

PRESS RELEASE
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Behind the magic at Stockeld Park: Inside Yorkshire's most iconic Christmas event

Yorkshire's most enchanting festive destination, Stockeld Park (Stockeld), is pulling back the curtain this winter, inviting guests to step behind the scenes and discover the extraordinary creativity, craftsmanship, and Christmas spirit that bring its famous Winter Wonderland to life.



What started in 2006 as a standalone Christmas tree farm, now boasts over 200,000 guests annually, and every year, thousands of families flock to Stockeld Park to wander through the glowing Winter Illuminations, meet Santa in his Grotto, and play among the park's dazzling Adventure Zones. But few realise just how much hard work, artistry, and sheer dedication it takes to make the magic happen.

For Stockeld Park's team, Christmas doesn't begin in December, it begins the moment the previous Christmas ends. As the last twinkling lights fade and the final presents are gifted, the planning begins for next year. From January onwards, the team's ideas flow: sketches, stories, and lighting concepts fill notebooks, until the park's winter wonderland slowly takes shape again.

A 13-strong team works all year to design and build bespoke illuminations, many handcrafted and custom-made to Stockeld's unique vision, in-house. Installation

begins in September, when the forest transforms into a canvas of light and imagination ready for the colder months.



In 2024, the Winter Illuminations featured around 3,000 lights. This year, visitors will discover even more wonder: fantastical woodland creatures, a special projection show, a glade of twinkling trees, and a spectacular four-seasons lake show where snowflakes melt, daffodils bloom, and the magic of the year unfolds in light and colour. New illuminated hot air balloons will rise above the path, and a lantern casting dancing silhouettes will guide guests deeper into the story.

All of these are designed and developed in-house by creative duo co-owner, Susie Grant and general manager, Ben Locke, working alongside the talented lighting designer Simon Hayes to bring every idea to life.

Beyond the forest, Santa's Grotto has been transformed into an even more immersive experience. This year, families will step first into Santa's Sorting Office, where thousands of letters from children around the world arrive by post. From there, little ones can help a miniature elf in his quest to build toys. These interactive moments make every visit to the park feel part of a living Christmas storybook.

Stockeld invests heavily in its Christmas magic (over £180,000 this year alone) but also in its people. Every team member receives extensive training, not just to ensure seamless operations but to deliver warmth, joy and magic at every turn.

"Every light that twinkles, every note that plays, every moment of magic at Stockeld Park is imagined, built and cared for by our team," **says Peter Grant, owner and Chief Fun Officer of Stockeld Park.** *"Christmas at Stockeld isn't just a season, it's*

something we live and breathe all year round. We pour our hearts into every detail so that families can step into a world that feels truly magical.”

Behind the lights and laughter are real stories of dedication, creativity and growth. There’s Benjy, who began selling Christmas trees and now leads technical displays after completing his electrical apprenticeship. Jacob, once a 16-year-old ice rink marshal, now manages all park activities and a 70-strong team. Dani and Stevey, who joined as actors in 2017, now head up entertainment and have reshaped Stockeld’s creative offering, including the now-iconic Grotto Dome, designed to make queuing for Santa a magical part of the Stockeld experience.

The park’s creativity doesn’t stop with its team, but grows through its guests, too. Every review, suggestion, and sketch is read and considered by management. Some of Stockeld’s most beloved features, like the Singing Ringing Tree, the Unicorn Playground, and Russell the Talking Tree, were inspired by real children’s drawings.

Team and guest feedback has also sparked practical improvements: when Santa found his grotto too warm, vents were added. When queues became long, a second lift was installed to whisk visitors more quickly to Santa. Even the Grotto Dome was born from visitors’ wishes for a warmer, more immersive waiting space, now a highlight of the entire experience.

Within the Stockeld team, festive spirit runs deep. As the first decorations are hung, friendly competition begins, from the most outrageous Christmas socks to the sparkliest elf headwear. But beneath the laughter lies a shared devotion to excellence. The team reads every review, refines every detail, and plans years in advance, with ideas for Christmas 2026 already in the works!

Don’t miss your chance to experience the magic. Visit <https://stockeldpark.co.uk/> to explore the full festive line-up and book your visit to Yorkshire’s most enchanting Christmas destination.

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For further information please contact the Stockeld Park press office team on stockeld@prohibitionpr.co.uk

Notes to editor

About Stockeld Park

Open throughout the year, Stockeld Park is a unique all-weather family attraction located near Wetherby in Yorkshire.

The renowned Enchanted Forest is filled with magical interactive fun and is home to five themed adventure playgrounds.

The adventure doesn't end there, the giant yew tree maze has over a mile of paths with surprises hidden throughout, and the indoor Playhive is one of Europe's largest indoor play centres. Adventure across high-level walkways and down spiralling tunnel slides as you journey through four interconnected worlds of space, air, jungle, and ocean.

Each season sees a different event held in the park including illuminations and Santa's grotto in the winter, summer festival, and Halloween fun to entertain families throughout the seasons.