

7
OF THE
BEST

ENTERTAINMENT FOR NIGHT OWLS

Delay hibernation a little longer and instead fill the dark autumn evenings with light, colour, knowledge and intrigue thanks to our selection of enthralling night-time events

Words by Steve O'Brien



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BEST FOR... FAMILIES

Stargazing - an introduction to astronomy for families and beginners, Housesteads Fort, Northumberland

A fruitful night's stargazing needs a vast blanket of sky, unfettered by buildings, pollution and artificial light. There are few places in the UK better suited for taking in the night-time sky than Housesteads Roman Fort at Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland. The National Trust has, for a few years now, been running a stargazing night to introduce astronomically curious newbies to the brain-wowing wonders of the cosmos. If you've caught the astronomy bug after World Space Week, head up to Northumberland on 29 October. After an indoor presentation, you'll enjoy an open-air star watch where a guide will help you tell your Corona Borealis from your Coma Berenices.

■ **HOW TO GET THERE** Take the J40 off the M6, and follow the A69, the B630 and the B618 in that order

■ **WHEN** 29 October, 7pm-9pm

■ **PRICE** £5

tinyurl.com/y98jq47a

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2 BEST FOR... ANIMAL LOVERS

Batman and Walkin', Glasgow

If your knowledge of bats begins and ends with Bruce Wayne's crime-fighting alter ego, you might want to take advantage of this enlightening bat walk and talk in Glasgow's Castlemilk Park. Bats are secretive animals and this tour around one of the city's most scenic and bat-friendly parks will arm you with enough fascinating facts and figures to thrill your friends with. Your guide will use sophisticated bat technology to listen to their sounds, while giving you an expert's insights.

- **HOW TO GET THERE** 15 minutes North of East Kilbride, or 30 minutes south of Glasgow. Come off the M74 on to the Glasgow Road, then the Fernhill Road
 - **WHEN** 28 September, 7pm-9pm
 - **PRICE** Free (no booking required)
- bats.org.uk

3 BEST FOR... THRILLSEEKERS

Jack the Ripper Tour, London

If one murder isn't enough, what about five? Since his first victim was discovered in August 1888, the name Jack the Ripper has been wedded to our capital city and the world is still in the dark as to the identity of the prolific butcher. The tour is through the streets and alleys of Jack the Ripper's London, a gruesome trip back in time to when the city was gripped by panic and fear. Some locations have changed so little, it's easy to feel the 21st century fade away as you walk from Aldgate East through Brick Lane to Mitre Square and finally Spitalfields, where the body of Mary Jane Kelly, the Ripper's final victim, was found.

- **HOW TO GET THERE** The meeting point for the tour is outside exit four of Aldgate East underground station
 - **WHEN** 7pm-9pm
 - **PRICE** £10
- jack-the-ripper-tour.com



4 BEST FOR... HISTORY BUFFS

No. 1 Royal Crescent Tour, Bath

Let a candles and night-time experience add a romantic allure to all things Jane Austen, as this September the World Heritage city of Bath in Somerset plays host to the Jane Austen Festival, a ten-day jamboree. And as part of the celebration, No. 1 Royal Crescent is opening its artfully crafted doors for a run of evening tours on 21 September. Normally open only during daylight hours, this is a rare chance to see an authentic Georgian townhouse at night, candlelit for a thrillingly atmospheric trip back in time. Perched on one of the most iconic streets in the world, No. 1 Royal Crescent has been lavishly decorated and furnished just as it would have been in the late 18th century, with guides in period costume in most of the rooms, ready to share their peerless knowledge.

- **HOW TO GET THERE** Exit the M4 at J18 and take the A46 to Bath before following signs to the Royal Crescent
 - **WHEN** 21 September, 6.30pm-9pm
 - **PRICE** £30 includes tour, glass of Prosecco and canapés
- no1royalcrescent.org.uk



A rare chance to see
an authentic Georgian
townhouse at night

5 BEST FOR... VOLUNTEERS

The Big Sleep Out North/South London

It's estimated that around 4,100 people slept rough in Britain in 2017 – an alarmingly large figure – but thanks to organisations like The Big Issue Foundation, more and more homeless people are getting help. Campaigns like last year's Big Sleep Out raised over £50,000 for the charity and this year they're doing it again, twice! In October and November the foundation wants as many people as possible to sleep under the stars for one night, each with a fundraising target of £350. Big Sleep Out North takes place on 12 October at Tottenham's Bernie Grant Arts Centre, followed by Big Sleep Out South at the Kia Oval in Kennington on 16 November.

- **HOW TO GET THERE** North: A short walk from Seven Sisters tube station; South: A short walk from Oval tube station
 - **WHEN** 12 October, 16 November, 9pm-7am
 - **PRICE** Registration fee is £25 or £20 per person for a team of five or more
- bigissue.org.uk/event/big-sleep-out-london



6 BEST FOR... ADULTS

Halloween Ghost Hunt at The Four Crosses, Staffordshire

A Tudor boozery with such a fearsome reputation in paranormal circles that it's been called one of the most haunted places in the UK, the Four Crosses in Cannock, Staffordshire, is a building you wouldn't want to find yourself alone in. A little girl with jet-black eyes is said to haunt the 16th-century pub, and there have been sightings of a Roundhead soldier roaming its aged rooms. We all like a little scare at Halloween, and this enjoyably spooky ghost tour promises to put the willies up even the hardiest of sceptics. Expect seances, Ouija boards, glass moving and – with any luck – some bona fide ghosts!

- **HOW TO GET THERE** Take exit 12 from the M6, and then turn right onto the A5
 - **WHEN** 19 October, 9pm-2am
 - **PRICE** £49 per person (over 18s only)
- dusktilldawnevents.co.uk



7 BEST FOR... FIREWORKS FANS

Matlock Bath Illuminations, Derbyshire

The village of Matlock Bath is one of the UK's more hidden treasures, a gorgeously picturesque parish that Lord Byron once called the 'Switzerland of Derbyshire'. But it's not just its elegant riverside gardens and wooded hillsides that draw visitors each year. Every weekend from 8 September to 28 October, the village plays host to Matlock Bath Illuminations, a dazzling parade of illuminated and decorated boats that sail along the River Derwent and topped off, every Saturday, by a lavish fireworks display. With its unique carnival-like atmosphere, it's no wonder that Matlock Bath Illuminations has been wowing visitors and locals alike for 121 years.

A dazzling parade of illuminated boats sail along the River Derwent

- **HOW TO GET THERE** Trains run from Derby to Matlock Bath. A Park & Ride service will operate from 5pm until 10.30pm on the fireworks nights only from Cromford Meadows, Cromford
 - **WHEN** 8 September-28 October, from 7.45pm
 - **PRICE** £6 on Saturdays (£5 concessions) and £5 on Sundays (£4 concessions)
- derbyshiredales.gov.uk



SAVE UP TO 44% ON THORPE PARK FRIGHT NIGHTS*

Join the world's biggest horror franchise – AMC's *The Walking Dead*, which returns to Thorpe Park Resort for a load of scares!

Boundless.co.uk/thorpepark