



MeMBrane Newsletter

Winter 2021

Project update

It'll be no surprise that 2020 didn't go as planned.

We got off to a good start with our meeting in York in January. It was great to get the team together in the blissful ignorance that it would probably be our last face to face meeting. Since then we've arranged and cancelled a project meeting in Bologna, cancelled a trip to Brussels and moved everything online. It makes it easier to attend international meetings but we do miss all the extras discussions that are possible in person.



The MeMBrane team in York, January 2020

Lockdowns and a variety of restrictions limited our access to the labs, and still do. Thankfully, we've been granted a 6 month extension to the project, until Q4 2021. In the meantime we've also been working on a number of papers, the first of which was published by our Spanish partner, IATA, in *Frontiers in Biotechnology and Bioengineering* in March 2020. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fbioe.2020.00129> PhD student Maria Lairon Peris and her colleagues describe the creation and analysis of a hybrid yeast strain with the good low-temperature fermentation and enological properties of *S. uvarum* with the high ethanol tolerance of *S. cerevisiae*.

Please sign up for biannual newsletters at the email address below to keep up to date with the project.





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Communication & Dissemination

Using Biology

In 2020 MeMBrane teamed up with folk duo [Megson](#) and animator [Scribblestache](#) to produce an animated music video about biotechnology. The track features a biology teacher explaining the benefits of biotechnology, with examples from the first antibiotics through to modern bioplastic solutions.

We think it's a great way to encourage students to choose biology as a subject. The video was launched on Facebook in September and has had over 10,000 views! See for yourself [here](#).

Look out for this featuring in the York online Festival of Ideas 2021.



SuperYeast

We were successful in our application to expand our citizen science project where we invited the public to send us yeast samples from baking & homebrewing to be tested for alcohol tolerance. However, our plans were severely impacted by the pandemic as we were not able to collect or test samples. We did restart the SuperYeast project in the autumn of 2020 but our efforts to get schools involved in the project was thwarted by lockdown #3 in the UK. Nevertheless, samples are being collected and a leaderboard will be posted on our website.

During lockdown, we produced a children's book about the project which will soon be published!