

Astronomy Festival Programme

Friday 28th - Sunday 30th
August 2026





Astronomy Festival Programme

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First time at the Observatory Science Centre & Museum? We have over 100 interactive science exhibits to explore!

Themed indoor galleries - 'Earth & Beyond', 'Light & Colour' and 'Forces', 'Puzzles & Illusions' and 'Ancient Wisdom'

Outdoor Discovery Park - our 'science playground' of large-scale interactive exhibits

Outdoor water play areas - Build dams, explore water pressure, and create locks and canals.

Historic Telescopes - Each dome contains an historic telescope.

The telescopes in domes B, E can be visited during your daytime visit.

Telescopes in domes A, C and D can be visited during our evening sessions.

The Lunar Experience - Dome F is currently the home of 'Lunar', a walkthrough science show where you will uncover the mysteries of the moon. Lunar is available during daytime sessions, pick up your free tickets at reception.

Telescope tours - Find out more about the telescopes during our free telescope tours.

The Cafe - Open for light meals, snacks and hot/cold drinks during each session.

There's always more to explore...

Become a member!

Your £45 Annual membership includes:

12 months' unlimited daytime entry to the Observatory Science Centre & Museum

Valid weekends and East Sussex school holidays, during public opening hours

A unique QR code delivered by email for quick scanning on arrival at reception.



Purchase your annual membership online or sign up at reception.





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Information:

Every session includes access all the exhibits, telescope tours, astronomy society/volunteer stands and trade stands.

Activities for **Solar Flare**, **Eclipse** or **Total Eclipse** passes are marked (SF, E, TE)

Visit the **BBQ** during the evening sessions – situated by the marquee and Geo dome.

Campers check-in opens at 11am on Fri 28th. Campers must vacate by 5pm on Sunday.

Talk tickets can be purchased from the **info point** for £4 each.

You will need to present your ticket to enter the marquee.

Raffle tickets can be purchased from the **info point**.

There are fantastic prizes for the £1 Saturday draw and £2 Grand prize draw.

This years' attending societies/ volunteer stands

Brighton Astronomy Soc.
East Sussex Astronomy Soc.
Eastbourne Astronomy Soc.
Lewes Astronomy Soc.
South East Kent Astro Soc.
Seven Sisters Astronomy Soc.
Wealden Astronomy Society

Sussex Sidewalk
Astronomers
Southdowns National Park
Herstmonceux Castle Estate
SE Physics Network
Friends of Herstmonceux
Observatory

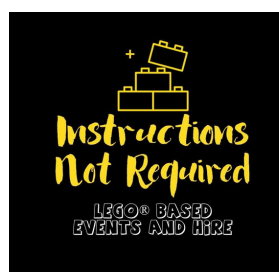
Trade stands

First light Optics
365 Astro
Bresser
Society for Popular
Astronomy

Guest appearances from The UK Garrison Saturday and Sunday



A huge thank you to our suppliers.





Astronomy Festival Programme

Friday 28th August 2026

Friday Daytime Session 10am - 5pm

Solar, Solar Flare, Eclipse and Total Eclipse passes

10am: Gates open

11am: Campers check-in opens

12pm - 5pm: Newtons Bar provided by Knights

Throughout the session:-

Telescope Tours

The Lunar Experience

Solar Viewing on the lawns (weather permitting)

Planetarium Shows (SF, E, TE)

Brick Lab – LEGO building in Dome B (SF, E, TE)

Kids Crafts: Alien headbands in the Science Station (SF, E, TE)

5pm: Close

Friday Evening Session 6pm - 11pm

Moon, Eclipse and Total Eclipse passes

6pm: Gates open, BBQ opens

6pm– 11pm: Newtons Bar Provided by Knights

7pm: Free opening talk - Convened by Ian Whiteley FRAS.

Speaker: Dr Louise Devoy, Senior Curator at the Royal Observatory Greenwich.

Title: Royal Observatory Greenwich: A History in Objects.

8:15pm: Live music by the pond from local folk musician Liz Overs

Until 11pm: Stargazing with our volunteers plus astronomy societies.

11pm: Close

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Astronomy Festival Programme

Friday 28th August 2026

Saturday Daytime Session 10am - 5pm

Solar, Solar Flare, Eclipse and Total Eclipse passes

7:30am: CAMPERS ONLY - Breakfast at the BBQ (until 10:30am)

10am: Gates open

10:45am: Talk 1

Speaker: Neil Philipson, Observatory Designer & Science Communicator

Title: 'Mankind's Next Great Leap'

11am - 3pm: Face painting (SF, E, TE)

12pm - 5pm: Newtons Bar provided by Knights

12:15pm: Talk 2

Speaker: Dr Vicki Smith, Scientist at NERC Space Geodesy Facility

Title: '2026: A Space Geodesy'

2:15pm: Talk 3

Speaker: Gary Newport, astrophysicist, computer scientist, and educator

Title: 'The Voyager Missions'

3:45pm: Talk 4

Speaker: Dr Robin Catchpole, Former Senior Astronomer at the Royal Observatory Greenwich.

Title: 'Are We Alone?'

Throughout the session:-

Telescope Tours

The Lunar Experience

Solar Viewing on the lawns (weather permitting)

Planetarium Shows (SF, E, TE)

Brick Lab – LEGO building in Dome B (SF, E, TE)

Kids Crafts: Telescope making in the Science Station (SF, E, TE)

4pm: Saturday £1 raffle draw on the steps by Newton's Bar

5pm: Close

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Astronomy Festival Programme

Friday 28th August 2026

Saturday Evening Session 6pm - 11pm

Moon, Eclipse and Total Eclipse passes

6pm: Gates open, BBQ opens

6pm– 11pm: Newtons Bar Provided by Knights

6:30pm: Live music by the pond from 'The Equatorial Group'

8pm: Pub Quiz in Newton's Bar

Until 11pm: Stargazing with our volunteers plus astronomy societies.

11pm: Close

Thank you to our generous sponsors for donating
these amazing raffle prizes!

GRAND PRIZE RAFFLE

SUNDAY 30TH AUGUST

FIRST PRIZE:

ZWO SEESTAR S30 PRO
ALL-IN-ONE SMART APO
TELESCOPE & TRIPOD
SRP £649



DONATED BY
FIRST LIGHT OPTICS



SECOND PRIZE:

DWARF 3 SMART TELESCOPE
SRP £459



DONATED BY
365 ASTRONOMY



THIRD PRIZE:

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
114/500 COMPACT
TELESCOPE SRP £162.99



DONATED BY BRESSER



The Raffle will be drawn on Sunday 30th August,
tickets can be purchased from the info point

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Astronomy Festival Programme

Friday 28th August 2026

Sunday Daytime Session 10am - 5pm

Solar, Solar Flare, Eclipse and Total Eclipse passes

8am: ECLIPSE & TOTAL ECLIPSE PASSHOLDERS - Breakfast at the BBQ

10am: Gates open

10:45am: Talk 1

Speaker: Doug Edworthy, Astronomy Enthusiast and & service Volunteer.

Title: 'Please Don't Light Me Up'

11am - 3pm: Face painting (SF, E, TE)

12pm - 5pm: Newtons Bar provided by Knights

12:15pm: Talk 2 - VIRTUAL TALK VIA VIDEOLINK

Speaker: Prof. Jim Wild, President of the Royal Astronomical Society.

Title: 'Solar superstorms - Are we ready for another Carrington Event?'

2:15pm: Talk 3

Speaker: Prof. Stephen Wilkins, Professor in Astronomy and Public Understanding of Science at the University of Sussex.

Title: 'Simulating the Universe'

3:45pm: Talk 4

Speaker: Dr Darren Baskill,

Assistant professor and outreach officer in the Department of Physics & Astronomy at the University of Sussex.

Title: 'The Tidal Universe'

Throughout the session:-

Telescope Tours

The Lunar Experience

Solar Viewing on the lawns (weather permitting)

Retro Reset Bus

Planetarium Shows (SF, E, TE)

Brick Lab – Lego building in Dome B (SF, E, TE)

Kids Crafts: Rocket making & launching in the Science Station (SF, E, TE)

4pm: GRAND PRIZE DRAW on the steps by Newton's Bar

5pm: Close

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