Yorkshire Dales Dark Skies Festival: Case Study

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

‘Stargazing Beneath Ingleborough’, one of four such events held throughout the winter months, started in The Old Sawmill Cafe at the entrance to Ingleborough Estate Nature Trail.

Visitors were greeted and astronomer Pete Collins from Diamond Skies gave a presentation on what we can see in the night sky, illustrated with his images of starry skies over iconic Dales landscapes. They then headed out for a guided tour of the Dales night sky, experiencing the Ingleborough Estate Nature Trail as never before.



On clear nights, visitors walked a short distance up the trail for some stargazing, where constellations, star clusters, galaxies (including our home galaxy, the Milky Way) and the planets were pointed out. How long was spent on each activity was dependent on cloud-cover and weather conditions.

Old Sawmill Café was open for hot drinks and a selection of cakes on the evening, and a selection of prints of the night sky over iconic local landscapes were available for purchase.

Andrew Jarman, owner of Ingleborough Cave, has seen the benefit of getting involved in the Dark Skies Festival and has taken part for many years now and has also hosted a Planet Trail event.

On occasions when stargazing is not possible, an alternative indoors activity is offered.

“A superb dark sky is one of the things that make the Yorkshire Dales National Park so special, and with large areas completely free from local light pollution, it’s a fantastic place to start your stargazing adventure.

There’s no better time to come stargazing here, now that the Yorkshire Dales National Park has been designated as a Dark Sky Reserve by the International Dark Sky Association.”

Andrew Jarman, owner of Ingleborough Cave

Andrew Jarman gave us this feedback on the events at Ingleborough:

The event was a great success, we were fully booked and the feedback from visitors on the night was really positive.

We uploaded the event onto our website, and the YDNPA website used social media to promote the event.

Taking part in the Dark Skies Festival allowed us to reach a different audience who might not have otherwise known we were here. It also brought in specific event income and made good use of our function room.

We would definitely recommend the Dark Skies Festival to other businesses - give it a try! I would never have thought of using the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales to run a stargazing event until approached by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Tourism team, but it has been well worth it.

What have Ingleborough Cave gained?

- Free online and offline promotion for the business to attract new customers.
- Additional revenue stream from the profit made on ticket sales, benefiting directly from the local tourism.
- Being placed on the 'Dark Skies Festival Map' - a key benefit.
- Satisfied customers and the confidence to run future events as part of the Festival.
- Support from the Tourism team in the build-up and during the Festival.

Dark Skies FESTIVAL

YORKSHIRE DALES National Park

North York Moors National Park

Find out more…

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The Dark Skies Festival is all about celebrating the special, star-filled skies of Dales, free from light pollution.

To take part in any future Dark Skies Festivals get in touch at tourism@yorkshiredales.org.uk. For more information on the Festival, including some useful resources, go to www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/host-your-own-dark-skies-festival-event.