

SOUTH DOWNS DARK SKIES FESTIVAL

10–18 FEBRUARY 2024

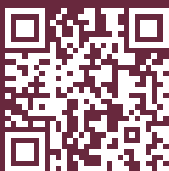
Take Action for Nature and Climate: Embrace the Darkness

Nine days of celebration exploring the dark skies of the South Downs and the nocturnal wildlife that lives there. With lots of in-person outdoor events and online content.

- Explore each of our 10 Dark Sky Discovery sites through our short films before visiting them.
- Find out about nocturnal wildlife and learn how to build your own bat box.
- Walk the Solar System, discover each of the planets along the way and listen to our new audio trail.
- Listen to stories of the stars.
- Join a star party on Brighton seafront and at Goodwood.
- See prizewinning night-time photography.
- Discover how to run your own star party.
- Download craft activities and colouring sheets.

The South Downs National Park became an International Dark Skies Reserve in 2016. Head to our website and social media pages to join the festival fun.

Please note that all in person events are subject to cancellation at short notice due to weather conditions. Please check southdowns.gov.uk/DarkSkiesFestival2024 on the day.



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

WHAT'S ON

SATURDAY 10 FEBRUARY

17:09 08:10 17:53

► **JOIN JOSH AND ELINOR** **V** out at a starry Iping Common to hear about Dark Skies in the National Park and what to expect at this year's Festival.

► **17:30–20:00 – STAR PARTY ON BRIGHTON SEAFRONT FREE** **L** Join SDNPA and Brighton Astro on the i360 terrace on Brighton seafront for a star party. We will have telescopes out if it is clear. For more details, visit [LINK](#).

Partners: Brighton Astro/Brighton i360

► **18:00–18:45 – BRIGHTON i360 “DARK SKIES STARGAZING” POD RIDES (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** The i360 pod will be taking to the Brighton skies, with a talk from Dan Oakley of Dark Sky Consulting on “Dark Skies, infinity and beyond: A beginners guide to the night sky.” An opportunity to view Brighton and beyond from a night-time perspective. For tickets visit this [LINK](#).

Partner: Brighton i360

► **19:00–21:00 – STARGAZING AT FINDON PLACE (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** Stargazing is back at Findon Place! Each year we celebrate the dark skies above the South Downs National Park and the wonderful Worthing Astronomers come along with a selection of fantastic telescopes and let you look at the stars! Tickets are on sale now at this [LINK](#), and are limited so get in quick if you want to come and join us!

Partner: Findon Place

► **19:00–21:00 – DARK SKIES WALK IN MIDHURST (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** Join us for a series of gentle night-time adventure walks on the South Downs. With a hugely

experienced and qualified local guide leading the way, venture out into the South Downs National Park and enjoy the vast open skies from viewpoints at some stunning locations. Suitable for age 10+. To book visit this [LINK](#).

Partner: Pied a Terre Adventures

SATURDAY 10 – SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY

► **10:00–16:00 (LAST ADMISSION 14:30) STAR TRAILS AND ANCIENT JOURNEYS AT BUTSER ANCIENT FARM (included in normal admission charge, additional charge for some activities)** **L** Visit Butser Ancient Farm to discover more about ancient astronomy and celestial navigation as part of the South Downs National Park Dark Skies Festival. For more details visit this [LINK](#).

Partner: Butser Ancient Farm

► **10:00–16:00 COSMO'S FAMILY SPACE TRAIL AT SEVEN SISTERS COUNTRY PARK FREE** **L** Embark on a Space Adventure with Cosmo at Seven Sisters Country Park. For more details, visit [LINK](#).

SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY

17:11 08:27 19:25

► **HOLDING YOUR OWN STAR PARTY** **V** Check out our hot tips and helpful hints for holding your own successful star party.

MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY

17:12 08:42 20:55

► **THE AMAZING WORLD OF NOCTURNAL WILDLIFE** **V** Check out our new video about some of the fascinating wildlife that calls night-time home across the National Park, then learn how to make your own bat box.

L In person **V** Virtual (Facebook/X/Instagram/Youtube)

TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY

17:14 08:55 22:22

► **18:30-20:30 – STAR PARTY AT GOODWOOD FREE** **L** Join National Park staff and the South Downs Astronomical Society for a free event exploring the night sky at Counters Gate Park, Goodwood. So long as the night is clear, there will be telescopes available to look through with expert guidance. For more details, visit [LINK](#).

Partner: South Downs Astronomical Society

WEDNESDAY 14 FEBRUARY

17:16 09:09 23:48

► **FALL IN LOVE...WITH ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY** **V** We'll be sharing video content, tips and tricks throughout the day on how to fall in love with astrophotography.

WEDNESDAY 14 – FRIDAY 16 FEBRUARY

► **11:00-15:00 – DARK SKIES FAMILY FUN AT AMBERLEY MUSEUM** **L** (free with Museum admission, no booking required) Discover constellations and nocturnal animals through our drop-in, hands-on activities and explore the museum with our themed family trail. (Trail also available on half term weekends.) For more details, visit [LINK](#).

Partner: Amberley Museum

THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY

17:18 09:26 01:14 (+1)

► **18:00-20:30 – WALK THE PLANETS AT QUEEN ELIZABETH COUNTRY PARK FREE** **L** Join us at Queen Elizabeth Country Park for a host of family-friendly activities: walk the planets trail, with the planets laid out to

scale, stargaze through telescopes (weather permitting), be captivated by our storyteller, and meet and learn about some of our most iconic nocturnal wildlife. For more details, visit [LINK](#).

Partners: Hampshire Countryside Services/ Hampshire Astronomical Group

FRIDAY 16 FEBRUARY

17:18 09:26 01:14 (+1)

► **18:00-21:00 – A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS AT HOGMOOR INCLOSURE FREE (BOOKING REQUIRED FOR GUIDED WALK)** **L** Join Deadwater Valley Trust and Rangers from the South Downs National Park to explore the wonders of the night sky. At 6pm, enjoy a guided "Walk the Planets" trail (booking essential) or come along to the Ephemeral Statue pond from 6.30pm for an opportunity to look through telescopes if the skies are clear. Event supported by BSL translator. Free to attend. Hot refreshments available (cash only). Family friendly.

For more details/to book contact Deadwater Valley Trust via this [LINK](#) or call the Ranger office on 01420 479070. Or visit: [deadwatervalleytrust](#)

Partner: Deadwater Valley Trust

► **19:00-21:00 – DARK SKIES WALK IN BIGNOR (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** Join us for a series of gentle night-time adventure walks on the South Downs. With a hugely experienced and qualified local guide leading the way, venture out into the South Downs National Park and enjoy the vast open skies from viewpoints at some stunning locations. Suitable for age 10+.

To book visit this [LINK](#).

Partner: Pied a Terre Adventures

SOLD OUT!

19:00-21:00 – THE SKIES OF PREHISTORY: STARGAZING AND POP-UP PLANETARIUM AT BUTSER ANCIENT FARM (BOOKING REQUIRED)

L Join us after dark for an immersive evening of stargazing and archaeoastronomy. Alongside an incredible planetarium show in the Iron Age Roundhouse there will be a wide array of telescopes (if the skies are clear) set up ready for you to see the stars and planets above and find out more about astronomy and the night sky. For more information and to book, visit this [LINK](#).

Partner: Butser Ancient Farm

► **20:00-22:00 – PRACTICAL ASTRONOMY SESSION WITH EASTBOURNE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY (NO BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** A

short presentation, some practical discussion about telescopes, astrophotography or astronomy in general, and then observing outside. Non-members welcome although a donation (or membership) is appreciated. The evening takes place at Arlington Village Hall, The Street, Arlington, Polegate, BN26 6RX. For more information email this [LINK](#).

Partner: Eastbourne Astronomical Society

SATURDAY 17 FEBRUARY

17:21 10:13 03:53 (+1)

► **10:00-16:00 (LAST ADMISSION 14:30) – THE SKIES OF PREHISTORY AT BUTSER ANCIENT FARM** **L**

In addition to the other activities on site (see above), our Roundhouse will become home to a pop-up planetarium for an immersive experience; 'The Skies of Prehistory' with skyscape archaeologist Dr Fabio Silva from Bournemouth University. Additional charge of £5 per person for a 45 minute immersive experience – can be booked in advance or on the day subject to availability.

Partner: Butser Ancient Farm

To book visit this [LINK](#).

► **18:00-20:30 – WALK THE PLANETS AND NIGHT WALK AT SEVEN SISTERS COUNTRY PARK FREE (BOOKING REQUIRED FOR NIGHT WALK)** **L** Join us to walk the planets at the iconic Seven Sisters Country Park. This short, accessible trail will see the planets laid out to scale. There will be stargazing, storytelling and a chance to enjoy the visitor centre and grab a hot drink and snack. An event for the whole family.

At 6pm, join Seven Sisters Country Park Ranger, Lawrence for an exciting insect-spotting walk around in Friston Forest using UV flashlights. For more details, visit [LINK](#) or to book for the Night Walk visit [LINK](#).

SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY

17:23 10:50 04:58 (+1)


► **EMBRACE THE DARKNESS** **V** There have been stellar star parties, amazing astrophotography and fabulous nocturnal critters. Now discover how to take action for nature and climate by embracing the darkness. Join us online to learn what it means to be a Dark Skies Reserve with Dan Oakley, how to select good outdoor lighting, and tips on supporting wildlife in your garden and the National Park.

ON THE WEBSITE

Winning entries to the South Downs' latest Astrophotography Competition will be shown throughout the festival with the chance to vote for your favourite from Sunday 18 February.

Find our Dark Skies Pinterest Board with colouring sheets of the planets and nocturnal wildlife, and lots of craft activities to do at home.

 @SDNPA  SDNPA

 southdownsnp | southdowns.gov.uk

L In person **V** Virtual (Facebook/X/Instagram/YouTube)