



BAILLIE GIFFORD BORDERS BOOK FESTIVAL ATTRACTS RECORD AUDIENCES IN A SELL-OUT WEEKEND

For immediate release Wednesday 20th June 2018

Despite having to weather Storm Hector at the start, the Baillie Gifford Borders Book Festival, which took place last weekend (14th – 17th June) in the Scottish Borders, proved as popular as ever, with ticket sales up 15% on last year and nearly a third of the packed programme of events sold-out over the four days.

Alistair Moffat, Festival Director, said:

“Since we believe that to expand the Borders Book festival to more than its four days would be to dissipate its unique magic, our aim has always been to improve its quality and the spectacular 15% increase in ticket sales means that we are doing that. The sessions with The Hairy Bikers, Chris Bonington, Ian Rankin, Neil Oliver, William Hague, Gordon Brown, Stacey Dooley, Rory Bremner, Alexander McCall Smith, Robert Peston, Jan Ravens and Nina Conti were not only bursting at the seams, they were enlightening, funny, moving and utterly engaging.”

The Walter Scott Prize went to Benjamin Myers for The Gallows Pole and this week every letter delivered by the Royal Mail, all 30 million, will carry a postmark celebrating his win, emphasising the undoubted fact that the festival is now a truly major, national event.

Our weather was the worst on record with gales on Thursday and rain every day, but few people let that discourage them. And our team responded brilliantly. Our daunting task now is to compile a programme for 2019 that is even better. But before that, two or three good nights’ sleep would be a good idea.”

The book festival received high praise from participating authors too:

The Hairy Bikers, who opened the Borders Book Festival on the Thursday said:

“What’s not to love. One of the best book festivals in Britain.”

Scotland’s bestselling comic book writer, Mark Millar, said about his first visit to the book festival: *“It’s so nice, informal and friendly. It’s exactly what you want a book festival to be.”*

Whilst Ian Rankin, who returned having last been in 2006, commented: *“It’s got a nice feel to it, a nice vibe to it. Harmony House is gorgeous, the grounds are fantastic. There’s like a book festival Fringe across the lane now. It ticks every box.”*

Neil Oliver added *“it was perfect, just the best”* and Robert Peston reckoned it was *“the best festival I have ever been to.”*

Through a partnership with FoSho Video the Baillie Gifford Borders Book Festival posted daily video updates on Facebook, which have been watched more than 25,400 times.

One of the sell-out events at the festival, Robert Peston’s McInroy & Wood Lecture, on what Brexit will really mean to Britain, will be available soon as a podcast on iTunes and on the festival’s YouTube channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI63cwbgTwRc7XqbEAfW1LA>.

The Baillie Gifford Borders Book Festival will return to Melrose from 13 – 16 June 2019.

More information can be found at www.bordersbookfestival.org.

Notes to Editors:

The **Baillie Gifford Borders Book Festival** took place in Harmony Garden, Melrose from Thursday 14th to Sunday 17th June 2018. The full programme is available at www.bordersbookfestival.org

A wide selection of other pictures from the festival can be found at

www.flickr.com/photos/bordersbookfestival

Or

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/li0wio0s3zru8p2/AADn9RhARAnGxuj3rVW7tm-Qa?dl=0>

Daily videos from the festival can be watched on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTRIS3RBIPGSJY0BsUouWslKLXhrfS5Q3>

For further information, photographs and videos please contact:

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