

**12 August 2008**

## **JOHN PRESCOTT SPEAKS AT THE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL**

John Prescott, former Deputy Prime Minister, spoke at the Edinburgh International Book Festival this afternoon on his career in the Labour Party and in the Government. The conversation with Ian McWhirter in front of a capacity audience, was entertaining and wide ranging, covering topics such as the environment, Iraq and the current leadership situation, where Prescott, in typically ebullient form, retorted "Who?" when David Milliband's name was mentioned.

Asked about the Prime Minister, and his public image, he said "I've heard people ask why Gordon doesn't smile – well they used to say that about me, but when you get into an airplane you don't look to see if the pilot is smiling, you ask if he can take off and land the plane safely."

He spoke of revealing that he suffered from bulimia, saying that when he announced he was a Diabetic it had raised awareness of the illness which impelled his decision to come out as a Bulimic. He believes the public attitude to the illness has been revolutionised as a result, especially amongst men.

He laughed off his "Two Jags" nickname, saying that although he had never previously been a two jags man - the second car had belonged to the Government – he had actually just bought a second Jaguar.

The Book Festival continues until Monday 25 August with talks from Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond, three times Booker Prize winner, and 2008 Booker Nominee Salman Rushdie and in a world first, Vietnamese Author Nam Le, will be beamed live to Charlotte Square from the Melbourne Writers' Festival in Australia. Full details of all the events can be found on [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk).

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