

20 October 2009**For Immediate Release****SCOTTISH WRITING TALENT SHOWCASED IN CANADA**

The Edinburgh International Book Festival confirmed today that, with the support of the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund, 14 Scottish authors will travel to Canada to attend the International Festival of Authors in Toronto this week as part of the *Writing Scotland* initiative. *Writing Scotland* is the result of a distinctive partnership between IFOA, North America's largest literary festival, and the Edinburgh International Book Festival providing a focus on Scottish writers at the heart of the Canadian festival's 30th anniversary celebrations.

The authors travelling from Scotland are Alan Bissett, Rob Butlin, Margaret Elphinstone, Murray Grigor, Jen Hadfield, Richard Holloway, Quintin Jardine, A.L Kennedy, Martin MacIntyre, James Meek, Denise Mina, Andrew O'Hagan, Ian Rankin and Eleanor Thom. They will be joined by Roland Gulliver, Programme Manager from the Edinburgh International Book Festival. The Scottish authors will be appearing alongside eminent Canadian writers of Scottish descent including Alistair MacLeod, Alice Munro, Ken McGoogan, Jean McNeil, David Byrne and Linden MacIntyre in the highest ever concentration of Scottish writers on the IFOA stage.

A range of events throughout the Festival will feature the Scottish writers including *Writing Scotland: Writing Scotland's Past* on 24 October where Richard Holloway, Denise Mina and Andrew O'Hagan will explore Scotland's literary heritage and *New Writing Scotland* on October 31 where an Edinburgh International Book Festival panel including Alan Bissett, Margaret Elphinstone, James Meek and Eleanor Thom will examine contemporary Scottish writing.

Culture Minister Michael Russell said: "In the Year of Homecoming it is fitting that so many people in Canada will learn more about Scotland and our literature as a record number of Scottish writers appear at the prestigious IFOA. *Writing Scotland* will focus even more attention on the tremendous breadth and talent of our writers as well as creating new opportunities and future collaborations for all Scottish authors. The rich partnership between these two leading literary events will ensure that Scottish literature and The Edinburgh International Book Festival remain firmly in the spotlight on the international stage as well as strengthening the cultural ties between our two nations."

Roland Gulliver, Programme Manager of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said "We are delighted to be working so closely with this prestigious Canadian Festival. There are so many historical

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EDINBURGH

INTERNATIONAL

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FESTIVAL

in association with

THE  TIMES

THE SUNDAY TIMES
SCOTLAND

Press Release

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

www.edbookfest.co.uk

and modern day links between Canada and Scotland, it seems fitting that in this, the Year of Homecoming, we can showcase the tremendous breadth of Scottish writing to an international audience."

Geoffrey Taylor, Director of IFOA, said "There are more than four million Canadians who claim heritage ties to Scotland. This partnership with the Edinburgh International Book Festival enables us to present the highest ever concentration of Scottish writers on the IFOA stage, and ensures that we can continue to present Scotland's most important contemporary authors to Canadian audiences for years to come."

The International Festival of Authors in Toronto will take place from 21 October to 3 November 2009. Full details of the programme, and the involvement of the Scottish writers, can be found at www.readings.org and full details of the *Writing Scotland* initiative can be found at <http://www.scotland.org/writingscotland/>.

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