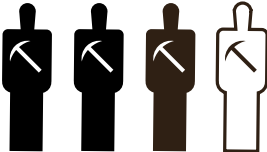
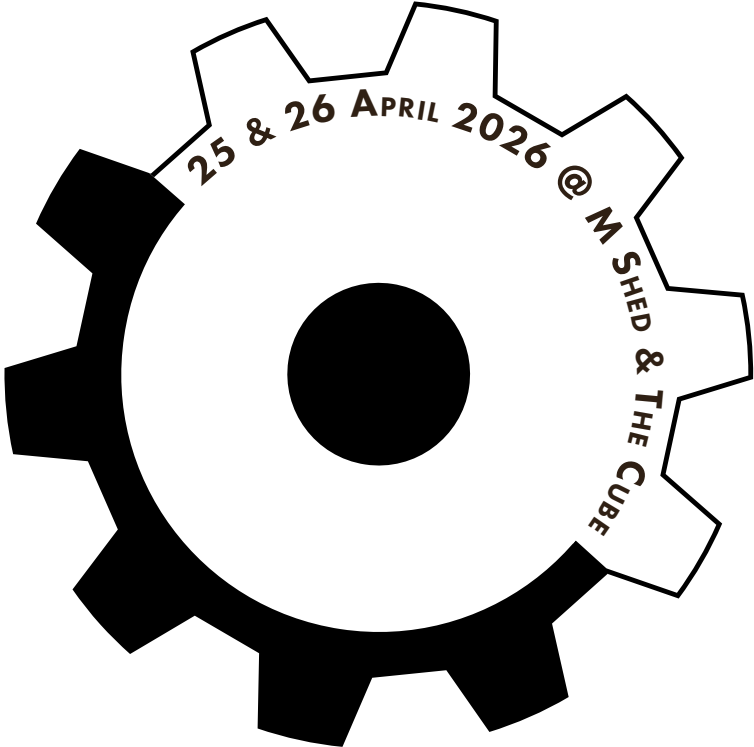


BRISTOL RADICAL HISTORY FESTIVAL



*General Strike 1926
Propaganda
Welsh Risings
Utopias*



Bristol Radical History Festival 2026

Welcome to the eighth Bristol Radical History Festival! Two days at two main venues: Bristol's social history museum on the city's historic harbourside, M Shed; and the volunteer-run arts centre and cinema the Cube Microplex.

radical /'rædɪkəl/ adjective 1.(especially of change or action) relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough. 2.characterized by departure from tradition; innovative or progressive.

Themes

AT M SHED ON SATURDAY 25

- # 1 General Strike 1926** Arguably the greatest ever mass mobilisation of the British trade union movement. It lasted nine days and ended in defeat. So what is there to celebrate?
- # 2 Propaganda** By revealing much that has gone unsaid and unheard our speakers will seek to dispel false historical narratives and shine some light on the darker side of our past.
- # 3 Welsh Risings** The history of Wales in the nineteenth century is framed by the huge social changes associated with the industrial revolution and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of proletarians to work in mines, iron works and transportation. It is also a history marked by working-class uprisings...



#4

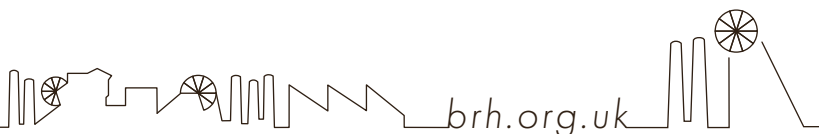
Utopias Utopian thinking is oft derided as wishful thinking, whimsical, even useless. We live in an age of dystopian visions: AI, robot overlords, devastating climate change, corruption and inequality creating a split society of the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. But can utopian thinking propel us into a bountiful future?

Bristol Radical History Group

BRH.ORG.UK

Founded in 2006, BRHG has organised more than 500 events including talks, walks, film screenings, archive days, historical recreations, gigs and fireside story telling. We have also published over 80 pamphlets and books and have a number of active research projects. BRHG organises events across Bristol and the South West, hosting local, national and international speakers. We seek to open up history so that it is relevant and real and to make it engaging and accessible for all.

BRHG are a non-profit, volunteer-run organisation and take no funding from business, political parties, local government or universities. Instead, to break-even, we rely on our members giving their labour for free, sales from our bookstall and donations. So, to help us fund and organise events like this, please buy a book or two (or three) from our bookstall.



#1:—General Strike 1926

Level 2—Harbourview suite

- 10 : 30** **The General Strike in Bristol: an introduction** (Rob Whitfield & Henry Fowler) will cover the events of those nine days in Bristol, put them in their national context and look at the miners' lock-out which began before and lasted longer than the General Strike.
- 11 : 45** **The General Strike in Gloucester and Swindon** (Tony Conder & Stuart Butler) The Swindon GWR 'railway servants' were anything but servile during the strike. And the Gloucester dockworkers showed a cheeky gallantry.
- 13 : 00** **"An industrial Red Cross"** (June Hannam) How the 'Women's Committee for the Relief of Miners Wives and Children' was set up and the efforts of Labour women to organise relief in the southwest and the support they gave in Bristol and in Radstock.
- 14 : 15** **The 1926 miners' lockout in the Forest of Dean and the Somerset coalfields** (Ian Wright & Dave Chapple) Ian will discuss the use of rough music and direct action by miners' wives and Dave's talk will cover the 'Nine Days' and the seven month's lockout that followed in Somerset.
- 15 : 30** **Reflections on the General Strike** (Chris Bowkett, Sheila Caffrey, Henry Fowler, Steve Mills) What should we learn from the 1926 General Strike and what might a 2026 General Strike look like? Why does the labour movement memorialise our failures rather than our victories? What is the relevance of 1926 today?

#2:—Propaganda

Level 1—Studio 1 & 2

- 10 : 30** **War on Democracy: Loyalist Propaganda in Britain after the French Revolution** (Steve Poole) Were the British democrats of the 1790s defeated by legal onslaught and mob violence? Or had they already lost the battle of ideas in a propaganda war?
- 11 : 45** **Curating the Colonial Past** (Riley Linebaugh) British administrations in East Africa organized the systematic destruction and removal of documents from colonies approaching independence. Riley considers struggles to conceal and reveal colonial records.
- 13 : 00** **BBC rebels in the 1970s** (Lucy Goodison & Colin Thomas) will look at BBC staff resistance, in an environment of cold war institutional blacklisting and spying, undertaken through their unions, covert groups producing critical (and humorous) underground publications and ultimately refusals.
- 14 : 15** **How the news is made** (Dorothy Byrne and Nicholas Jones) Seasoned media journalists, one a former head of Channel 4 News, the other a former BBC correspondent, give an inside look at how the news is made.
- 15 : 30** **The Renaissance in the Upside-Down “Archives” World** (Ghada Dimashk & Barney Cullum) Ghada will explore how civilian archivists intervene to preserve endangered digital records while Barney will describe a project to support Palestinians to reject imposed reconstruction plans by sharing their memories, hopes and dreams.



#3:— Welsh Risings

Level 2—Harbourview suite

- 10 : 30** **Putting Welsh history on TV** (Colin Thomas) Looking at attempts to turn the complexities of Welsh history into accessible television, Colin’s talk will include film clips from his acclaimed *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*.
- 11 : 45** **Jenkin Morgan: Chartist Scarecrow** (Ray Stroud) A story of betrayal, retribution and suffering, Jenkin Morgan has become part of the invisible landscape of Welsh Chartism.
- 13 : 00** **Rethinking the Rebecca Riots?** (Rhian Jones) In the 1840s, “Rebeccaism” was a wide-ranging popular movement generated by the social, political and economic turbulence of the early industrial era and a remote and neglectful ruling class.
- 14 : 15** **Causes and Characters of the Chartist Riot in Llanidloes, Mid Wales in 1839** (Nick Venti & Nia Griffiths) Attempts to arrest its leaders led to a riot in which the forces of law and order were overthrown and the town fell under the control of the Chartists.
- 15 : 30** **‘Bread or Blood’ – The Merthyr Rising of 1831** (Viv Pugh) The most ferocious and bloody event in the history of industrial Britain, Viv will explore the explosive social, economic and political reasons behind the rising.



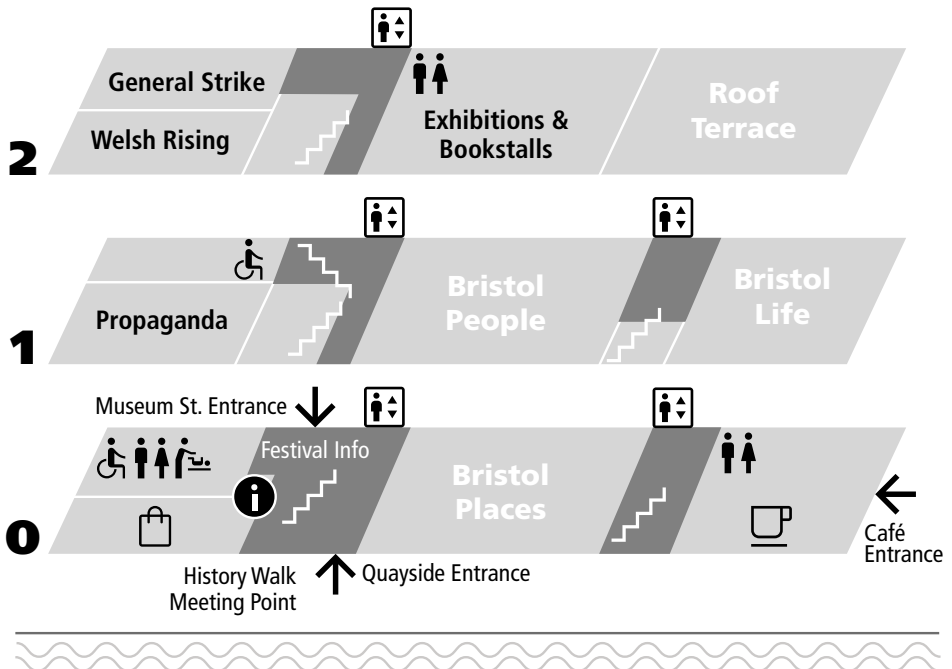
Ground Floor—Foyer

11:30 Red Notes Choir—Catch Bristol’s wonderful Red Notes Choir, whose themes include unions, peace, green and human rights.

WALK

Meet Outside Quayside Entrance

11:00 Copper, Coal and Colonizers: The Welsh in the West Country and their impact on Bristol’s past (Mark Steeds) Exploring the Welsh people and places that helped shape the city’s history, from colonists to Chartists, enslavers to abolitionists—with the odd pirate and colonial governor thrown in for good measure.



Level 2—Gallery

There will be lots of stalls with history books and merchandise from local and national groups.

EXHIBITIONS

Level 2—Gallery

Come and take a look at any time, or a tour with the curator. [TOUR TIME]

[15:10] **Woman Magic 2026**—“Moving from politics to magick we were still radical in our thinking”, in the words of artists Beverley Skinner, Anne Berg, Marika Tell and Monica Sjöö.

[13:55] **A brief history of Bristol street art and graffiti**—From the early eighties through a series of fascinating images featuring the pioneers of street art in the city.

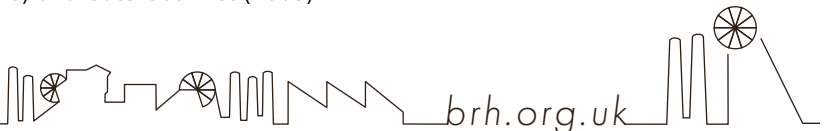
Documenting Bristol communities in the 1980s—A selection of social documentary photographs of community life in Bristol in the 1980s by Carrie Hitchcock.

[12:40] **Aspirations of Women**—A new exhibition which uncovers valuable life stories as women from working class backgrounds reflect upon their experiences within a large comprehensive school.

[11:25] **False Narratives: when dubious images set the political agenda**—Challenging national newspapers over inaccurate, intrusive and unethical coverage.

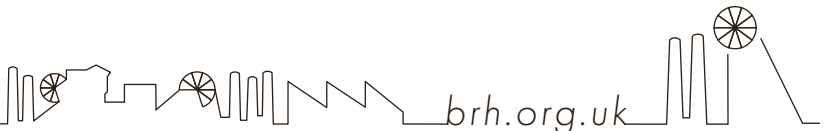
People in Common—the first fully mutual housing co-operative formed in the 1970s.

[11:25] **Striking Women**—The story of two groups of South Asian women workers who took part in struggles for workers’ rights at Grunwick (1976–1978) and Gate Gourmet (2005).



#4:—Utopias & Dystopias

- 13 : 00** **Imagining Otherwise: Utopia and the Work of Hope** (Kirsten Harris) How can imagined worlds offer hope and drive change? Across literature, film, music, and art, creators have been energised by utopia's capacity to interrogate the present and envision other possibilities.
- 14 : 05** **Intentional Communities and the Utopian Impulse** (Chris Coates) From the Diggers to the Hippies via the Chartists, Owenites and Tolstoyan anarchists the utopian impulse has resulted in hundreds of new communities across the UK. Chris will explore the past, present and future of intentional community in Britain.
- 15 : 10** **Utopian Bristol: Visions of Our City from the Middle Ages to the Far Future** (Nate Taylor) From religious millenarians to social reformers, from sci-fi writers to climate activists, people have continually reimagined what Bristol could become. Nate explores these varied and often conflicting visions of our city's future and what we might learn from their successes and failures.
- 16 : 15** **Future Song: a thrutopian vision of near-future Bristol** (Tim Kindberg) Set in Bristol and in a nearer future, against a backdrop of adaptation to the realities of climate change, it's neither a utopia nor dystopia, but a thrutopia. Tim will explain what that means and what kind of future-imagining and thinking he's been doing.
- 17 : 20** **Radical Abundance and How We Get it** (Keir Milburn) Through capitalism's relentless pursuit of profit, we have been put on a collision course with social and ecological limits we can no longer ignore. We need an alternative - radical abundance. But this can't just be voted into existence through parliament, it must be made by taking control of our collective reproduction in the here and now.



FILM

19:00 **Film showing: Ireland: The Silent Voices (1983) + Q&A with director Rod Stoneman**—Tickets £7/£5

This ground-breaking and rarely-seen Channel 4 documentary, made at the height of the war in Ireland, provided a critical counter-narrative to the pro-British propaganda spouted by most of our mainstream media. In three parts, the film analyses the representation of the conflict on TV in Britain and in Europe.

WALK

Meet outside Kingsley Hall, Old Market Street, BS2 OHP

13:00 **Patriots, volunteers and scabs: The 1926 General Strike in Bristol** (Chris Bowkett) Mapping the flashpoints from the 1926 General Strike in Bristol, this behind-the-scenes walk around the city centre delves the hidden histories from the strike, the use of propaganda and how the state fought back. Booking required.

