



Issued 16.00, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September

## **MORE VISITORS THAN EVER BEFORE AT EDINBURGH MELA**

This year's Edinburgh Mela, which took place this weekend (3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> September), has been the most successful yet, with organisers estimating up to 30,000 visitors on the first day alone.

As the sun shone on the Pilrig Park site, artists from countries across the world, including Turkey, Bulgaria, Canada, India, Pakistan, Iran and Zimbabwe, gave performances in a variety of tented venues, an open-air central stage, and walking through the festival crowds in a series of much-enjoyed 'promenades'. At the end of the day many diverse artists came together in jam sessions in the Chai Serrai tent – a 'first' for the Festival.

The eighty stallholders and information centres reported an upturn in business from last year, and BBC Asian Network's workshops to find new talent for their weekly radio drama *Silver Street* reported a busy weekend with some interesting acting talent to follow up.

Out of the Blue Productions took over as producers of this year's Edinburgh Mela, which was founded in 1995 by members of Edinburgh's Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi communities.

The Rt Hon Lesley Hinds, Lord Provost of Edinburgh and chair of the Edinburgh Mela board, said:

"This year's Mela has been the most diverse yet, with performers from all over the world, and a really fantastic atmosphere on the site – open, exciting and buzzing. The visitor figures show how the partnership between the City Council and Out of the Blue, and between the city's cultural communities, really can work."

Last year over 40,000 people attended the Edinburgh Mela over 2 days. The festival is funded by the City of Edinburgh Council, the Scottish Arts Council, and project-managed by Out of the Blue.

For further information please contact: Colman Getty Scotland PR on 0131 558 8851 or email Emma Henderson: 07977 134 614 Rebecca Salt: 07970 783 213 email [rebecca@colmangettypr.co.uk](mailto:rebecca@colmangettypr.co.uk)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. The Edinburgh Mela 2005 took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> September at Pilrig Park, off Leith Walk, 12noon until 9pm daily.
2. For full details of this year's Edinburgh MELA programme please contact Colman Getty PR on 0131 558 8851.
3. The Edinburgh Mela was founded in 1995 by members of Edinburgh's Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi communities, and one of its key objectives from the outset was to reflect and celebrate Scotland's cultural diversity, while retaining its roots in the South Asian communities.
4. Main Sponsors of the 2005 Edinburgh Mela are Health Scotland, Royal Bank of Scotland, Western Union, Unison and Cairn Energy