

SOUTH DOWNS DARK SKIES FESTIVAL

Nature at Night

4-17 FEBRUARY 2023

FREE
Online pack of
resources for the
whole family.

Explore the South Downs
National Park Dark
Skies Digital Pack 2023
Click to Download

PROGRAMME (LIVE/VIRTUAL EVENTS)

It's that time of the year, when the nights feel so long, that we can pause and revel in the tranquillity and mystery that our dark skies offer. It's the South Downs National Park Dark Skies Festival 2023!

The South Downs National Park became an International Dark Skies Reserve in 2016. Our dark skies amaze and inspire a completely different experience of the South Downs. We think everyone should be able to explore the wonder of our dark skies, to stargaze, connect with and learn more about nature at night. The Dark Skies Festival 2023 offers a wide range of in-person and online events with something for everyone to enjoy.

Come on, Embrace the Darkness!

Please note that all in person events are weather dependent and are subject to cancellation at short notice. Please check southdowns.gov.uk/DarkSkiesFestival2023 on the day.



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

WHAT'S ON

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY

► **18:00 – EXPLORE THE MAJESTIC DARK SKIES OF SEVEN SISTERS (FREE)** **L** Join us to "Walk the Planets" at the iconic Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, near Seaford. This short, accessible trail will see the planets laid out to scale for everyone to walk through and get a feel for the distances in space. The event will also feature stargazing, storytelling, a chance to enjoy the visitor centre and grab a hot drink and snack. Suitable for the whole family. For more details visit this [LINK](#).

SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY

► **17:30 – STARGAZING FROM COASTAL HEIGHTS (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** Join us for a 45-minute stargazing ride in the Brighton i360 pod. The fascinating ride will feature our 'Dark Skies Dan' talk about 'Harry Potter's Guide to the Sky'; highlighting interesting facts about the moon, stars, and other planetary bodies above us. There will also be the opportunity to explore the views from the Brighton i360 pod through telescopes. Suitable for the whole family. Visit this [LINK](#) to register for the i360 ride.

ACTIVITIES (FREE) Beside the sea on the i360 terrace there will also be other activities including more stargazing with telescopes, as well as a virtual reality dark skies headset experience. Suitable for the whole family.

MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY

► **SHORT FILM: DARK SKIES DISCOVERY SITES: WINCHESTER SCIENCE CENTRE** **V** "Dark Skies" Dan Oakley walks you through how best to see the night sky at Winchester Science Centre. Watch on the [South Downs National Park Facebook](#) and South Downs National Park social media channels.

TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY

► **WONDERING HOW TO ORGANISE UNFORGETTABLE STAR PARTIES?** **V** Watch our stellar guide for star parties.

WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY

► **SHORT FILM: ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY AND TELESCOPES** **V** Our very own 'Dark Skies Dan' gives his top tips on equipment to enhance your stargazing experience and how to get started with astrophotography.



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

THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY

► **EXPERIENCE THE IMMERSIVE POWER OF DARK SKIES FOLKLORE** **V** As our professional storyteller Dawn Nelson shares some of the legends and lore found in our night skies in a mini podcast.

FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY

► **18:00-20:00 – HOGMOOR – EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF THE NIGHT SKY (REGISTRATION REQUIRED)** **L** Join the Deadwater Valley Trust and rangers from the South Downs National Park to discover more about the planets, solar system and dark skies from Hogmoor Inclosure. It will also feature an informal astronomy talk followed by the opportunity to look through some telescopes.

Suitable for the whole family. Hot refreshments available. For more information, please contact: rangers@deadwatervalleytrust.co.uk.

Partner Event – Deadwater Valley Trust.

► **19:00 – STARGAZING AT FINDON PLACE** **L** Enjoy the fabulous Dark Skies above the South Downs National Park with enthusiastic astronomers from the Worthing Astronomers Club at Findon Place, West Sussex. For details and ticketing visit this [LINK](#).

Partner Event – Findon Place.

► **19:00 NIGHT NAVIGATION COURSE WITH PIED A TERRE ADVENTURES (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** Explore a fun, practical and challenging navigation course

which addresses the essential and often neglected skills of navigating at night or in poor visibility. 18.00-21.30 Near Midhurst. For more details, visit this [LINK](#).

Partner Event – Pied A Terre Adventures.

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY

► **18:00-20:30 – QUEEN ELIZABETH COUNTRY PARK (FREE)** **L** Join us for a host of family-friendly activities at Queen Elizabeth Country Park. Take part in the 'Walk the Planets' trail with the planets laid out to scale, stargaze through telescopes (weather permitting), and listen to myths and legends from our professional Storyteller Dawn. In addition there is the opportunity to meet and find out more about some of our most iconic nocturnal wildlife. Hot refreshments also available. For more details visit this [LINK](#).

► **19:00 – STARGAZING AT FINDON PLACE (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** Enjoy the fabulous Dark Skies above the South Downs National Park with enthusiastic astronomers from the Worthing Astronomers Club at Findon Place, West Sussex. For more details visit this [LINK](#).

Partner Event – Findon Place.

SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY

► **GOODWOOD – OUTDOOR STARGAZING EVENTS (FREE)** **L** Join National Park staff and the South Downs Planetarium 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 this [LINK](#).

TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY

► **18:30 – WINCHESTER SCIENCE CENTRE-BREATHTAKING PLANETS (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** Join us for an immersive evening at the Winchester Science Centre, Telegraph Way, Winchester. This event will include a planetarium show, stargazing, storytelling and a chance to meet and find out more about some of our most iconic nocturnal wildlife. For more details and ticketing, visit this [LINK](#).

WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY

► **FOLKLORE OF THE MOON AND STARS** **V** Enjoy engrossing folklore as our professional storyteller Dawn Nelson shares some of the legends and lore found in our night skies in a mini podcast.

THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY

► **THE NIGHT SKY TODAY** **L** Gilbert White's House and Gardens within the South Downs National Park, and a dark sky protected area will be hosting a compelling evening talk about astronomy and stargazing. For registrations details, visit this [LINK](#).

Partner Event – Gilbert White's House.

FRIDAY 17 FEBRUARY

► **18:30 – ST HUBERT'S 'LITTLE CHURCH IN A FIELD' – STAR PARTY (BOOKING REQUIRED)** **L** Enjoy an evening in the company of the heavenly stars with a talk and weather permitting, viewing

constellations in the SDNPA dark skies at the charming St Hubert's Church, Idsworth. (near Petersfield). For details, visit the event page on [Eventbrite](#).

Partner Event – St Hubert's Church, Idsworth.

► **ROUND THE HEAVENS AT BUTSER ANCIENT FARM (BOOKING REQUIRED)**

L Gather around the fire in the large roundhouse for 'Dark Skies & Storied Stars': traditional performance storytelling taking you on a journey through the stars. For more details, visit this [LINK](#).

Partner Event – Butser Ancient Farm.

► **19:00 – DARK SKIES WALK WITH PIED A TERRE ADVENTURES (BOOKING REQUIRED)**

L Join experienced and qualified local guide leading a series of gentle night-time adventure walks to experience the breathtaking open skies from the South Downs at Bignor. Suitable for children aged 10+ and must be accompanied by an attending adult, one per child. Get more details and register for the walk, visit this [LINK](#).

Partner Event – Pied A Terre Adventures.

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



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