

THE WORLD, IN WORDS

CHARLOTTE SQUARE GARDENS
EDINBURGH
www.edbookfest.co.uk
11 – 27 AUGUST 2012

NEWS RELEASE



in association with

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FOR IMMEDIATE USE

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL REPORTS AN EXCEPTIONALLY SUCCESSFUL YEAR

The Edinburgh International Book Festival ended tonight with the inaugural Fred Hood Memorial Lecture delivered by journalist and broadcaster John McCarthy. Over the 17 days of the Book Festival, Charlotte Square Gardens welcomed six of the authors nominated for the 2012 Man Booker Prize, former Prime Minister Gordon Brown delivered the Donald Dewar Memorial Lecture, Alistair Darling spoke on his experiences of the financial crisis and Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz discussed the implications of unequal distribution of wealth. Brand new novels were launched by Ian McEwan, Zadie Smith, Pat Barker, Howard Jacobson, actor John Gordon Sinclair and comedian Russell Kane.

In the popular RBS Children's Programme, Val McDermid was dressed as a pirate, Julia Donaldson launched her new book and David Walliams read from *Gangsta Granny* to a packed house this afternoon. Over 3,000 primary school children from across Scotland will visit the Book Festival tomorrow for the RBS Schools Gala day to enjoy events, activities, workshops and readings from authors including Julia Donaldson, Tom Pow and Theresa Breslin.

Audiences at the Book Festival's series of late night, free Unbound events were rocked by music legend Nile Rodgers, entertained by the Electronic Voice Phenomena, and inspired by Mark Haddon, Kirstin Innes, Christopher Brookmyre and authors from Ireland, Iceland and The Netherlands. Herman Koch, Liza Klausman, Jeet Thayil and Danny Wallace were amongst the 45 authors presenting their debut novels in the programme. All the debut authors are eligible for the Anobii First Book Award, which is voted for by readers and Book Festival audiences and the winner will be announced in October.

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Among the highlights of this year's Book Festival were the inaugural events of the 2012-2013 Edinburgh World Writers' Conference, an ambitious programming partnership with the British Council. The Conference, celebrating the seminal 1962 Edinburgh Writers' Conference, welcomed 50 writers from 25 different countries to discuss the role of fiction in the world today. Over five days, audiences participated in impassioned debates on the future of the novel, a national literature, whether literature should be political, style vs content and censorship today. The Edinburgh World Writers' Conference events will continue at book festivals in 16 countries around the world, starting with the International Literature Festival in Berlin next week before moving onto Capetown in September, and will return to Edinburgh in August 2013 for a plenary session.

With around 225,000 visits this August - the most in the Book Festival's history - Charlotte Square Gardens was busier than ever with visitors attending events, visiting the Bookshops and cafes and relaxing in the sunshine. Ticket sales were up 3% on 2011 and sales of books held steady, an excellent achievement in the current economic climate.

Nick Barley, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival said, "We are obviously delighted with the number of visitors that have come to Charlotte Square Gardens this August. We invited a stellar line up of authors from around the world, and our audiences have, as always, responded with interest and enthusiasm.

"I think it's important to look beyond the statistics and acknowledge the overall impact of the Book Festival, and indeed all the Festivals. Festivals are not all about the numbers, but about the events, the conversations, and to employ an overused word, the legacy. The Edinburgh World Writers' Conference has started something here in Edinburgh that will reverberate around the world, both in the formal Conference sessions at other Book Festivals, but also in conversations on every occasion that writers gather together. 1962 was a seminal event and while the mood in Edinburgh this year has been more collaborative than confrontational, we have already seen some definitive actions from the participating writers.

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“The international reach for the Book Festival has been exceptional this year with television and radio broadcast teams from France, USA, Egypt, South Korea, Portugal, The Netherlands and Australia reporting on Book Festival events and authors and the Edinburgh World Writers’ Conference events being watched online in over 60 countries. We have used social media extensively to continue the conversations started in Book Festival events, and fully expect that these discussions will continue long after we’ve packed away our tents and bookshops.”

The 2013 Edinburgh International Book Festival will take place from Saturday 10 to Monday 26 August and the programme will be announced in June. Audio from events in the 2012 Book Festival will be available on the website (www.edbookfest.co.uk) over the coming months.

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