

# **The UK Government “promoting Scotland in New York”**

**Scotland Office Minister John Lamont made a trip to the US during Tartan Week to promote culture, investment and trade.**

**We were able to confirm with him that the £8.6 million which the UK Government has just awarded the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is “what they asked for” to establish a new Fringe HQ in Edinburgh.**



John Lamont speaking in Bryant Park New York PHOTO Martin P McAdam

The UK Government was represented in a first visit to the event for more than a decade.

Marking the 25th anniversary of National Tartan Day this year, Tartan Week is the celebration of Scottish heritage in the Big Apple. It highlights the ties between Scotland and the United States, and those who take part include representatives of academia, universities, clans, dancers, pipes and drums and of course the Celtic Canines on the streets of Manhattan.

Mr Lamont spoke to The Edinburgh Reporter in Bryant Park where a number of performers were entertaining the crowds. He said: "It's an amazing week this, Tartan Week, here in New York. It's the first time I've been and there are lots of events including the big event – the parade on Saturday when I can wear my Lamont tartan trews. As well as that I have been able to have a number of meetings with businesses and organisations with strong ties to Scotland to understand how those connections have developed over many, many years in some cases

– and also how we can develop them for the future.”



A representative of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe at the

Tartan Day Parade in New York PHOTO Martin P McAdam  
Regarding the £8.6 million funding for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and he confirmed that this money was being awarded to the Fringe Society to “help them develop new premises” and that “more details will be emerging in due course”. Mr Lamont confirmed to The Edinburgh Reporter that this money was “what the Society had applied for – money to help them develop new headquarters to accommodate all their staff”, and that the funding was a “recognition of the importance of the Fringe not just to Edinburgh and Scotland but also to the rest of the UK”.

*Following yesterday's announcement, there's still lots of detail to work through – we're not moving into plush new offices! We'll be able to share more info early next week. We understand the interest in the news, and are working quickly to answer questions that have been asked.*

*– Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society (@EdFringeSociety) [March 16, 2023](#)*

Although the Fringe Society initially said they were not getting “plush new offices” they clarified in a subsequent [statement](#) that indeed they are moving into new premises – which presumably they knew all along if they did apply for the funding as the Minister suggested to us.

The statement said: “Since 2017 in our published blueprint we had also set out an aspiration to have a central community based hub to house the services offered by the Fringe Society, and provide a space for our community partners, artists, visiting arts industry and media.

“The funding announced this week is from the UK Government’s capital investment fund. It is not revenue funding, therefore it is ring-fenced to be used against capital spending only.”



The Cabinet Secretary was accompanied on the trip by performers from The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. The all-female troupe is made up of two pipers, a fiddle player and four dancers. This was the first time the Tattoo had been represented in New York.



The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo Dancers in Bryant Park  
PHOTO Martin P McAdam



The Minister also took part in a number of other events, including:

Attending a recreation of the first Tartan Week parade 25 years ago, which marched from the British Consulate to the UN Plaza. This included performers from The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Hosting a reception with The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and Edinburgh Festival Fringe with CEO Shona McCarthy, showcasing the best in Scottish arts and culture. Refreshments at the event will be provided courtesy of Johnnie Walker Scotch Whisky.

Taking part in a panel discussion on renewable energy and the drive to Net Zero, hosted by the Scottish North American Business Council and involving representatives from both sides of the Atlantic.

Attending a roundtable event with members of the financial services industry hosted by EY and the UK Government's Department for Business and Trade.

The government says that the Minister's presence at Tartan

Week highlights the importance of the relationship between Scotland and the United States, the significant contributions that Scottish-Americans have made to American society, as well as our many trade links. The USA is Scotland's top exports market, with latest figures showing services exports worth £5 billion and goods exports worth £4 billion, and with beverages alone counting for more than £1 billion.

UK Minister for Scotland John Lamont said: "I am very pleased to be representing the UK Government at New York's Tartan Week. It is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Scotland and our world class exports – be they financial services, Scotch or ceilidh dancing. The ties between Scotland and the United States are strong and enduring, and events like this showcase the lasting and important friendship between our two countries."

Business and Trade Minister Nigel Huddleston said: "Our trading relationship with the US is a hugely important one, with Scottish businesses exporting billions of pounds worth of high-quality goods and services each year.

"Events such as Tartan Week help us to celebrate these links, but also to further strengthen ties with US buyers.

"We've already made encouraging progress in removing trade barriers at state and federal level, and the UK Government will continue to do all it can to deliver for Scottish businesses and consumers."

Jason Barrett, Chief Operating Officer for The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, said: "We are delighted to be invited by the Scotland Office to New York's 25th Tartan Week celebrations. The opportunity to share Scottish and military traditions as our Tattoo performers march alongside other extraordinary local and international Scottish organisations highlights our ambition to share our rich heritage with the world."

The UK Government said in a press release about the visit that

it “works tirelessly around the world to promote and protect the interests of Scotland”. There is also a reminder of the network of 282 missions in 180 countries and territories, where British diplomats “represent the interests of the whole United Kingdom, generating trade and investment and proudly promoting Scotland’s rich culture and heritage”.

The UK Government also issued a reminder that it has been seeking to remove trade barriers with the United States through a series of state-level MoUs, with more expected in the coming months. There have been “major trade breakthroughs at the federal level, including the removal of restrictions preventing high-quality Scottish beef from being sold in the US and resolving the Section 232 tariff dispute, resulting in the removal of 25 per cent tariffs on British steel”.

The Tartan Parade, which took place on Saturday 15 April is a very visible event for Scots and Scotland in New York City, drawing thousands of spectators each year as well as the 3,600 people who marched down Sixth Avenue. The event has become a tradition in the Big Apple, and is a testament to the enduring cultural legacy of Scotland in the United States.

The Edinburgh Reporter has asked the Festival Fringe for comment, and asked for an interview with CEO Shona McCarthy both ahead of and during Tartan Week.



