

A Coordinated Hub Approach to Eclipse Outreach and Education in the UK

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PROJECT PARTNERS



**Lead Partners for Website Funding
and Development**

<https://www.firstlightoptics.com/>

<https://gostargazing.co.uk/>

Aims of ukeclipse.com

UK Eclipse set up to:

- Encourage astronomy outreach groups, observatories, schools, societies, and science organisations to run public eclipse events
- Provide a central place where people can discover eclipse events happening near them
- Share trusted guidance on how to observe eclipses safely
- Promote accessible astronomy for beginners and families
- Celebrate future eclipses and other major astronomical events visible from the UK

A Central Hub

- Trusted advice and guidance from astronomy partners in one place (saving time for users and partners)
- Safety first – how to view safely, glasses from trusted retailers
- Activities to try, including for schools
- Links to local events
- Countdown to the event

PLEASE DO NOT DIRECTLY LOOK AT THE ECLIPSE WITHOUT EYE PROTECTION



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Don't miss the next UK eclipse

Set your location



Find an event



Access to glasses

- Worked with Astronomers Without Borders



- Go Stargazing coordinated
- Glasses could be ordered for personal group use or an event
- 50 pairs for £12, 200 pairs for £25
- Fantastic for community groups, schools, and astronomy groups
- Give-aways - eg Bath Astronomers provided to schools in their area
- First Light Optics packed and shipped over **100,000 glasses!**



Experience

- The week before the eclipse the UK went eclipse mad!
- A great deal of TV coverage raised awareness
- Everyone wanted glasses
- **Easy to direct people to the website for information**
- How to watch safely if could not buy glasses (counter misinformation)
- Encourage people to go to an event where there would be glasses

310,000 website visits, 2.6 million pages accessed

The Results: Community

Parish of Bedwellty Facebook



People gathered together in huge numbers

From astronomy societies to communities

Hills, parks, housing estates and gardens

Go Stargazing Facebook



One People
One Sky

“What shone through on the night was phenomenal team spirit and hard work, community care and kindness, a shared experience with strangers and friends, strangers becoming friends”

Reflections, Challenges and Opportunities - 1

- Sponsorship and small core development team (not committee) made it happen
- Other partners added content later – saving duplication
- Provision of glasses was a huge success – over 100,000 sent out
- Media engaged late, and then went big – causing huge late demand for glasses
- Opportunity for more glasses to be distributed but some astronomy societies, community groups did not engage until it was too late
- Missed opportunity for including other information (eclipse-specific and general astronomy) with glasses

Reflections, Challenges and Opportunities - 2

- Potential model going forward for Education and Outreach activities in UK
- Build on/complement Go Stargazing's platform for publicising stargazing events
- Website supported by app, social media interactions, mailing list
- Partnership approach:
 - First Light Optics/GoStargazing manage infrastructure
 - Voluntary organisations (British Astronomical Association, Society for Popular Astronomy, Royal Astronomical Society etc) add content
 - Play to different organisations' strengths and avoid duplication