# Happy Birthday! At-Bristol Science Centre Turns 15!

**Thursday 23 July, 2015**

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**Happy birthday! At-Bristol Science Centre turns 15!**

At-Bristol Science Centre, one of the UK's leading interactive science centres, turns 15 years old at the end of this month. At-Bristol will be celebrating with guests, staff and visitors during their next 'Hello' Community Open Weekend on 25 & 26 July where visitors from Southmead will be able to visit At-Bristol for free! (Upon presenting a flyer they will have received through schools and children's centres).

Opening in 2000 as a Landmark Millennium project, At-Bristol's vision as an educational charity is to "make science accessible to all"; encouraging visitors to investigate and engage with science, technology, engineering and maths by inspiring and developing their curiosity.

An award-winning science centre, At-Bristol has welcomed over 4 million visitors since opening in 2000, and currently receives over 277,000 visitors a year, including over 60,000 school visits. The lively and enthusiastic staff and volunteers all play an integral part in At-Bristol's charitable aims through the delivery of a wide range of frequently changing hands-on activities and events within the venue (from explosive live science shows, to hands-on experiments and trips around the Solar System in the Planetarium), but also extending out into the city region through a series of regular community open weekends, and outreach projects working with community groups and sites around Bristol.

At-Bristol houses 270 hands-on exhibits, including a working science kitchen and greenhouse lab, an open access laboratory 'Live Lab', and the Studio, a theatre space used for presenter-led science shows. It has recently unveiled the UK's first 3D digital Planetarium which allows visitors to explore the universe without leaving their seats. In partnership with the Bristol Is Open project, the Planetarium will also enable business users, academics and the city to explore the exciting new format for high impact, immersive data visualisation. School visitors benefit from a range of curriculum-related workshops delivered in the suite of classrooms and labs. The flexible venue hire spaces throughout the building and outside in Millennium Square and Anchor Square all contribute to the At-Bristol experience.

Now in its teenage years, At-Bristol is deeply connected in the city, working with many collaborative partners including Bristol Is Open, Bristol City Council, Bristol 2015, the University of Bristol, UWE and the Watershed. Recognised as a centre for learning At-Bristol is currently working with Bristol City Council as part of the Learning City initiative, which includes looking at ways to get out and about in the city more often, inspiring even more people about science.

Looking forward, At-Bristol is working on a new exhibition, planned for summer 2016, where visitors will be able to tinker, build and make their own science infused creations, using a laser cutter or getting hands on with electronics. And visitors to At-Bristol next year can expect a few robot encounters along the way - watch this space!

At-Bristol has recently appointed Anna Starkey in a newly created Creative Director role, which aims to bring science and art closer together. In a first for science centres, from the end of this summer, At-Bristol will become the home base for the British Paraorchestra - the world's first ensemble of professional disabled musicians. Anna said "I think the next 15 years for At-Bristol are going to be very exciting - there's incredibly interesting and creative work going on where science, art and technology meet - the future holds a wonderful merged culture of creative collaborations."

At-Bristol's Chief Executive Phil Winfield added: "We've certainly come a long way from where we started in 2000, and we've got some exciting plans in the pipeline. Our aim is to inspire the scientists of the future, and by creating a stimulating and inspiring atmosphere where people of all ages can learn together, we're igniting curiosity. We'll be continuing to build on our relationships within the city, and to look for new and creative opportunities. We have exciting and ambitious plans for the future that will see At-Bristol embedded in many initiatives in the city."

At-Bristol will be celebrating its 15th birthday on the weekend of 25 & 26 July, during the next 'Hello' Community Open Weekend. Visitors from Southmead will be able to visit At-Bristol for free, (upon presenting a flyer they will have received through schools and children's centres) and will be invited to come and enjoy some birthday celebrations throughout the weekend! For more information, please visit www.at-bristol.org.uk

**-ENDS-**

**About At-Bristol - notes to Editors:**

Images are available (including archive images) - please contact Jen Forster, PR Manager for At-Bristol, on 0117 9157 152/07967 334 152 or jen.forster@at-bristol.org.uk.

**About At-Bristol Science Centre:**

1. **1. Press Trips:** If you are interested in writing a review of At-Bristol and require press tickets, please e-mail press@at-bristol.org.uk, providing media details and proposed dates of visit
    1. **2. At-Bristol** is a leading science centre in the UK and a major player in the worldwide science centre movement with over 277,000 visitors a year, including over 60,000 school visits.
    2. **3. At-Bristol** runs its own YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/atbristol), which is the most subscribed science centre channel in the world withalmost 10,000 subscribers.
    3. **4. At-Bristol** makes and develops new exhibitions for Science centres and schools worldwide to purchase and hire, and won the tender to design, develop and build the London2012-inspired touring exhibition, In the Zone, on behalf of the Wellcome Trust ahead of many major exhibit developers in the UK.
    4. **5. At-Bristol** aims to be a world-class science centre that makes a distinctive, valued and recognised contribution to science learning and public engagement with science across Europe.
    5. **6. A registered charity**, At-Bristol has hosted over four million visits since its opening in June 2000 and continually strives towards making science accessible to all.
    6. **7. At-Bristol** receives no central government funding and support from visitors, members, corporate partners and donors means it can continue to make science relevant and fun for future generations.
    7. **8. At-Bristol** has achieved a 27% reduction in energy over 5 years, which won us a West of England Carbon Challenge Carbon Champions for four consecutive years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, and we continue to work towards further goals across all areas of sustainability. At-Bristol is currently one of the most innovative sustainable buildings in the country; we were awarded Silver in the South West Tourism Excellence Awards 2012, a Gold Green Tourism Business Scheme Award, and won bronze in the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence 2014.

You can also follow At-Bristol on Twitter (@AtBristol) or on Facebook (atbristolfans)

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