



Herschel Museum of Astronomy and Bath Preservation Trust

Shortlisted for Family Learning to Support STEM in partnership with Maths on Toast

The Herschel House Trust (HHT) aims to provide inspiration, learning and enjoyment for all, and through interpretation, demonstration, collecting, research and conservation engage everyone in the life and work of the Herschels, encourage interest in astronomy, science and music, and the rich social history of Bath. The Herschel Museum of Astronomy is dedicated to the achievements of the Herschels: distinguished astronomers and talented musicians. It was from this house that William discovered Uranus in 1781.

Pop-up planetarium experience

The Herschel Museum of Astronomy ran free planetarium shows with STEM workshops running alongside them for local families to take part in. The show and workshop aimed to support families' understanding of the importance of the Herschels' discoveries and show how their legacy shapes modern space exploration – making links with current space missions which use technology made possible by William Herschel's discovery of infrared, thus showing how STEM is vital in everyday life and careers. The activities ran alongside the planetarium shows enabled people to further their understanding of the scale of the solar system, find constellations and understand the importance of preserving dark skies.

An immersive pop-up planetarium brought astronomy to life for families at the museum, in schools, libraries and community centres. Through film, families were able to see what was right above their heads at night in their local areas and follow a journey through space with close-up views of the planets, making the audience feel as though they were really flying through Saturn's rings.

Activities that families took part in encouraged children to investigate the scale of the solar system and develop their problem-solving skills. Younger children were able to get creative and investigate constellations using a range of materials including marshmallows, stickers and pens.

Removing barriers to stargazing

The team collaborated with Bath Astronomers which allowed them to give families from a variety of backgrounds the opportunity to have a go at astronomy.

Free access to the planetarium shows was offered in libraries and a local community centre for disadvantaged families in Bath. For many, this was their first interaction with astronomy and removed some of the access and financial barriers to encourage participation, inspire engagement with science and build relationships with their local museum.



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The accompanying craft workshop activities engaged even the youngest members of the audience in the subject. Through engaging with families, the museum was able to share them other opportunities in the area and promote ongoing interest in STEM.

Expanding the astronomy audience

Going forward, the planetarium show forms a key part of the museum's learning programme for the year ahead. The team plans to continue to reach new audiences by using community spaces as well as running events in schools. In collaboration with the Bath Astronomers, new content is being created – focusing on different aspects of space exploration and astronomy, especially for younger audiences.