

Monday 22 June 2009

**MARGARET ATWOOD & VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR  
TOP SELLING EVENTS AT BOOK FESTIVAL**

The Edinburgh International Book Festival has today experienced a phenomenal demand for tickets and the launch of Margaret Atwood's new book in St John's Church, Princes Street on 30 August sold out in under two hours – together with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in the RBS Children's Programme. Over 50 events from 700 across the adult and children's programmes sold out by 3.00pm today including Vince Cable, Antony Beevor, Garrison Keillor, the Writing a Novel Workshop, Tom Kitchin, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, the Drawing Manga workshop, Richard Dawkins and David Sedaris.

The 2009 Book Festival programme welcomes 750 authors representing 45 countries who will appear in readings, debates and conversations in Charlotte Square Gardens this August. Other highlights include appearances from Ben Okri, Joss Ackland, David Simon, Douglas Coupland, and Margaret Drabble.

The quality of the programme this year and the special nature of the events – each event is a one-off and takes place in a relatively intimate venue – combined with comparatively low ticket prices has meant that the demand for tickets has been greater than in previous years with ticket sales up to 3.00pm this afternoon exceeding the first full day of sales in 2008.

300 customers were queuing outside the specially created Box Office at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre at 8.30am when bookings opened. Iain Hunter and Marc Capapanni from Edinburgh were first in the queue having waited outside the EICC from 4.20am this morning. They were hoping for tickets for Richard Dawkins, Tom Devine, Jeremy Paxman and Neil Gaiman and were delighted to be able to purchase all their choices.

Richard Holloway, 2009 Guest Director of the Book Festival said "Once again, we are delighted that the Book Festival programme has proved so popular. It is a great reflection on the breadth of our audience and the strength of our programme that events across every genre are selling out so quickly."

"The Festival has invested a significant amount of time, staff and financial resource to develop a system to cope with the demand and we are delighted that we have been able to deal with so many customers satisfactorily today. All our systems are working well and we have been taking ticket sales over the telephone, the internet, by post and at the EICC consistently since 8.30am. We know that due to the extraordinary demand a large number of potential customers were finding it difficult to get through on the phone or via the internet, however they were patient and kept trying and ticket sales have reflected this.

**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)

With over 700 events in the programme, there are still thousands of tickets available to see world class authors – both internationally renowned and relatively unknown.”

The Box Office moves to The Hub on Castlehill tomorrow, Tuesday 23 June, until Thursday 13 August and is open Monday to Saturday from 10.00am to 5.00pm. Tickets may also be booked online – [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk) or by phone 0845 373 5888. Phone lines are open Monday to Saturday, 10.00am to 5.00pm.

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