



News Release

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MARY KING'S GHOST FEST IS SHORT LISTED IN SCOTTISH TOURISM OSCARS!

The unique and hugely popular and paranormal festival, **Mary King's Ghost Fest** – organised by the five star, underground attraction The Real Mary King's Close - has beaten off stiff competition to be short listed for a third year running in one of the most prestigious tourism industry awards, The Scottish Thistle Awards.

Mary King's Ghost Fest is a 10 day, Edinburgh based festival held each year in May which focuses on the themes of the paranormal and supernatural. Ghost Fest has been short listed in the PR Excellence category alongside CM Porter Novelli who is a finalist twice, for launching 'Budongo' at Edinburgh Zoo and for Edinburgh's Winter Festivals.

The Scottish Thistle Awards, which are among the most coveted accolades in the industry, celebrate quality and innovation across a range of categories. The 2008 winners will be announced at a glittering ceremony at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre on Friday 24th October.

Mary King's Ghost Fest's third nomination in Scotland's tourism 'Oscars' is a further testament to the success of this unusual festival and highlights the increasing interest in Scotland's supernatural features. Ghost Fest successfully combines a mix of history, science, ghost stories and legends, appealing to residents as well as driving UK based and overseas visitors to the Scottish capital in May. New events headlining the festival in 2008 included two celebrity 'An Evening With' events with former Living TV's 'Most Haunted' historian Richard Felix, scientific research into environmental sensitivity and the role of ghostly experiences by Edinburgh's University's Koestler Parapsychology Unit and four consecutive nights of Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP) workshops held at different haunted venues across Edinburgh.

Mary King's Ghost Fest is wholly funded by the award-winning 'The Real Mary King's Close' visitor attraction, who work closely with partner organisations across the city in the organisation of Ghost Fest, hosting a range of events throughout Edinburgh to enable visitors and enthusiasts to explore and uncover more about the dark tales and strange paranormal activity for which Edinburgh is internationally renowned.

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General Manager at The Real Mary King's Close, Stephen Spencer, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have been short listed for a third year running at the Scottish Thistle Awards. Mary King's Ghost Fest has proved hugely successful and extremely popular with visitors from across Scotland and beyond, as well as with our local residents. We worked very hard on publicising the festival, implementing an awareness generating six month PR campaign, working with a very limited budget! The staff here at The Real Mary King's Close, along with our festival partners, are thrilled that the festival and PR created for it have been recognised in these prestigious awards."

Congratulating all the finalists, Tourism Minister Jim Mather said: "The huge variety of entries to the Scottish Thistle Awards show what a vibrant and exciting sector of our economy tourism is. As well as creativity and innovation, all the finalists have shown a huge amount of dedication and hard work in developing their business model and promoting their product.

"These established and well recognised awards are a fantastic focal point for our tourism industry, and I wish the finalists every success."

Now into its fourth year, Mary King's Ghost Fest is growing and developing each year by adding new events and partners to the festival line up. As well as highlight events held at The Real Mary King's Close, event and venue support is provided by partner organisations including Mercat Tours, Edinburgh Playhouse, Cameo Cinema, National Library for Scotland, Camera Obscura, Ghost Finders Scotland, Full Moon Investigations, City of the Dead Tours, L.A Events, Edinburgh Bus Tours and The Scottish Mining Museum.

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Notes to Editors

For further press information: Please contact Heidi Folland on 01904 527700 or email heidi@continuum-group.com

The Real Mary King's Close is open daily (except Christmas Day) with tours departing every 20 minutes from 10am. Pre-booking is strongly recommended due to demand. See www.realmarykingsclose.com or call 08702 430 160 for individuals or 08702 411 414 for groups, to book in advance and find out more!

The attraction consists of a number of underground Closes which would have originally been very narrow walkways with houses on either side stretching up to 7 storeys high and dating back several centuries. In 1753 the Burgh authorities decided to develop a grand new building, the Royal Exchange (now the City Chambers). The houses at the top of the Closes were knocked down and part of the lower sections were kept and used as the foundations for the new building, leaving a number of dark and mysterious underground Closes and ancient dwellings steeped in mystery.

Scottish Thistle Awards: The Thistle Awards are recognised as one of the top accolades a tourism business can receive, and reward Scottish tourism businesses that consistently strive for quality and innovation. Over 240 entries were received for this year's Awards and the panel of judges has been extremely impressed with the high standard of entries. For more information about the Thistle Awards visit www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk