

## **Nocturnal life to be brought to light in captivating York illumination**

Visitors to York's museum gardens this Autumn can discover the secrets of life after dark through a spectacular light and sound installation, as part of this year's Illuminating York art festival.

Supported by Visit York, Welcome to Yorkshire, The Arts Council and City of York Council, Illuminating York has established itself as a flagship event in Yorkshire's festival calendar. This year it will run from 23 October and 1 November and is expected to attract art fans from across the UK.

The festival transforms York's historic buildings with projections each year, and one of three keynote pieces for 2009 is created by Yorkshire company Bright White.

As the darkness creeps in over the gardens, *Vespertine* by Bright White will flood the Kings Manor with light, bringing it to life with a projection expressing the magnificent battle for survival amongst creatures that fills the city's green spaces each evening.

The projection will be accompanied by a digital sound track acoustically tuned for the unique space in the King's Manor courtyard, creating pockets of sound, composed with the notes made by nocturnal animals.

The King's Manor is situated in the corner of the beautiful Museum Gardens, behind the ruins of St Mary's Abbey and its Tudor walls will be the backdrop to this spectacular vision.

Chris Walker, chief executive of Bright White, the creative digital design consultancy which created the piece said: "The battle for survival which goes on every night in parks in the city when we've all gone to bed is very rarely recognised. The magnificence of this brutal world is nearly a dance between creatures, inevitably ending in death, which humans are protected from in their daily lives and are generally unaware of.

The whole piece has been developed for the King's Manor and the sound track has been tuned specifically for use in the space, which allows the sound to resonate off

the surrounding structures. The motion of the projection is influenced by the sound which provides an intriguing experience, as people will be able to essentially see what they're hearing.

We've worked closely with the University of York to create the piece. Their knowledge of the nocturnal world and the unique relationships between animals has enabled us to demonstrate the true nature of what goes on around us when darkness falls."

*Vespertine* is one of three key installations in Illuminating York this year and the menu promises the most spectacular contemporary mixture of projections seen in the city yet. Each offers a unique and atmospheric experience, from this nature inspired light-landscape to interactive installations, encouraging the audience to influence the look of the art pieces.

Stephen Purcell, Chair of Illuminating York and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at York St John University said: "This year our artists have risen to the challenge of engaging more than ever with the public. We hope audiences will come back time and again to see how the artworks change throughout the festival."

Gillian Cruddas, Chief Executive of Visit York said: "Each year art lovers from around the country are drawn in to feast their eyes on the spectacle that the festival creates and last year brought in the largest number of visitors yet, reaching just under 30,000 people. Visit York and Welcome to Yorkshire are delighted to have worked with key partners in the city to make this event happen.

Illuminating York offers visitors the chance to experience the juxtaposition of York's historic gems with contemporary light installations, creating a very rare and unique atmosphere."

### **Get the latest news**

To find out more about Illuminating York, visit: [www.illuminatingyork.org](http://www.illuminatingyork.org), and make friends with Illuminating York on Facebook, or follow the excitement on Twitter. Visit [www.visitYork.org](http://www.visitYork.org) or call York Visitor Information 01904 550099 to book your festival break.

Vespertine is just one of three art projections being featured at Illuminating York this year. Details of the two other pieces will follow in the weeks leading up to the festival.

**-Ends-**

**Media Enquires:** For further information, please call Sally Barr or Charlotte Renwick on 01132 200536/646.

### **Notes to Editor**

#### Images

Attached a sneak preview of 'Vespertine', two more sneak previews of Walls of Light and 5Circles will follow with more information.

Illuminating York is supported by The Arts Council, City of York Council, Visit York and Welcome to Yorkshire and is proud to work with partners which include The York Museums Trust, Creative York, York St. John University, York University and York Theatre Royal.

Illuminating York 2008 – outlined below are some key stats for the festival last year:

- 29,924 visitors to the festival in Oct 08, compared to 11,580 in Oct 07 and 11,319 in Jan 07.
- Good levels of awareness with nearly 80% of visitors knowing about the festival before they attended the event.
- Main methods of finding out about the festival were word of mouth, regional media and TV.
- The economic impact of last year's festival on York's economy was calculated to be £2.8 million pounds.

#### What is Visit York?

Visit York is the new driving force for the city's tourism industry and the official tourism body for York and the surrounding area. Visit York aims to create a stronger more integrated approach to tourism, working with businesses, Yorkshire Forward and Welcome to Yorkshire. It was formed on 1st April 2008 and brought together the City Council, the York Hospitality Association and the former York Tourism Bureau. The Chairman is John Yeomans and the Chief Executive is Gillian Cruddas.

Its aim is to market York as a must-see world-class destination to the leisure and business visitor, and ensure investment to develop the quality of tourism in York. It is responsible for leisure and conference marketing, visitor services (running the city's Visitor Information Centres), training and developing the tourism product. Visit York aims to increase the value of the visitor economy by at least 5% annually.

Tourism in York already makes a huge contribution to the well-being of the city, however, Visit York aims to drive this to a higher level. Here are the latest figures:

#### **York Tourism Figures:**

- 4.09 million visitors a year (2007/2008) - Figures for 08/09 to available shortly

- £364 million spent in York each year (2007/2008 ) - Figures for 08/09 to be available shortly
- 10,646 jobs in York created by tourism (2007/2008) - Figures for 08/09 to be available shortly
- Staying visitors generated 2 million bednights (2007/2008) - Figures for 08/09 to be available shortly
- 13% of visitors are from overseas (around a third of these from North America)
- Top overseas markets for York include USA, Germany, Netherlands and Belgium