

# SOUTH DOWNS DARK SKIES FESTIVAL

THURS 13 - SUN 23 FEBRUARY 2025

SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK

## EMBRACE THE DARKNESS

Join us for 11 days of dark skies celebrations! We're exploring the glimmers of happiness, peace and awe that come from embracing wondrous encounters with our dark night skies and the nocturnal wildlife that lives in the National Park.

- Explore our 10 Dark Sky Discovery sites
- Join star parties at venues across the National Park
- 'Walk the Planets' of the Solar System and enjoy our updated audio trail
- Find out about nocturnal wildlife, listen to stories of the stars
- Explore our new 'Embrace the Darkness' podcast
- See prizewinning night-time astrophotography

Please note that all in person events are subject to cancellation at short notice due to weather conditions. Do check [southdowns.gov.uk/DarkSkiesFestival2025](https://southdowns.gov.uk/DarkSkiesFestival2025) on the day.



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## WHAT'S ON?

SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK

### THURSDAY FEB 13

#### Embrace the Darkness Podcast

Start your Festival off with our new podcast series! Join Queen of Darkness, Elinor, as she chats with guests about their experiences of darkness in the South Downs National Park and beyond! Visit [LINK](#) to listen.

### FRIDAY FEB 14

#### 18:00 'Bathed in Moonbeams' – Night Walk with Rural Strides (Booking required)

Reflect on the beauty of the wider universe and our tiny place within it. For more details and to book, visit [LINK](#).

Partner: Rural Strides

#### 18:30 The Planetarium Experience at Winchester Science Centre (Booking required)

Zoom through the stars on an exciting flight through the solar system. For more details and to book, visit [LINK](#).

Partner: Winchester Science Centre

#### 19:00 Dark Skies Walk in Bignor (Booking required)

Date 1 of 3 - join an experienced local guide for a gentle night-time adventure walk on the South Downs. For more information and to book, visit [LINK](#).

Partner: Pied a Terre Adventures



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### SATURDAY FEB 15

#### 18:00-20:30 Walk the Planets and Star Party at Seven Sisters Country Park

'Walk the Planets' at the iconic Seven Sisters Country Park and enjoy a range of stargazing activities. Why not take advantage of a special hot drink and snack deal in from the visitor centre too? Includes a Night Walk searching for biofluorescent beasts (**booking required**) giving you the chance to experience the dark skies above Seven Sisters from a new perspective. For more details, visit [LINK](#).

Partner: Lewes Astronomical Society

#### 18:00 'Twinkle, Twinkle' – Night Walk with Rural Strides (Booking required)

Starting in West Meon, Hampshire, this will be a slow walk connecting children to the night and sky above through all their senses. For more details and to book, visit [LINK](#).

Partner: Rural Strides

#### 18:30-23.00 Stargazing Evening – Observatory Science Centre at Herstmonceux (Booking required)

A fascinating way to experience the natural wonders of the night sky. For more information and to book, visit [LINK](#).

Partner: Observatory Science Centre



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# WHAT'S ON?

## SUNDAY FEB 16

**18:30-20:30 Star Party at Goodwood Country Park** Join National Park staff and the South Downs Planetarium for a free event exploring the night sky at Counters Gate Car Park, Goodwood. For more details, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: South Downs Planetarium**

## TUESDAY FEB 18

**18:30-20:30 'Walk the Planets' and Star Party at Alice Holt Forest** 'Walk the Planets' at Alice Holt Forest and enjoy a range of stargazing activities. Why not take advantage of a hot drink and light snack in the café too? Includes a Night Walk around the forest, giving you the chance to search for biofluorescent beasts! (booking required). For more details, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: Alice Holt**

## WEDNESDAY FEB 19

**18:30-20:30 'Backup date' for Star Party at Goodwood Country Park** For more details, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: South Downs Planetarium**



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## THURSDAY FEB 20

**18:00-20:30 Walk the Planets and Star Party at Queen Elizabeth Country Park** 'Walk the Planets' at Queen Elizabeth Country Park and enjoy a range of stargazing activities. Why not take advantage of a hot drink and light snack in the café too? Includes a Night Walk around the forest, giving you the chance to search for biofluorescent beasts! (booking required) For more details, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partners: Hampshire Countryside Services/ Hampshire Astronomical Group/ Hampshire Bat Group**

**19:00 'The Life and Death of Stars', a talk at Gilbert White's House and Gardens (Booking required)** How do stars form? Do they live forever? If not why? The talk is given by Steve Broadbent BSc FRAS of Hampshire Astronomical Group. For more information and to book, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: Gilbert White's House and Gardens**

Follow our social channels to enjoy extra Festival content...



# WHAT'S ON?

## FRIDAY FEB 21

**10:00-20:00 Extended opening at Observatory Science Centre, Herstmonceux (Booking required)** Come along to explore spectacular interactive science and discovery among the domes and telescopes of a world famous astronomical observatory. For more information and to book, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: Observatory Science Centre**

**19:00 Dark Skies Walk in Bignor (Booking required)** Date 2 of 3 - join an experienced local guide for a gentle night-time adventure walk on the South Downs. For more information and to book, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: Pied a Terre Adventures**

**19:00-21:00 'We are all made of stars' – storytelling evening at Butser Ancient Farm (Booking required)** Join storyteller Bernadette Russell for an evening of tales inspired by the skies. For more information and to book, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: Butser Ancient Farm**

## SATURDAY FEB 22

**17:30-20:30 Star Party on Brighton Seafront** Join National Park staff and Brighton Astro on Brighton seafront near the Brighton i360 for a star party. For more details, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: Brighton Astro**

**19:00 Dark Skies Walk in Bignor (Booking required)** Date 3 of 3 - join an experienced local guide for a gentle night-time adventure walk on the South Downs. For more information and to book, visit [LINK](#).  
**Partner: Pied a Terre Adventures**



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## SUNDAY FEB 23

**'People's Choice' Astrophotography gallery opens** Winning entries to the South Downs first Astrophotography Competition will be shown throughout the festival. Visit [LINK](#).



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