


ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



Illustration by Yvette Earl



A vertical light ribbon, likely representing the STEVE phenomenon, stretches from the top to the bottom of the frame. It has a bright white core that transitions into a vibrant red and then a darker red/purple at the bottom. The background is a dark, starry night sky with numerous small, distant stars.

Welcome to some of our favourite moments of 2023.

It was a year of spectacle with our dark skies exploding with meteors, Northern Lights, and the rarely seen STEVE (pictured left), the Strong Thermal Emission Velocity Enhancement that appears as a light ribbon.

It was also a year of further outreach and engagement - working with excluded children, prisoners, and sanctuary seekers to deliver that special Kielder moment.

Events continue to sell out at the Observatory itself, showing us how important that connection to the cosmos truly is. In a world that seems increasingly uncertain, we are proud to create and sustain a place for inspiration and hope. We are all made of stars, and we all need to be reminded of that.

Huge thanks to the Board, the team, our partners and funders, most of all to our visitors.

Peter Standfield, Chair of Trustees
Catherine Johns, CEO



WHAT PEOPLE SAY

"The night was crystal clear and dry for us and the starry sky was simply amazing; we have never seen anything like it! This was such an experience, the guides were knowledgeable, helpful and entertaining."

"Our family all agreed that the evening was absolutely superb... For the first time I grasped the enormity of space."

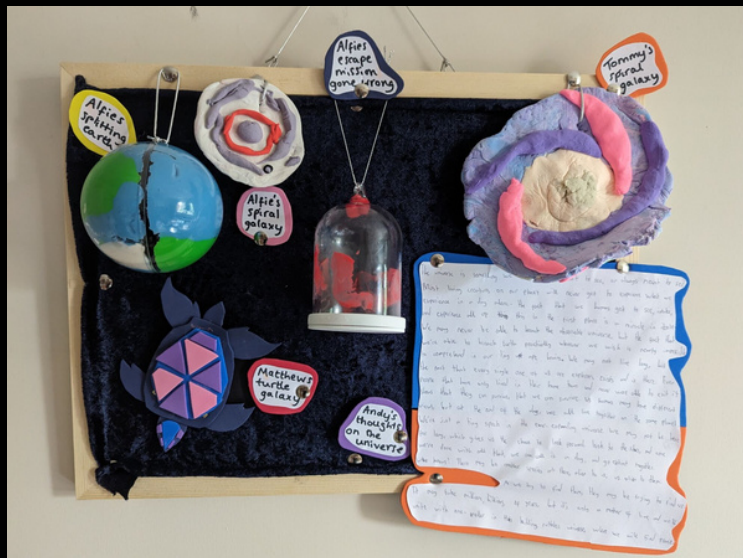
"We went to Space Kids and it was absolutely fantastic. My husband and I enjoyed it along with our son, who came out smiling and inspired."

"Excellent venue, highly professional and friendly staff who go out of their way to make the evening special. I am a regular visitor try to attend a couple of times a year. Absolutely passionate about astronomy and this is by far my favourite venue."

"We had an absolutely amazing experience this evening. So so lucky to get a clear night. And the Aurora was an added bonus."

"Absolutely superb! Well worth a visit - a fabulous facility in an amazing location. All the staff and presenters are enthusiastic, very knowledgeable and make everything interesting, awe inspiring and entertaining."





Spooky pumpkins at Halloween

Worked with children at risk of exclusion to create art



Shortlisted in the NE Culture Awards



Supported young artists with Frank's Fellowship bursary



Worked with the West End Refugee Service to launch the North East Astrophotography Academy - part of the national Mindsets + Missions programme

HIGHLIGHTS



**Light painting at the West End Refugee Service
(or Jedi training...?)**

HIGHLIGHTS



Worked with Novus in HMP Northumberland to co-create a new poetry collection, called Look Up

HIGHLIGHTS



Nacreous clouds!

HIGHLIGHTS



Delivered our STEM to Stars programme to over 40 schools, examining solar storms and their impact on Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS



Welcomed LJ Ross to name one of our turrets the Caroline Herschel Observatory

HIGHLIGHTS

Kielder Dark Skies at PROTO



Explored immersive
tech at PROTO in
Gateshead

Our podcast series



Podcast Episode:

Aurora Hunting Inside The Arctic Circle!



**Listen
& Subscribe**

HIGHLIGHTS



Created a scale model of the Solar System



Adopted "Star" the duck at a school visit



Mourned the loss



Commissioned a group of creative practitioners to capture the essence of Kielder in a new spoken word artwork, Kielder Narratives

HIGHLIGHTS



**Celebrated 10 years as a Gold Tier
Dark Sky Park**



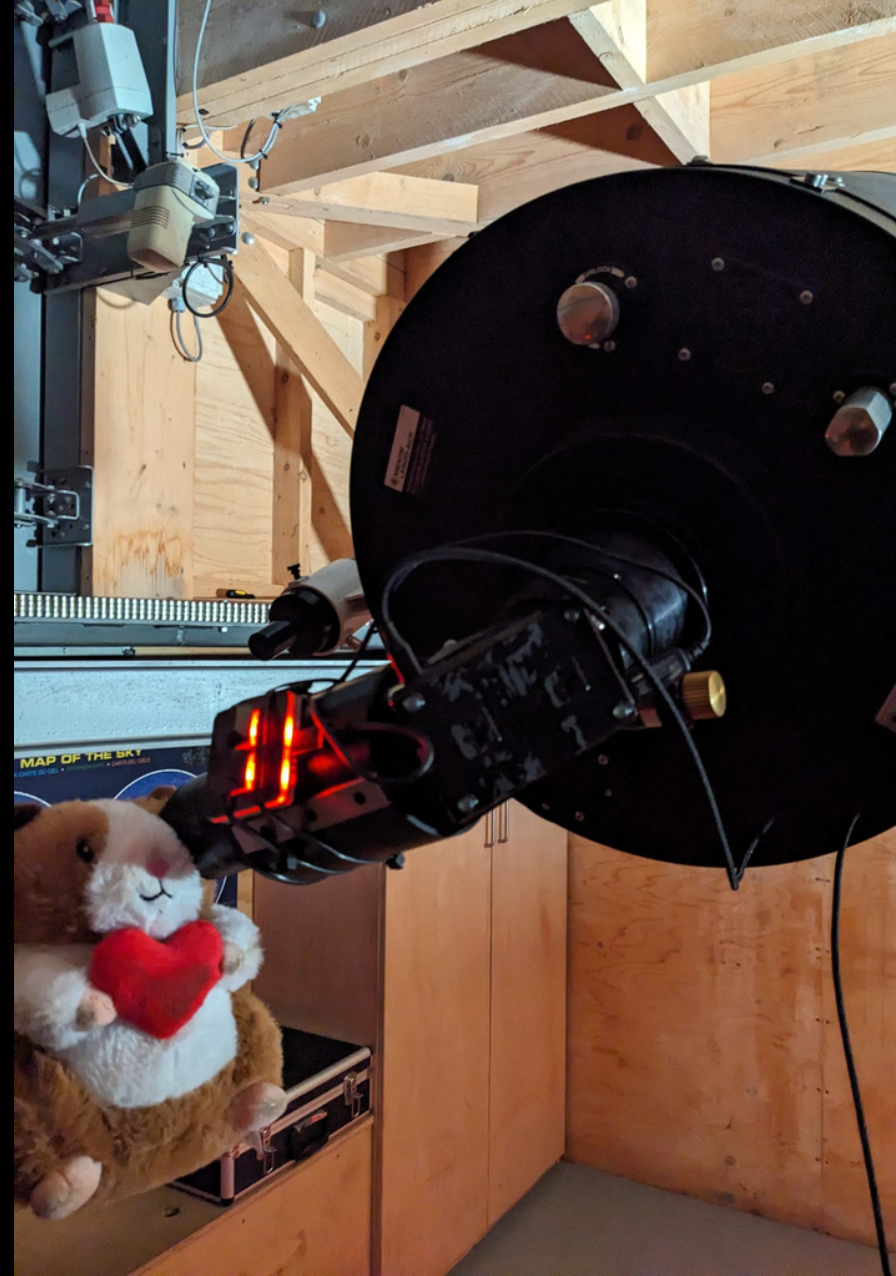
Aurora hunting in Norway

MEET THE TEAM 2023

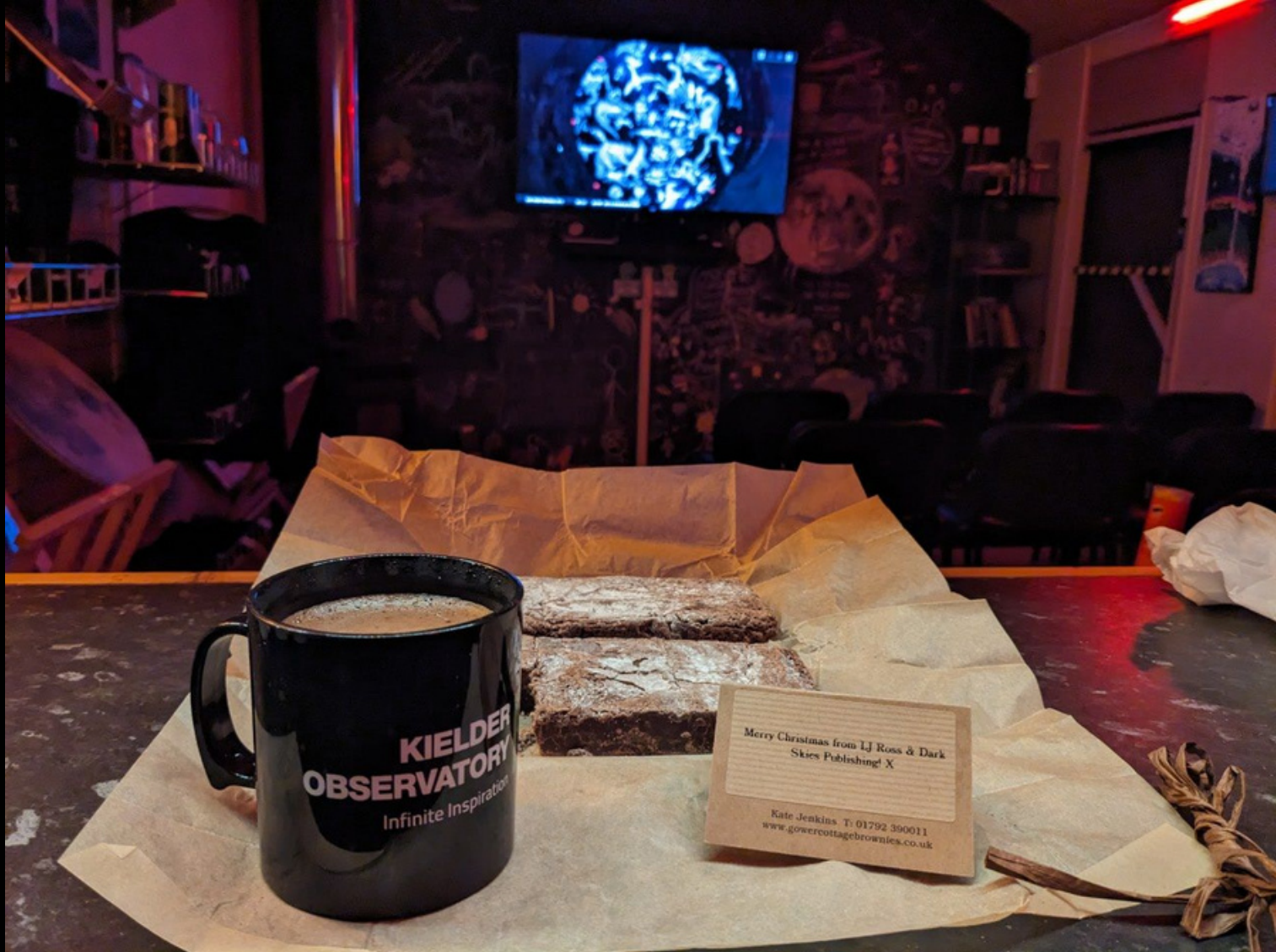
- **Catherine Johns**, CEO (until February 2024)
 - **Leigh Venus**, CEO (from December 2023)
 - **Hannah Matterson**, Operations and Marketing Director
 - **Daniel Monk**, Director of the Gillian Dickinson AstroImaging Academy
 - **Dan Pye**, Director of Astronomy and Science Communication
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- **Jesse Beaman**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Alison Booth**, Finance Executive
 - **Rosie Braunholtz**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Finn Burridge**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Ishbel Carlyle**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Hayden Goodfellow**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Guy Haveron**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Ellie MacDonald**, Astronomer and Science Communicator, Science Lead
 - **Gregoire Mahaut**, Astronomer and Science Communicator, Facilities Lead
 - **Patti Purcell**, Office Manager and PA to the Board
 - **Liam Reid**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Matt Robinson**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Simon Robinson**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
 - **Adam Shore**, Astronomer and Science Communicator, Education Lead
 - **Heather Woodfine**, Communications and Events Administrator, Arts Lead



The team getting into the Christmas spirit



Access for all!



"I first came to Kielder Observatory as a patron in 2019 (I still have the mugs). I was so inspired by the site and staff that it reignited a childhood passion I once had for stargazing. Wanting to immerse myself further and step outside of my city-comfort-zone I became a volunteer."

Pip



Our mission is to create opportunities for people of all backgrounds and abilities to experience moments of inspiration, revelation, wonder and hope through observing the cosmos. In 2024 we will commit:

- To continuously improve inclusion and representation
- To improve our B-Corp score
- To extend our reach locally, nationally and internationally
- To extend our STEM enrichment work nationally
- To review and improve quality and consistency of content available
- To explore new techniques in immersive and digital and mass media
- To link Kielder PopUps to community outreach around light pollution
- To continue to deliver dark sky tourism/cultural experiences

We also welcome our new CEO, Leigh Venus, in post - the best case of nominative determinism we've seen!

You can find out more about our strategy here

<https://kielderobservatory.org/images/Strategy-1.pdf>





**WITH GRATEFUL
THANKS TO**

Accenture
Arts Council England
Association of Science and Discovery Centres
Creative England
Digital Catapult North East and Tees Valley
Durham University
Fenwick Newcastle
Forestry England
The Gillian Dickinson Trust
Institute of Physics
International Dark Sky Association
The Joicey Trust
Kielder Parish Council
Kielder School
The Kielder Trust and Kielder partners
Museums Association
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Newcastle University
The North of Tyne Combined Authority
Northumberland County Council
Northumberland National Park Authority
Northumbrian Water
Raytheon-NORSS
Novus and HMP Northumberland
The Reece Foundation
Royal Astronomical Society
Sunderland Culture
The Tanlaw Foundation
Visit Northumberland



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