

# Bristol former railway station turned into creative space

13 July 2022



CHARLES EMERSON  
Mangotsfield Station closed in 1966

**A mission to bring life back to a disused former railway station platform has led to a creative arts project.**

Mangotsfield Railway Station in Bristol will play host to a 12-month series of creative commissions by local artists.

The Mangotsfield Folly programme has been developed around a purpose-built folly structure.

"We want to let people to take ownership of the site's rich history," said folly architect, Rob Elkins.



CHARLES EMERSON  
The folly structure built by Artel 31 Architects will host the project

Once a stop on the railway route between Bristol and Birmingham, Mangotsfield Station closed in 1966.

Its remains now form a distinctive part of the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, which was opened by Sustrans.

"Mangotsfield Folly hopes to encourage more people, whether they are walking or cycling past, to visit this beautiful place," said Mr Elkins.

"We want to evolve the complex history of the site with artistic and architectural concepts."

The programme includes a series of artist takeovers, performances and workshops.



CHARLES EMERSON  
The first takeover was by artist duo Lucas Antics

The project has been funded by Arts Council England and Emersons Green Town Council, and led by freelance curator Suzanne Heath and Mr Elkins from Artel 31 Architects.

"I'm a massive fan of street architecture, the temporary nature of it," added Mr Elkins.

"I firmly believe that structures are better when they evolve and respond to their environment, and I can't wait to see how different people take on the folly and interpret its surroundings."



CHARLES EMERSON  
Mangotsfield Folly sits next to the Bristol to Bath Railway Path

Paul Fearnside and Alex Lucas, an artist duo from Bristol that form Lucas Antics, performed the first takeover.

"We decided to paint a mural that focused on hidden worlds, looking at insects that might be seen as rogue, like slugs and snails," said Mr Fearnside.



CHARLES EMERSON  
The duo hope their instalment will 'bring joy'

"We wanted to think about the fantastic universe they might live in while we are not looking, and the mischief they might get up to.

"There is so much natural, undisturbed life around the folly thanks to its disused nature, and we wanted to play with that."

There has been an open call for a series of bursaries for emerging local artists to takeover the site.



CHARLES EMERSON  
The project will run until April 2023

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