

Night sun rises as Lumiere enters second night



By [Mark Tallentire](#), Reporter
(Durham)

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Solar Equation being tested on Wednesday night. After being cancelled due to high winds on Thursday, it is up and operational tonight

THOUSANDS more people flooded into Durham tonight (Friday, November 15) for the second night of the Lumiere light festival.

Organisers estimated more than 30,000 people visited the biennial spectacular's central area on Thursday's opening night and tonight's attendance was expected to top that figure as the weekend got under way.

Producers and spectators welcomed the more relaxed, comfortable atmosphere around the city centre – the contrast to the tense overcrowding seen in 2011 suggesting new measures for this year, such as extended opening hours and ticketing the peninsula at peak times, are proving a success.

Nicky Webb, co-director of Lumiere producers Artichoke, said: "We had a great opening night for Lumiere Durham" Even though we had a similar number of people at the festival as the opening night in 2011, I think everyone would agree that the experience was much more relaxed with the crowd management systems we have implemented making it easier for people to enjoy the artworks that can be found throughout the city."

Solar Equation, a replica of the sun 100 million times smaller than the real thing, which was abandoned due to high winds on Thursday was operating as normal tonight.

Other highlights include a giant moving elephant, an interactive jukebox and stick men 'climbing' North Road's old miners' hall.

Councillor Neil Foster, cabinet member for economic regeneration at Durham County Council – Lumiere's commissioners, said: "It was

an absolute joy to see the smiles on people's faces last night and to hear the laughter of families delighting at the installations and marvelling at the wonders of the lights.

"Events like this have a vital role to play in boosting the local economy and I was particularly pleased to see how many businesses stayed open later to make the most of the passing trade."

The festival attracted extensive coverage in national media and celebrity fans included TV presenter George Clarke, who on seeing Durham Cathedral lit up by Crown of Light tweeted: "This is one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen."

***LUMIERE continues on Saturday and Sunday, from 4.30pm to 11pm.**

All tickets, needed to access the central area between 4.30pm and 7.30pm, have now been issued.

If you do not have a ticket, the advice is to visit the central area later – perhaps taking in the many installations elsewhere before heading for the peninsula after 7.30pm.

***FIVE things not to miss:**

Elephantastic: The giant 3D moving elephant above Elvet Bridge has caught the public's imagination, with pictures going global across Twitter and Facebook before the festival even began.

Solar Equation: This replica of the sun 100 million times smaller than the real thing was a late arrival, having not made it into the sky above Durham University's science site on Thursday due to gusty winds. Don't let the sun go down on you without seeing it.

Crown of Light: This could be your last chance to see this spectacular display, which is making its third Lumiere appearance. Huge images from the Lindisfarne Gospels scrolling across the walls of Durham Cathedral make for a stunning watch.

Volume Unit: Tweet your song requests using #lumieredj and dance along as the sound levels are projected in lights onto Milburngate House, on Framwelgate Waterside.

Aquarium: Another social media hit – watch as illuminated fish swim peacefully around a red phone box. Not the huge spectacle of 2011's snowdome, but quirky, fun and very popular.