Time Travel, UOBA-23-15– Families and Adults (Fri 29 Sept and Sat 30 Oct, 10:00-19:00)**





Developed as part of the 2021 edition of *FUTURES, Test Tubes and Time Travel* was relaunched in 2022 during *FUTURES* night and delivered in 2023. Test Tubes and Time Travel is an immersive location-based digital theatrical walking tour of the City of Bath led by award-winning theatre company Kilter. Participants went on a 'choose your own adventure' tour and, using innovative app-based technology on their smart phones, were taken across to the city to visit locations to discover the stories behind Bath's historic scientific pioneers. Along the way they met three contemporary scientists and engineers from the University of Bath working on some of the big issues in society today such as vaccine production, sustainable building development and technology to detect cancer. 87 people went on the walk on Friday 29 September and Saturday 30 September.

**Back to the FUTURES!, UOBA-23-38 – Families with children under 16 and Adults (Fri 29 Sept 18:00-21:00)**



Replacing the planned 2022 activity *Reimagining the Town Hall*, the *FUTURES Listening Project* worked over 2022 and 2023 in partnership with community-based organisation Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) to engage residents and community groups of the Knowle West area of Bristol. During this period KWMC were a key intermediary between the *FUTURES Festival* team, researchers and the community of Knowle West, facilitating engagement with research. Over 2022 and 2023 the team delivered several activities to better understand the topics that were of interest to the wider community at local venues such as Filwood Community Centre, Redcatch Community Garden and Springfield Community Allotments, at community-based events such as Knowle West Fest and with community groups such as Jump Youth Club. From this work the theme of the 'high streets' was identified and reflected the high level of interest within the community of the large-scale regeneration of the Filwood Broadway high street. 20 residents from the community were recruited into this project and took part in a training session with University of the West of England's Shawn Sobers to develop their skills as community researchers. Coordinated by Knowle West Media Centre, this team, made of residents of various ages, worked with The People Speak to use their Talkaoke format to collect responses from the wider community at community-based events to the key questions they were interested in around high street regeneration. These responses were showcased at a celebration event attended by 86 people at Filwood Community Centre on Friday 29 September, *Back to the FUTURES!* where the content was broadcast and an exhibition of community-sourced archive material of the area was displayed. The material collected as part of the project was also compiled into a multimedia resource that has been submitted to Bristol City Council

as part of their consultation work for the Filwood Broadway regeneration project outlining the communities' concerns and desires for the space.

**Nature-Gram, UOBA-23-32 – Adults (Tues 26 to Sat 30 Sept, various times)**



Leif Bersweden and Lucy Hodson, naturalists and Instagram content creators, went on an expedition of the South West, exploring the rich natural heritage of the region. Between Tuesday 26 and Saturday 30 September, the pair took users of the social media platform Instagram with them as they cycled, walked and travelled by train from Falmouth to Bath city centre sharing the animals and plants that are found across the South West across diverse natural habitats including urban landscapes, temperate rainforest, peatland and rocky shores. Over the course of the five days, they produced a range of video and photographic content that was broadcast on their channels and gained 84,118 active engagements which include views of videos (reels and stories) and likes, saves and comments on photos (grid posts).

**Holburne Up Late, UOBA-23-35– Families with children under 16 and Adults (Fri 30 Sept 17:00-21:00)**



Led by University of Bath's Dr Sandra Darcozi, with support from the Public Engagement Unit, the *Holburne Up Late* event explored the theme of *The Women of Bath – Past, Present, Future* and was attended by 159 people. Through an open call to colleagues at the University, researchers from the departments of Social & Policy Sciences, Mechanical Engineering and Politics, Languages & International Studies devised activities that were inspired by the museum's collection and their own research. This included exploring the issues that women face around engineering equipment designed by men, a scavenger hunt across the collections for 'hidden women', and inviting visitors to step inside an immersive Nepalese menstruation tent. In addition to these activities local theatre company Kilter took part in the event inviting people to help grow a new arboretum to replace the lost Bath suffragette arboretum and crowdsource content for a new immersive walk and visitors had the opportunity to get hands-on with a print-making workshops and create new portraits of Bath's famous historical women.

**Science Showoff, UOBA-23-16 –Adults (Fri 29 Sept, 19:30-21:00)**



Compered by professional comedian Steve Cross, *Science Showoff* is a science comedy night where researchers share with audiences the funnier side of their work and their life as a research. Five researchers from the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Leicester and Oxford and King's College London took part in the event, attended by 98 people at Bristol's Wardrobe Theatre on Friday 29 September.

**Biology in Action! – BSU-22-5-BIO, General public, (30 September 2023, 13:00 – 17:00.)**

Six researchers from Bath Spa University used the university grounds and a variety of workshops to discuss biology and biodiversity. There were 44 participants from the public, the majority of which was made up of family groups. Participants got a tour of BSU biology labs and learned about eating insects as a sustainable protein source , with the option to try mealworms, crickets, or cricket flour biscuits. They also looked at seeds under the microscope and made wildflower seed bombs that were friendly for bees. Participants also got to explore extracting their own DNA, which they ere able to keep and take home in a necklace as well as exploring different blood types and enjoy dressing up as biologists. There was also a nature tour of campus exploring forest bathing, and a bee workshop.



**Saturday Family Fair, UOB-23-11-FAMILY, (Cabot Circus Shopping Centre) Families and adults (Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023 12:00 – 16:00)**

FUTURES “popped up” in a busy city centre shopping centre in central Bristol on a Saturday afternoon. 23 researchers showcased their interactive hands-on fun activities for families and adults who were able to interact with hands-on experiments, learn new things and were excited by STEM research happening in Life Sciences, Engineering and Health Science. Families and adults were able to speak with researchers who demonstrated their interactive stalls on research topics including ‘Practice makes perfect – how movement accuracy is maintained through life’, ‘What happens in a baby’s brain?’, ‘Trust me, I’m a robot’, and ‘How (not) to get the wrong answers with health data’. A total of 237 people engaged with the exhibits.



**FUTURES Walking Tour: Research Lives and Legacies, UOB-23-30-WALK, (leaving from Cabot Circus Shopping Centre ending in Royal Fort Gardens) Adults (Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023 11:00 – 16:00)**

Guided by professional Walking Tour Guide, Steve Mynard, the FUTURES Walking Tour: Research Lives and Legacies explored blue plaques, statues, buildings and art installations showcasing research that has happened at the University. The walking tour showed how the legacies of Researchers' past influence research happening today. Delivered at 11:00 and 14:00 these two-hour walks were attended by 39 adults and were designed in such a way to be accessible to all adults by choosing a route that avoided steps and dropped curbs.



**Up Late, UOB-23-8-LATEFAIR, (SS Great Britain) Families (Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 18:00 – 21:00)**

On Friday evening, FUTURES “took over” the grounds of Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s historic ship, the SS Great Britain. Families visited for free (normally SSGB costs £48 for a family) and took part in a host of fun interactive hands-on demonstrations. Families received a map which led them through different areas of the SS Great Britain grounds through the Ship itself, the Being Brunel Museum, and the Virador Theatre. The 66 researchers from University of Bristol and University of Bath were based amongst the maritime exhibits and immersive historical environment. The 12 research exhibits included titles such as; ‘Be a Heart Surgeon and Cardiologist’, ‘Known Unknowns: You Be The Judge!’, and ‘Seeing is believing?: Visual illusions, compression and immersive technologies’. We also had five workshops and exhibitions where visitors could be further involved in activities, including ‘The Untapped Stories project: unlocking pandemic experiences through creativity’; ‘Swallowed by a whale! Imagination and poetry’ and ‘Poster Making with Resilience Through Nature’. Visitors could also attend *Researchers Tales* in the Library. The evening was attended by a diverse range of local families, particularly those with younger children, young people and adults attending with friends. Coach travel was also provided for four diverse communities in Bristol. A total of 367 people attended.



**Researchers' Tales - Up Late, UOB-23-9-TALES, (SS Great Britain) Families (Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 18:15 – 20:30)**

A group of nine researchers from UoB doing research in Engineering, Social Sciences and Law; Arts; and Science performed short stories about their research careers in the Library on the grounds of the SS Great Britain. Their stories and delivery were developed with a professional storyteller over a two-day training course to prepare the researchers. The stories aimed to explain their research and their lives as researchers to help break stereotypes. The researchers, compered by a professional performer, performed their short stories which created an intimate atmosphere for visitors to discover the people behind the research. A total of 77 people attended the Tales.



**Schools Research Fair, UOB-23-7-SRF, (SS Great Britain) School Children (Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023 09:30 - 14:30)**

The Schools Research Fair for Bristol Secondary schools (11-13 year olds) took place over two sessions (09:30-11:00, 10:30 – 12:30 and 13:30 – 14:00) with 48 researchers engaging 118 children and 16 teachers on 12 exhibits. Sessions were attended by secondary school students. 12 interactive stalls covered a variety of research topics including robotics, poetry and plant biology. School children met researchers and explored the impact of cutting-edge research across 4 faculties through hands-on activities. The students also explored a range of STEAM careers and met role models, with researchers from a range of backgrounds taking part. As in previous years, schools from low socio-economic backgrounds and in areas with low uptake of higher education were prioritised and free coaches provided. Additionally, two schools brought pupils with additional educational needs to a quieter more focussed session.

**NEXTComp Sessions with Young Bristol, UOB-23-37-NEXT, (Community Settings around Bristol) Older Children (Various dates October 2023)**

The NextCOMP project designed and delivered a pilot programme of sessions in collaboration with a new partner, Young Bristol. This 2-hour, co-created “Discover Composites” interactive workshop went on tour with Young Bristol’s ‘Youth Club on Wheels’ youth provision to enthuse and excite older children about this engineering topic. The sessions were delivered to older children in underserved areas across Bristol including Henbury, Speedwell and Brislington. In total 3 members of the NextCOMP team participated (an academic, a researcher and a Professional Services staff member), delivering workshops to 30 young people. Throughout the duration of the project both Young Bristol and the NextCOMP team posted lots of social media updates which were very well engaged with, with several news items being posted and circulated including a [news item on Young Bristol's website](#) following the wrap-up of the final session as well as [an article in the bi-annual Bristol Composites external newsletter](#) which is circulated to over 1100 recipients.

**Do Try This At Home, UOB-23-DTAH, Online (Website), Children, (September 2022 to end of project, with updates in 2023).**

Do Try This At Home resources created in previous years remained available on the FUTURES website during the FUTURES 23 activity period. These resources comprise activity sheets based on different research topics with instructions that carers could download and do at home with children. These resources could be printed out and completed using everyday household items. Children completing the activity were also given a completion certificate to download. UoB continued its position as a Children’s University learning destination, [Children's University \(childrensuniversity.co.uk\)](#), where any child completing a resource activity are able to gain credits against their learning journey. 22 resources were made available by 31 researchers from 7 institutions across the UK. These resources were accessed a total of 124 times in the 2023 period.

**Pop-Up Curiosity Shop of Science, Art, and Culture, UoE-23-19-SHOP – families, young people, children, older people (30 Sept & 1 Oct 2023, 10:00 – 16:00.)**

The Pop-Up Shop took place at the popular and vibrant community arts space *The Cornish Bank* in the centre of Falmouth, Cornwall. To make the most of the space and the central location, musicians, including an all-female saxophone band and a kora player, attracted passers by from outside the building. With members of staff and student volunteers positioned on the high street,



people of all ages were invited to drop-in to this multi-event, mini research fair. Forty researchers from the University of Exeter set up interactive demonstrations and workshops using the venue's indoor and outdoor space and lunchtime talks were held between 12-2 P.M. Two creative workshops took place at a separate community space, Fairwinds, to encourage neurodivergent families to join in on the weekend activities. Two further spaces, The Church Hall and The Poly, served as Quiet Spaces during the event and were within a short walking-distance from the venue. An Accessibility Guide was created and circulated in advance to local schools, and made available on the Agile Rabbit website.

Visitors not only had the chance to immerse themselves in hands-on activities, but also to speak to scientists from a range of backgrounds and disciplines about their research, art, life, and career. Research topics included a VR experience of Antarctica, conservation efforts to protect red kites in the UK, new developments in solar and wave energy, climate poetry, cancer research, and astrophysics. At least 1,302 people engaged with the variety of activities accessible for everyone from young to older ages.





**Pop-Up Shop Mural, UoE-23-19-MURAL - families, young people, children, older people (30 Sept & 1 Oct 2023, 10:00 – 16:00.)**

Artist Marta Zu spoke to the 40 researchers involved in the Pop Up Shop to paint a mural on the shop window, viewed by an estimated 10,000 people. Locals and (international) tourists who passed by the Pop Up Shop had the chance to watch the creative process as the mural was created, and to talk to the artist, who incorporated ideas and reactions from the Pop-Up Shop visitors.



**Walkie Talkies Across Falmouth, UoE-23-20-WALKTALK – children over the age of 10, adults, older people, neurodivergent families, rural communities in Cornwall (30 Sept & 1 Oct 2023, multiple times)**

Four UoE researchers each led a nature and sustainability-themed Walkie Talkie, which together attracted 61 people. Alongside Plastic Free Falmouth, a researcher engaged a small audience in the efforts of tackling plastic pollution on the Galapagos Islands whilst picking litter on Castle Beach. The walk to Kimberley Park specifically focused on the Asian Hornet invasion threatening bee populations in the UK. Rapport between the speaker and the audience was built quickly, and a lively conversation was had. The walk on fungi, mushrooms, and the human cell proved to be most popular, attracting families, older people, and adults. They learned about the different sizes of fungi

(from microorganisms to large fungi in North America), and how fungi can not only just be found outdoors, but are part of fabric processes, too. A gentle walk along Falmouth docks saw a group of people learn about the pharma industry, our medications, and the pollution it causes. Audience totals were hindered by inclement weather and it appears the length of one walk affected attendance.



**Why Do People Believe in Conspiracy Theories? – UoE-23-22-ODD Intended audience, (November 2023, 13:00 – 14:00.)**

3 researchers took part in this live panel talk, attended by 70 people. The topic was on the psychology behind conspiracy theories, why they seem to hit the headlines every year, why they are popular and whether they are dangerous. We allowed a third of the time for audience questions to help break down the barriers between researchers and public. This took place at the community and art centre, The Exeter Phoenix, right in the centre of Exeter, which made it accessible for Exeter's community.

**Wild tribe Family Festival: UOP-23-31-WILD – families with children of all ages, (16 September 2023, 10:00-16:00)**

The Wild Tribe Family Festival event took place on Saturday 16 September at 10:00-16:00 at Devonport Park. The PE officer, with the help of plant researcher – Chloe Betts, colleagues from the R&I Directorate and student ambassadors, led a series of interactive demonstrations and engagement activities around soil and plant science. These included prepared planting activities, making your own mini greenhouse, crafts, word searches, colouring and seed finding for visiting

families. We used this event to promote and drive sign-ups to our all our other **Futures23** events. We gave away over 200 seeded compostable wristbands with **Futures23** QR codes to our events, example below:



218 people from a wide range of age groups, including parents, guardians, toddlers, teenagers, dog walkers and local community groups, took part in the activities on the day. The event was made accessible by setting up the activities under shelter in a specific marked area in Devonport Park:



### **The Big Talk – Screening the Future: UOP-23-23-BIG - Discover Plymouth’s urban heritage through Film, (27 September 2023, 18:00-19:30)**

The Big Talk took place on Wednesday 27 September at 18:00-19:30 in Plymouth Athenaeum. This interactive, engaging event looked at Plymouth as a City in the past, in the present and what it might look like in the future. Lead researcher Dr Angela Piccini, helped by Sefryn Penrose and Joanne-Dorothea Smith along with specialist archivists from The Box Plymouth - Archives and Collections, took archive film and photos – showcasing them on a large screen in front of an audience and conducted a discussion panel, involving the audience to frame views and memories from the past and what our city could look like in the future. To finish the discussion, the audience had been pre-invited to send in a 30 second video of a part of Plymouth that held a particular interest or memory for them. The audience member was then invited to speak about their video and what it meant to them.

Using the local theatre in the city centre - [Plymouth Athenaeum](#) made the event suitable for bookings and walk-ins. 29 people attended (it is worth noting, the weather was storm conditions!). The Futures team, along with 2 student ambassadors and 3 researchers helped ensure the event was smooth running and successful.



**Stories in the Stones - GEO Walks: UOP-23-26-TOUR - adults, (30 September 2023, 10:00-15:00)**

51 people joined geologist [Dr Jodie Fisher](#) for a walking adventure through time – 380 million years, in fact! The guided [Geo Trail](#) took our audience on a journey of discovery about Plymouth’s once-tropical climate. They saw the evidence of ancient sea creatures and felt the fossilized remains of old coral reefs. The audience discovered Drake’s Island was formed from volcanic rock and that you can fossil hunt in Plymouth.

Jodie hosted 3 1-hour tours at the [Royal William Yard](#), taking in surrounding areas of the Southwest Coast Path, the natural landscape of Devil’s Point, and the building blocks used to create Royal William Yard’s grand buildings. Jodie’s take on the [Geo Trail](#) revealed the stories in the stones, whilst sharing fascinating facts and tips to spot the fossils. Jodie was supported by the Futures team, colleagues from R&I and student ambassadors.



**Voyage of Discovery: UOP-23-26-VOYAGE - families, (30 September 2023, 10:00 – 16:00)**

The Voyage of Discovery 2023 took place on Saturday 30 September from 10:00 -16:00 at the Plymouth Guildhall, a prestigious venue in central Plymouth, located close to the main shopping area in central Plymouth. Both the location and the venue are accessible to families.

Families were invited to drop-in and learn about the immersive world of science, technology, and art in an interactive showcase for all ages. 28 researchers delivered 11 stands offering hands on activities and talks in topics such as robotics, history, the environment, and even dentistry. Families were able to discover the wonder of science, technology, and art and met our delightful talking robotic pets including Pepper – the world’s first social humanoid robot. The Futures team, student ambassadors, along with UoP colleagues helped the event run smoothly. 859 people attended the event; the majority were families, along with some students and older people.



**Future Neighbourhoods: UOP-23-29-SHAPE – families and younger people, (30 September 2023, 12:30 – 16:00)**

Plymouth Pioneer Professor Katharine Willis joined forces with Nudge Community Builders to delve into the future of inclusive neighbourhoods and discover the power to create thriving communities for all citizens. A lunch of Ethiopian street food provided by Jabulani, an introductory talk and a 2-hour hands-on workshop at The Plot covered the work that’s going on in Plymouth to build strong and sustainable neighbourhoods and demonstrated how technology became a catalyst for building strong and sustainable neighbourhoods. The learning was about new tools and technologies that help people live in a more smart and sustainable community. Each participant created a miniature model to take home.

The workshop was open to all, and a total of 63 people (included families and younger people) attended lunch and stayed for the workshop. Katharine was supported by the Futures team, 2 Researchers from Katharine’s team (including William B Milon) and student ambassadors.



**Table 1: Overview of activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
A Voyage of Discovery	UOP-23-36-VOYAGE	<i>Guild Hall, Plymouth</i>	859
Ask me Anything	UOBA-23-4-AMA	<i>Online</i>	1537
Back to the FUTURES	UOBA-23-38-LIST	<i>Bristol</i>	86
Biology In Action	BSU-23-5-BIO	<i>Bath Spa Campus</i>	44
Do Try This At Home	UOB-23-6-DTAH	<i>Online</i>	124
FUTURE Neighbourhoods	UOP-23-29-NEIGH	<i>Plymouth</i>	63
FUTURES on Air	UOE-23-1-ONAIR	<i>Radio</i>	10500
Holburne Up Late	UOBA-23-35-HOLB	<i>Holburne Museum, Bath</i>	159
Images Of Research	UOBA-23-33-IMAGES	<i>Bath Spa Train Station</i>	12000
Legacies of Research Walking Tour	UOB-23-30-WALK	<i>Bristol</i>	39
Naturegram	UOBA-23-32-NATURE	<i>Online</i>	84118
NEXTComp and Young Bristol	UOB-23-37-NEXT	<i>Various in Bristol</i>	30
Pop Up Mural	UOE-23-19-MURAL	<i>Make Tank, Exeter</i>	10000
Pop-Up Curiosity Shop of Science and Culture	UOE-23-19-SHOP	<i>Make Tank, Exeter</i>	1,302
Researchers' Tales - Up Late	UOB-23-9-TALES	<i>S.S. Great Britain, Bristol</i>	77
Saturday Family Fair	UOB-23-11-FAMILY	<i>Bristol City Centre</i>	237
Schools Research Fair	UOB-23-7-SRF	<i>S.S. Great Britain, Bristol</i>	134
Science Showoff	UOBA-23-16-SHOW	<i>Bristol City Centre</i>	98
Stories in the Stones Geo-trail walking tours	UOP-23-26-TOUR	<i>Royal William Yard, Plymouth</i>	51



Test Tubes and Time Travel	UOBA-23-15-TTTT	<i>Bath City Centre</i>	<i>87</i>
The Big Talk 23	UOP-23-23-BIG	<i>Plymouth</i>	<i>29</i>
The FUTURES Science Show (Kids Invent Stuff)	UOBA-23-2-INVENT	<i>Online</i>	<i>5218</i>
Up Late	UOB-23-8-LATEFAIR	<i>S.S. Great Britain, Bristol.</i>	<i>367</i>
Walkie Talkies	UOE-23-20-WALKTALK	<i>Exeter and region</i>	<i>61</i>
Why Do People Believe in Conspiracy Theories	UOE-23-22-ODD	<i>Phoenix Theatre, Exeter</i>	<i>74</i>
Wildtribe Children's Festival	UOP-23-31-WILD	<i>Plymouth</i>	<i>218</i>