

The Culture Minister looks forward to the Festivals

by Fiona Hyslop MSP

As well as being one of the elected members for the Lothians region, I am also the Minister responsible for Culture in the Scottish Government. Despite a 6.7% budget cut in my portfolio, we have managed to keep the £2m expo fund for Edinburgh – a fund which encourages home grown Scottish talent to shine in front of our international visitors.



Our capital city is enriched with culture and we should take pride in our Festival City. The Edinburgh Festivals are the world's largest cultural phenomenon, where the number of tickets sold are only exceeded by the Olympics and the World Cup.

Last summer's festivals were no exception. The Fringe festival saw a record breaking 1,955,913 people visit the 2,453 events and attractions including 662 acts who performed along the Royal Mile for free.

I had the pleasure of attending many events and shows at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Music Festivals including:

- Made in Scotland's showcase production of Road Kill
- Performance of Cargo at Leith Links
- A performance by the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra at the Usher Hall

I also attended showings of

- At home with Mrs Money Penny
- Long live the King
- And the Traverse's The Not So Fatal Death of Grampa Fredo

For me, another high point of the summer's festivities was The Edinburgh Book Festival where visitors can attend lectures, workshops or Question and Answer sessions with authors and poets both local and international. Twelve thousand of these events alone were aimed at school children, encouraging new learning techniques through reading and writing. The marquees which take over Charlotte Square each year are a wonderful place to sit and read, or listen to such writers as Carol Ann Duffy, recite her newest or best loved poems or Stuart Kelly, author of 'Scott Land: The Man Who Built a Nation' discussing his passion for Sir Walter Scott.

I must say that I am really looking forward to relaxing at the festivals this year after the hectic run up to the Scottish Parliamentary Elections in May is over.

If you would like to keep up to date with what Fiona is doing in the Lothians or see more photos of her Constituency or Government work you can visit [her website](#).