

York Consortium Refresh York Project

Information on 'York Red Letter Nights' Indicative Programme

Imagine you are visiting York some time in 2015.....

The York Consortium has devised these possible scenarios following the principles and values of Refresh York. They show how we will engage a range of visitors in contemporary culture, from the first time visitor who knows little about the city, or the determined cultural tourist wanting to dig a little deeper, to the business visitor with time on their hands, and the potential overseas city-break visitor scanning what's on online. In general these events, which may an hour or two and take place once, or be repeated nightly for a week, will be free of charge and take place in public or easily accessible places, and will bridge the gap between the major attractions closing and evening entertainment starting.

January

You, your partner and your daughter are staying with your brother and his wife, a not quite annual event. But this time is different. Your brother suggests a Red Letter event later that day might interest you, as it digs into York's past and promises to show it in a new light. As part of the annual Residents' Festival the Red Letter people have brought together the Rowntree Society, with its archive of the lives and work of members of the Rowntree family who were instrumental in early studies of working-class life and poverty in the city, and a group of talented young artists studying at York St John University. In a dozen terraced houses in streets within walking distance of the City walls, short and inventive videos are being projected each evening in the front windows for those walking past to see. A trail – in print or on your phone – will take you to them, and introduce you to the creator of the video and tell you more about how to discover more.

March

You and your partner are in York for a 'culture and heritage' weekend during a trip to the UK that includes stops in Edinburgh and London. You have been meaning to go into the Minster as you want to see the East Window which can now be seen afresh following a £10m restoration programme.

With the Minster the National Centre for Early Music has organised a nationwide event to find the Renaissance Choir of the Year, and over two hours, as the Minster is closing, you do a 'choir crawl' around five churches in the city where five amateur choirs are each performing a work based on Revelation, the subject of the medieval glass in the East Window. You are amazed and inspired to find such a strong culture of amateur performance and tell all your friends about it. (York Minster and the National Centre for Early Music)

May

You are a business visitor staying at the new hotel in St Leonards Place, and you pick up a leaflet about the newly transformed York Art Gallery just along the road. You don't know much about modern art, their current exhibition, but you do like to stroll in city squares in the early evening. In Exhibition Square you are amazed to see that the De Grey Rooms seems to have been turned inside out, with its interior displayed on the front wall facing the new square. Meanwhile you can hear an intriguing sound coming from the grounds of Kings Manor, and as you follow it you realise that there are two further groups of musicians who are accompanying a pre-recorded sound installation, in Museum Gardens and in the New Gardens behind the gallery which can now be reached directly from the Square. You make a mental note that your city break this autumn will be in York and that you will spend a couple of hours in the Gallery. (York Museums Trust, Aesthetica and York University)

June

You and your family have just left the The Jorvik Centre and are walking up Coppergate when you see that The York Archaeological Trust has a display in an empty shop in the city centre giving a hands-on, and quite gruesome, view of the ways forensic archaeology is used to establish the causes of death from what could be very ancient remains and artefacts. Your teenagers are immediately fascinated and, as part of the display they watch one of nine short films which Aesthetica has commissioned through a competition connected to their Short Film Festival, dramatising the lives and deaths of the exhibition's subjects. You consider making a return trip in November for the Aesthetica Short Film Festival. One of your teenagers

considers applying for an undergraduate course in York. (Aesthetica, Screen Yorkshire and York Archaeological Trust)

September

You and three friends from work are ending a full day of sightseeing by exploring the display of historic railway carriages at the National Railway Museum when you spot that there is a free downloadable podwalk which adds an unexpected dimension. As you walk around the outside of the carriage, actors from York Theatre Royal give audio-performances of some of Shakespeare's sonnets selected for their resonance with themes such as joy on meeting and sadness on parting, that are embodied in these evocative interiors. You make a point of picking up a programme for the Shakespeare Festival happening later in the year. (National Railway Museum and York Theatre Royal)

October

You are part of a global online network of Cold War archaeology nuts. Following an online event listing you join a group of visitors in York, some of whom are interested in the period during and after World War Two, others in contemporary immersive theatre. Taken to a Cold War bunker outside the city at dusk, you are riveted by a dramatised reconstruction of imaginary events using the bunker's equipment and facilities had the bomb ever dropped. You immediately post a strong recommendation on your blog, on Facebook and Trip Advisor. (English Heritage and York Theatre Royal)

November

Walking across (car-free) Lendal Bridge at dusk in the direction of the station you see a figure striding – apparently – across the face of the tall office blocks on the other bank. As a cheer goes up from the balcony of the City Screen and the neighbouring bars you realise this is a piece of outdoor theatre and you, and others, stop to watch as it plays out. From the credits you see this is also playing on digital channel York TV. The man standing next to you recognises the piece from a trail on the welcome screen in his hotel room and volunteers information he has picked up from a piece in One & Other which he has also brought with him from the hotel. You book mark the channel on your iPad. (One & Other, Pilot Theatre and SCY)

December

You are a weekend visitor leaving the Minster as it closes, which you enjoyed even more because the choir seemed to be going through a rehearsal for a major event, but as you leave by the South Door you realise you can still hear the choir. It continues for another hour through a projection onto the nearby external stonework and, a while later the projection changes to a live stream of the bell-ringers practising changes. You decide that, instead of joining the stream of traffic leaving the Park and Ride as you had planned you will stay on an hour or two longer. Now that the buses run to the car park until later at night to accommodate the evening shoppers and theatre and cinema goers, you decide to go back to a restaurant which has just started opening with a longer menu in the evening. (York Minster and Pilot Theatre)