

# THE WORLD, IN WORDS

CHARLOTTE SQUARE GARDENS  
EDINBURGH  
[www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk)  
13 – 29 AUGUST 2011

## NEWS RELEASE



Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2011  
FOR IMMEDIATE USE

### SARAH BROWN SURPRISES BOOK FESTIVAL AUDIENCE WITH SPECIAL GUEST

Former first lady Sarah Brown surprised readers at the Edinburgh International Book Festival tonight by asking husband and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown MP to join her on stage.

Mrs. Brown had been scheduled to appear at the Book Festival since June, but the presence of her husband was not known beforehand to the sold out audience in Charlotte Square Gardens.

The couple shared stories of their life behind the black door of number ten with Festival Director Nick Barley, with Mrs. Brown admitting that at times living in the public eye had made her feel like she was, “one step away from your greatest mistake.”

Mrs. Brown reflected on the “peculiarly British” way of living and working in the same building, much like a shop, but joked that the short commute did have its advantages.

After joining his wife on stage Mr. Brown said he had learnt three things since leaving office last year, namely that one or two people with vision can make a difference, that building a “national purpose” is crucial and that he remained committed to fighting global poverty stating, “Global problems need global solutions.”

Mrs. Brown noted that she never confused her role as the wife of the Prime Minister with one of a political advisor, saying that her views were just as equal as any other citizen, and admitted that there was a strict divide between personal and political advice.

Reflecting on the recent phone hacking scandal, Mr. Brown said that for many years, “journalists have been marching with members of the criminal underworld”, and accused some newspapers of unfairly challenging the motives of politicians and not focussing enough on their actions. He later added that

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the “public are much wiser than newspapers.”

Explaining how she wrote the book, *Behind the Black Door*, in a very short period of time, Mrs. Brown said that she did share sections of the book with her husband before it was published, but when asked by a member of the public if he had vetoed any of the content she replied, “Not one bit.”

Mrs. Brown’s appearance at the Book Festival was the second visit by a former first lady in recent years after Cherie Blair discussed her autobiography at the Festival in 2009.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival takes place from the 13 – 29 August 2011. The full programme can be viewed online at [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk) and tickets can be bought through the website or by calling 0845 373 5888.

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