

Ennis Book Club Festival '08 Line-up Confirmed

Ennis, County Clare, IRELAND, 7th January 08

A number of internationally renowned authors have been confirmed as participants in the Ennis Book Club Festival 2008, details of which were announced today.

The County Clare capital will host the second annual festival from 29th February to 2nd March. The three-day programme of events, supported by Clare County Library, is expected to attract hundreds of book club members and book lovers from all over Europe and North America.

The Festival programme will feature author visits, readings, lectures, workshops, exhibitions and cookery demonstrations, musical entertainment and chocolate tasting in various venues around Ennis.

Contributors will include British author Joanne Harris, who wrote the best seller '*Chocolat*'; Roddy Doyle, a Dublin dramatist, screenwriter and award winning author of '*The Commitments*', '*The Snapper*' and '*The Van*'; Hugo Hamilton, winner of the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature; Morgan Llywelyn, an esteemed author of historical fantasy, fiction and non-fiction books; Dermot Bolger, the author of eight novels and winner of the Samuel Beckett Award; and Nuala O Faolain, Irish Times columnist and author of '*Are You Somebody?*'

Other festival participants will include Neven Maguire, an award winning celebrity chef; Lorna Landvik, actor, playwright and author of the best selling novels '*Patty Jane's House of Curl*' and '*The Tall Pine Polka*'; Thomas Lynch, a Michigan-based essayist, poet and funeral director; Meda Ryan, historian and author of '*Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter*'; bilingual writer Nuala Ní Chonchúir; West of Ireland-based author David Rice; Ré O Laighlís, the biggest selling contemporary writer in the Irish language; and poet Mary O'Donnell.

The inaugural Ennis Book Club Festival, held last March, featured authors Patrick McCabe, Edna O'Brien and Booker Prize winner Ann Enright. Literary enthusiasts from all over North America and Europe attended the event, including members from many of Ireland's 150 Library Book Clubs and 300 Private Book Clubs.

Commenting today at the official launch of the Festival programme of events, Mayor of Ennis Cllr. Tommy Brennan expressed optimism that this year's event would again attract thousands of people to the town.

"The event will not only serve and reflect the reading passions of many in the country, but once again provide a significant boost to the local tourism sector. I would like to congratulate the Festival Organising Committee for securing the participation of numerous high profile contributors", stated the Mayor.

Besides various workshops and readings by the principal participants, the Festival's programme of events will include workshops on how to set up and maintain book clubs; two presentations by Trinity College Dublin lecturer Dr. Darryl Jones on the work of Jane Austen; a presentation on the papers of Maurice Walsh (author of the *Quiet Man*) by archivist Martin Morris; a poetry session and CD launch by the Clare Three-Legged Stool Poets; the story of the West Clare Railway by famed folklorist

Eddie Lenihan; and a speed dating-style networking session for book club members to get to know one another and exchange views.

Elsewhere, there will be a presentation entitled '*10 Books You Must Read*' by Ms. Marion Coy, Director of the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology; a walking tour of the historic streets and buildings of Ennis; a talk by University of Limerick English lecturer Dr. Michael Griffin on the 18th century Ennis poet Thomas Dermody; a talk on the 19th century's most famous folk healer, Feakle-native Biddy Early; and an '*Author Identification Parade*' fun competition featuring author effigies designed and constructed by local artist Jean Regan.

Kate Bateman of the School of English and Drama and the School of Education and Lifelong Learning in UCD will host a workshop 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.

Noreen Meagher, who is blind, will host a talk on the value of Audio books for the visually impaired. Included in the session will be a presentation by Colleen Pixley from the National Council for the Blind of Ireland. Irish language readings will be also held to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge 2008, while RTE's Rachael English and broadcaster/journalist Caimin Jones will chair the Festival's two main symposiums.

"We are keen to give the book clubs an eclectic mix that will not be found at any other literary festival and that reflects the reading passions of many in the country", explained Ms. Frances O'Gorman, Chairperson of the Ennis Book Club Festival Organising Committee.

She continued, "Book Clubs from Ireland the UK are invited to get together in Ennis to share their joy of reading, to meet authors, to discuss books, and to have a weekend break with friends. The festival offers an ideal opportunity for comparing notes and chatting with other Book Club members from all over the country. Non Book Club readers are also invited to come along and to find out how to go about setting up a club in their own area."

"Demand for tickets is growing so I would urge anyone interested in attending any of the Festival events to book their places as soon as possible", concluded Ms. O'Gorman.

Tickets for all events are now on sale at Glór Box Office - 065 6843103
info@glor.ie
<http://www.glor.ie>

For further details on the Ennis Book Club Festival 2008 see
<http://www.ennisbookclubfestival.com>

Alternatively email info@ennisbookclubfestival.com
or contact 00353879723647 / 00353857758523.