



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **UK AND IRELAND'S LARGEST EVER BOOK CLUB FESTIVAL GETS UNDERWAY IN ENNIS, CO. CLARE**

**Ennis, County Clare, IRELAND, Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007** - Some of the country's most renowned literary figures will gather in County Clare over the next three days to participate in the inaugural Ennis Book Club Festival 2007. Acclaimed Irish authors Patrick McCabe, Edna O'Brien, Ré Ó Laighléis, Carlo Gébler, Ann Enright and Niall Williams will join hundreds of literary enthusiasts from all over Europe at the inaugural Festival, which kicks off today.

Mayor of Ennis, Cllr. Joe Reidy said that the event - one of the largest of its kind in either the UK or Ireland – will provide a welcome boost to tourism in the county capital while presenting a unique opportunity for book club members to meet and exchange ideas about all aspects of literature.

*"The Ennis Book Club Festival 2007, which is supported by Clare County Library, will bring together some of the 150 Library Book Clubs and 300 Private Book Clubs that exist nationwide. Those who make the trip to County Clare will enjoy poetry in the cosy cafes, readings in the many restaurants and shops, and drama on street corners as they wander through the narrow streets and lanes of Ennis",* Mayor Reidy said.

Throughout the three-day Festival, events will be held in such venues as Glór Irish Music Centre and the De Valera Library as well as in various hotels, cafes, bookshops and restaurants around Ennis. According to Frances O'Gorman, Festival Chairperson, *"The Festival programme has a very broad brief as it is not confined to any one form of literature. It includes author visits, readings, lectures, workshops,*

*exhibitions and cookery demonstrations, Irish language drama, library book sales, musical entertainment, sale of Irish language books and youth theatre performances in various venues around Ennis”*

*“We are keen to give the book clubs an eclectic mix that won’t be found at any other literary festival and that reflects the reading passions of many in the country. There will also be a section for Irish language book clubs”, Ms. O’Gorman added.*

A number of internationally renowned authors are scheduled to participate in the inaugural Festival. One of Ireland’s most controversial and critically acclaimed authors of the twentieth century, **Edna O’Brien** will take centre stage when she performs a reading of her latest book and takes part in a public interview at Glór Irish Music Centre on Saturday, March 3rd. The public reading and interview will be chaired by Clare County Librarian **Noel Crowley**. The programme also boasts contributors such as **Patrick McCabe**, author of many works including ‘*The Butcher Boy*’, ‘*Breakfast on Pluto*’ and his most recent book ‘*Winterwood*’. Other authors include **Ré Ó Laighléis**, the biggest selling contemporary writer in the Irish language; **Dermot Healy**, novelist, playwright and poet; international best selling author **Niall Williams**; short-story writer **Evelyn Conlon**; and Clare-based writer **Eddie Stack**. Book lovers will also get a sneak preview from award-winning author **Anne Enright**, who will read from a work in progress.

On Sunday 4th March, authors **Charlie Bird**, RTE Chief News Correspondent and author of ‘*This is Charlie Bird*’; Booker Award nominee **Carlo Gébler**; **Rosita Boland**, Irish Times journalist, poet and author of ‘*A Secret Map of Ireland*’; and **PJ Curtis**, broadcaster, record producer, author and music historian, will take us through the thrills and terror of selling their books. Experienced broadcaster, journalist and communications consultant, **Caimin Jones**, will chair this session.

Poetry will also feature prominently at the festival. Hennessy Award winner **Mary O’Malley**; critically acclaimed poet and broadcaster **Thomas McCarthy**; **Michael Coady**, winner of the Patrick Kavanagh Award for Poetry; and poet and dramatist **Rita Ann Higgins**, whose many awards include the Peadar O’Donnell Award, will all delight and challenge their audiences during the Festival.

**Kate Bateman** of the School of English and Drama and the School of Education and Lifelong Learning in UCD will host an exhibition entitled ‘*How to Read a Novel*’.

'*How to Read Poetry*', meanwhile, is the title of poet Mary O'Malley's workshop where she will share valuable insights into exploring poetry.

Film is also included in the Festival itinerary with special screenings of Neil Jordan's film adaptations of Patrick McCabe's novels, '*The Butcher Boy*' and '*Breakfast on Pluto*'. Other events include a presentation on the '*Kate O'Brien Papers*' by Archivist **Róisín Berry**, a walking tour of the historic town of Ennis with local historian **Seán Spellissy**, a talk as Gaeilge by **Seán Ó Ceallaigh** on Éamonn Mac Giolla Iasachta (Edward MacLysaght), one of the foremost genealogists of the 20th Century. There will also be a presentation on the '*John McGahern Papers*' by Archivist **Fergus Fahey** of NUI Galway, and a talk on Book Clubs by Mayo County Librarian **Austin Vaughan**. Chef, food writer and proprietor of Cork's Café Paradiso, **Denis Cotter** will cater for culinary tastes by revealing his secrets in a cookery demonstration and talk. Chocolate tastings will take place in Barrack Street's '*Chocolat*' shop.

Committee member, Ciana Campbell said, "*Ticket sales have primarily been driven by a quality programme of events that contains some of the UK and Ireland's most popular authors. Others have been attracted by the wide variety of events scheduled to take place during the Festival.*"

Full details on ticket prices and the festival are available at [www.ennisbookclubfestival.com](http://www.ennisbookclubfestival.com), Telephone 087-9723647/085-7758523 or Email [info@ennisbookclubfestival.com](mailto:info@ennisbookclubfestival.com).

A limited number of tickets for Edna O'Brien's appearance at Glór are available. Tickets are priced at EUR15 (concession price of EUR12). Bookings can be made by phoning Glór box office at 065 6843103.