

14 July 2009

## **CATHERINE LOCKERBIE TO STAND DOWN AS DIRECTOR OF EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL**

It was announced today that, after nine highly successful years, Catherine Lockerbie is to step down as Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival in order to move on to an international consultancy role in culture and literature.

Lockerbie, whose work has been recognised by five honorary doctorates amongst many other accolades, became Director in 2000 and has presided over a period of remarkable expansion and transformation. The Edinburgh International Book Festival has become the largest and most pre-eminent event of its kind in the world, with 200,000 people attending over 750 events each year, and with authors, both world-renowned and brand new, invited from over 45 different nations. Under Lockerbie's directorship, the Book Festival has become an internationally acclaimed platform for audiences to debate with leading thinkers from the worlds of politics, science, economics and the media as well as literature.

Catherine Lockerbie said "It has been an unbelievable privilege to lead, nurture and build a festival dedicated to the power of words, ideas and challenging discussion. I am incredibly proud of our world-class team and what we have all achieved. The Book Festival has been a personal mission of mine, and I have poured every ounce of my energy, passion and thought into what has been an all-consuming role. Following a period of medical leave, I believe this to be a propitious moment to move on to new challenges and opportunities.

"Obviously I will be leaving with considerable sadness, but also with intense pride and optimism. I'm handing on the Festival at a point where it is artistically and organisationally in the most robust health. It is a dynamic and changing time in the literary and cultural life of the land and the consultancy role will allow me to retain my links with the writers and organisations to which I am dedicated, but also to explore many exciting new possibilities."

Susan Rice, Chair of the Edinburgh International Book Festival said "Catherine has taken the Book Festival into the major leagues, expanding the size and quality of its programme, the number of visitors and the praise it earns in the public eye. She has even seemingly expanded Charlotte Square Gardens because, though no one thought we could fit any more in, she has managed to do that as well. Catherine moves on from an outstanding term as Director of the Book Festival. She leaves us in good heart and in good hands and she goes with our gratitude, our pride in what she has achieved and our love."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT FRANCES SUTTON, PRESS MANAGER:**

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15 - 31 August 2009, Charlotte Square Gardens, Edinburgh.

[www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk)

Carol Ann Duffy, Poet Laureate said “Catherine Lockerbie has established the Edinburgh International Book Festival as the finest of its kind in the world. Her achievement shines like a beacon throughout the global world of literature. She has been a literary director of integrity, vision, compassion and inspiration and writers and readers everywhere are forever in her debt. She leaves the post with the deep love and gratitude of every man, woman and child who ever attended her festivals.”

Margaret Atwood, who will be launching her new novel, *Year of the Flood*, at the Book Festival in August said “The incomparable Catherine Lockerbie is — well, incomparable. Such passion and dedication and wild Scottish fervour welded to such a nit-picking eye for detail — these qualities are seldom found together. Hooray for her, and may the wind be always at her back.”

The strength of the 2009 Edinburgh International Book Festival programme, conceived by Lockerbie and developed by the Book Festival team, is reflected in the first three weeks of ticket sales which have seen an increase of 35% over the same period last year. Richard Holloway is Guest Director for this year’s festival, preparations for which are well underway. The search for a successor to carry on the development of the Festival will now begin and it is hoped that the new Director will take up their role in time to shape the 2010 programme.

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Frances Sutton, Press Manager

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hi res photographs of Catherine are available for download on

[http://www.edbookfest.co.uk/press\\_office/images.html](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk/press_office/images.html)

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## Notes for Editors

Amongst Catherine Lockerbie's achievements as director are:

- Bringing ten Nobel Prize-winners to Edinburgh, including two visits from Harold Pinter, despite serious illness. For her first festival Lockerbie invited the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk, then little known in the UK, who went on to win the Nobel Prize and become a leading campaigner for freedom of expression – a fundamental tenet of the festival.
- Events by major figures including Muriel Spark, Alan Bennett, Gore Vidal, John Mortimer, Doris Lessing, Seamus Heaney, J K Rowling, Al Gore, John Irving, Salman Rushdie, Sean Connery, Gordon Brown, Richard Dawkins and thousands more. All authors regardless of status are invited on the same basis for the same fee. Since Lockerbie's first festival, writers have been invited to take part in almost 6,000 unique, specially created and programmed literary events.
- A huge development in both the international and the Scottish components of the festival: writers from over 45 countries in the 2009 festival alongside over 200 Scottish authors. Bringing new and exceptional writers from overseas, often appearing in the UK for the first time, has been a defining artistic impetus.
- Major international collaborations and exchanges, notably with Norway and this year Sweden.
- Substantial increases in public funding as well as sponsorship and other earned income. The Book Festival, a not for profit charity, has to raise over 85% of its own income.
- The introduction of major themes including examinations of relations between the Western and Islamic worlds, and the future of nations and global power. The element of political discussion has greatly expanded and is now much emulated elsewhere.
- Pioneering long-distance link-ups such as Margaret Atwood's remarkable LongPen invention, which saw Norman Mailer sign books from over 3,000 miles away, shortly before his death. Lockerbie also initiated a live satellite link-up with Melbourne last year.
- Commissioning, publishing and touring authors for the first time, in the *Lights Off The Quay* project and book, supported by the Scottish Government's Expo fund – which also supports a major Scottish showcase this year.
- The creation of Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature, the Literature Forum for Scotland and Festivals Edinburgh. Lockerbie is a founder of these highly important collaborative organisations which are raising the profile of Scotland's literature and the capital's festivals internationally.

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