

The image shows a banner for Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd. The top part of the banner is a solid blue rectangle with the text 'Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd' in white. Below this, the banner transitions into a photograph of Hadrian's Wall, a stone wall built by the Romans, stretching across a grassy hillside under a clear sky. The text 'PRESS RELEASE' is written in blue capital letters on a white background below the photograph.

Hadrian's Wall
Heritage Ltd

PRESS RELEASE

'ILLUMINATING HADRIAN'S WALL' EVENT HAILED BLAZING SUCCESS

Illuminating Hadrian's Wall on Saturday 13 March was a blazing success according to the thousand volunteer Illuminators who took part in the event and the spectators who came to watch it.

It is estimated that more than 25,000 people turned out to witness the spectacular event along the 84-mile Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail.

The event recreated the lights that once shone from the imposing Roman turrets and milecastles which were regularly stationed along the length of the Wall.

The line of light brought Hadrian's Wall to life, as well as generating around £1 million of spending by tourists over the weekend.

Illuminating Hadrian's Wall was an ambitious project led by Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd which formed part of the world-class programme of festivals and events developed by the culture¹⁰ team based at NewcastleGateshead Initiative and the Lakes Alive programme in Cumbria presented by Kendal Arts International and Manchester International Arts. Illuminating Hadrian's Wall was also a flagship event of British Tourism Week 2010.

Linda Tuttiett, Chief Executive of Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd, who watched the event from Steel Rigg in Northumberland, said:

"We've been delighted by the enthusiasm that Illuminating Hadrian's Wall has generated. After all the months of hard work it was tremendously moving to see the line of light make its way along the Wall and to see the reactions of the Illuminators and the people who came to watch the event from all across the UK and overseas, as well as the surrounding communities.

"Visitors to Hadrian's Wall Country add nearly £2 billion a year to the economy of the North of England. Businesses across the area have had a very busy weekend and the event has also raised the profile of the Wall just ahead of the main tourist season. The line of light was seen by millions of people on television and there's already been coverage as far afield as Australia, South Africa and the Philippines.

"Working in partnership with local people, we've done something really quite extraordinary to bring to life Britain's longest and greatest World Heritage Site and celebrate the landscape of Hadrian's Wall Country. It's something that many of us will remember for a long time."

At Segedunum Roman Fort in Wallsend 4,000 people witnessed the first beacon being lit by Rosalind Elliott, Deputy Head of Burnside Business & Enterprise College at Wallsend.

Berlin-based Theater Anu put on a half-hour show telling the story of a winged boy, with his costumed mother enacting her part on the roof of Segedunum Museum and four winged angel figures appearing on the top of the museum's observation tower.

A procession of Roman soldiers escorted a torch to light the first beacon at the fort at 5.45pm, which was followed by a fireworks finale.

Carol Bell, Head of Culture and Major Events for culture¹⁰ at NewcastleGateshead Initiative, said:

“This spectacular event really captured the imagination of all involved and achieved the key objectives of raising the profile of the region, Hadrian’s Wall itself and in drawing thousands of people from both the North East and beyond to take part as well as experience this once in a lifetime event. It was a privilege to be involved in its development as well as being among the visitors who came to Wallsend to enjoy the lighting of the very first light and the installation by Theater Anu.”

Over 10,000 people were out in Carlisle city centre to greet the light when it arrived in Bitts Park at 6.50pm. The Welcoming the Light event in the city was organised by Kendal Arts International and Manchester International Arts as a prelude to the Lakes Alive season of events and in association with Carlisle Renaissance, Carlisle Tourism Partnership and Carlisle City Council.

The event included a torchlight procession, with bands, a magical fiery engine, a 7-metre floating angel and a Heliosphere balloon, from which was staged an aerial acrobatics show.

Julie Tait, from Kendal Arts International, says:

“It was exactly what we had hoped for - a magical procession with a real sense of occasion and anticipation and a fantastic atmosphere. The people who came in costume and carried torches played a vitally important role, helping to make this a very special event.

“It really did bring people together from right across the local community, as well as the many visitors who came from all over the UK and even overseas. The performances in the Park and the finale were greeted with awe and wonder. A lot of people have said they thought the event brought the city to life in a very special way and how moved they were to be part of it.

There were also three stewarded spectator points along the central section of the Wall at Brocolitia, Housesteads and Birdoswald.

The line of light ended at the Wall's most westerly point at Bowness-on-Solway in Cumbria, with the last beacon being fired just after 7pm, marked by Roman re-enactors firing burning arrows into the air.

Hadrian's Wall Heritage is supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA). Peter Mearns, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications at the NWDA said:

"Hadrian's Wall is a British icon and this fantastic event has reminded us all just how impressive it is. As well as bringing thousands of visitors to the region, it has demonstrated our ability to deliver world-class events here in the Northwest and has sent the message of Hadrian's Wall to a global audience. I hope it will encourage even more people to come and discover this beautiful part of the world for themselves."

Illuminating Hadrian's Wall was also a flagship event of British Tourism Week 2010 and marked the 1600th anniversary of the end of Roman rule in Britain in 410AD.

The people who volunteered to be Illuminators gave a wide range of reasons for wanting to take part including wanting to celebrate 'an iconic landmark' and their love for 'one of the greatest structures ever built'. Some of the Illuminators marked key moments in their own lives such as birthdays and anniversaries.

The Illuminators included hundreds of people from the communities around Hadrian's Wall as well as enthusiasts from all across the UK and overseas, including people from Canada, Australia, Germany, Belgium and Italy who had come over especially for the event.

The enthusiasm for the event has also been reflected online. More than 3,700 people had become fans of Illuminating Hadrian's Wall on Facebook and over 700 people are following @EmperorHadrian on Twitter. More than 12,000 people have also viewed a 30 second film of aerial footage filmed from a helicopter on the website www.illuminatinghadrianswall.com and on YouTube.

For more information about Hadrian's Wall Country visit www.hadrians-wall.org.

Ends

Images of Illuminating Hadrian's Wall are available by calling 01524-782086.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Paul Gardner or Jon Perkins on 01524-782086,
Paul@ospreycommunications.co.uk

Images of a rehearsal for Illuminating Hadrian's Wall on a 2 mile stretch of the Wall are available together with general images of the Wall.

Notes to Editors

1. Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd was set up in May 2006 in partnership with One NorthEast (One), the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), Natural England and English Heritage. Hadrian's Wall Heritage works in partnership with a number of organisations. It brings together business and conservation, visitors and local communities in a uniquely focused way, with the overall aim of:

- Creating jobs and enhancing the local economy
- Attracting more visitors who will stay longer and spend more in the area
- Creating a vibrant and sustainable visitor economy
- Finding better ways to interpret and protect an internationally recognised monument
- Making Hadrian's Wall a truly world-class destination

2. Illuminating Hadrian's Wall forms part of North East England's world-class programme of festivals and events, managed by culture¹⁰. culture¹⁰ is an annual curated programme of exceptional cultural events and festivals across NewcastleGateshead and North East England. Established in 2004, it is managed by the culture¹⁰ team, funded by Newcastle City Council, Gateshead Council, One North East, Northern Rock Foundation and Arts Council England, North East, working in partnership with NewcastleGateshead Initiative. The Landscape and Heritage theme for 2009/10's programme is inspired by major regional events including the opening of Great North Museum and Hadrian's Wall

celebrations. Curated by culture¹⁰, the programme supports a range of projects which raise the profile of North East England's natural and built assets, exploring the effect of landscape and heritage on the development of the region as well as the impact of people today on our landscape and heritage. For further details see www.NewcastleGateshead.com

3. The event is partnered by Lakes Alive, one of three annual programmes commissioned for WE PLAY, the North West cultural legacy programme for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. WE PLAY is funded by Legacy Trust UK, an independent charity set up to help build a lasting cultural and sporting legacy from the 2012 Olympic Games. The project is led by the Arts Council England Northwest on behalf of a new regional partnership. Lakes Alive is sponsored by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and has also received funding from Arts Council England and the Northern Rock Foundation. The event in Carlisle as part of *Illuminating Hadrian's Wall* is also supported by Carlisle Renaissance, Carlisle Tourism Partnership and Carlisle City Council.

4. *Illuminating Hadrian's Wall* is also a flagship event of British Tourism Week 2010.

- British Tourism Week (15-21 March 2010) aims to demonstrate the critical value of tourism to the economy of the United Kingdom. www.britishtourismweek.com
- Through a week of events throughout the UK it will:
 - Increase awareness of the success and importance of the tourism industry. Britain's fifth biggest industry, worth £114billion pa and which employs 2.65million people.
 - Raise quality standards.
 - Promote training and professionalism.
 - Improve the international competitiveness of the UK tourism industry.
 - Support the preparations for hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- British Tourism Week culminates with the Best of Britain and Ireland travel trade forum and consumer show at London's Olympia from 17-20 March. www.britainandirelandevent.co.uk
- His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is the Patron of British Tourism Week.

- British Tourism Week is organised by VisitBritain with the support of The Tourism Society, and representation from the following organisations on the Executive Council: The Tourism Alliance; Wales Tourism Alliance; Scottish Tourism Forum; VisitEngland; VisitScotland; Visit Wales; Visit London; the English Regions; British Hospitality Association; ABTA the Travel Association; UKinbound; Local Government Association; Association of Leading Visitor Attractions; Travelodge; Hoseasons; Holiday Cottages Group; British Beer & Pub Association; Coach Tourism Council; Group Travel Organisers Association; Virgin Trains; and Best of Britain & Ireland Events.