

Fires, fat rigs & gentrification: Turbo Island in a nutshell

Turbo Island sits as an orbit in Stokes Croft, Bristol for those on their clamorous night out, opposite 24-hour shop 'The Best' (you've most likely found yourself google-mapping this on a beer hunt for the afters) and within a 100-meter stumble of bars and clubs such as The Love Inn, Full Moon, Crofters Rights and Lakota. Over the years it has been deemed a pinnacle by alternative-nightlife-goers for impromptu raves, mixed-genre bootlegs and flaming mattresses.



Turbo Island, an infamous sloped spot of land in the heart of Stokes Croft, Bristol – named after a cheap white cider, sold in plastic bottles during the 1980s.

From once being a Shoe Warehouse hit by an air raid during the 1940s to more recently being owned by advertising company Wildstone from 1990, the infamous plot of land stands as a representation of Bristol's counterculture. But it's not all k-holes and tekno, as many recognise Turbo Island as a haven for marginalised communities like the ever-growing homeless population in modern Bristol's economy crisis.

In 2022, Bristol City Council went to the lengths of tarmacking the land to supposedly put a stop to anti-social behaviour. This plan disappointed decade-long hopes for the slope to be officially made a community space, embodying the concept of (quite literally) paving over the fuller issues instead of addressing them. Leaving a frustratingly bitter taste that couldn't be more far off what you get at Rice & Things.



An incompatible before and after of the council's paving of the land. Debatably an emblem of the community's resistance against the idea that Turbo Island is something in need of 'fixing.'

Despite local activists' efforts to buy the land outright and preserve this outwardly dingy spot along with its deep-rooted cultural history of liberalisation, it has been announced that Turbo Island has fallen into the hands of a mystery buyer. Bought at double the guide price for £100,000, an identical figure offered by The Stokes Croft Land Trust (SCLT) & People's Republic of Stokes Croft a few weeks ago, and just hours before a scheduled auction in which funds raised by the community were set to be used for the SCLT's bidding.

You may (more like definitely) have stumbled across it whilst scoffing on your post-rave cheesy-chips or mindlessly scrolled upon an Instagram post of a drum-n-bass pop-up event and thought to comment, "Ugh, gutted I missed that!" One thing's for sure, old Bristol's Turbo Island will be the most despairingly missed by the under-class. Homelessness, poverty and addiction just don't generate the same revenue as overpriced lattes.