



## MEDIA RELEASE

# ***'GOLD OF TRADAREE' TO BE PREMIERED IN NEWMARKET ON FERGUS***

**Newmarket on Fergus, County Clare, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2007** - A play charting major historical events and figures in the Newmarket on Fergus area is to be premiered in the village this month. Written by internationally renowned playwright Miriam Gallagher, *'The Gold of Tradaree'* features a strong cast of local Clare actors who bring to life an array of Clare legends. Further showings of the play are scheduled to take place in Kilrush and Ennis in the coming weeks.

*"The Gold of Tradaree is a fast moving epic play that brings to the stage the historical events that have shaped Clare's history, spanning from the late bronze age at Mooghaun Hill Fort through to present times"*, explained Director Jenny Walsh Bassett from the Banner Theatre Company.

Scenes include Mooghaun Hill Fort during the Bronze Age when the famous Gold of Tradaree was plundered; a tribute to Brian Ború, High King of Ireland who was born not far from Tradaree; the fighting spirit of fiery Máire Rua, wife to Conor O'Brien; the social and political achievements of William Smith O'Brien; the sporting passions of Edward O'Brien who built the turret at Dromoland; the famous Ralahine Commune; the 1854 dramatic discovery of the gold by workmen digging the new railway line from Ennis to Limerick, and the Clare Hurlers preparing to 'go for gold' and win glory for Clare.

Ms. Walsh Bassett continued, *"This historical tapestry of a play is interwoven with traditional Irish Music and Irish dance that is full of surprises and is sure to get your feet tapping and hands clapping for more. Personally, having a good script and a*

*dedicated talented cast to work with has provided me with a wonderful foundation for this production.”*

To emphasise the play’s local context, the producers of ‘*The Gold of Tradaree*’ have worked with members of the community, who are involved in all aspects of the play including acting, costume making, playing music and designing sets.

According to Siobhan Mulcahy, Arts Officer with Clare County Council, “*From actors to general helpers, from children to senior citizens, we were delighted to welcome members of the community to participate in this production. For many this is their first foray into theatre but the essence of a community play is that it is staged by the community as a whole and we are delighted to see so many members of the community get involved.*”

The Arts Office of Clare County Council commissioned Miriam Gallagher to write the play in 2004 under the ‘Per Cent for Arts Scheme’ associated with a new housing development at Kilnasoolagh. The Waterford-born Playwright, novelist & screenwriter Miriam Gallagher - a graduate of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art - is best known for her novel ‘*Song for Salamander*’ and her play ‘*Fancy Footwork*’. Since 1983, over twenty of her plays have been performed in Ireland, Europe, USA and Canada and her work translated into Irish, Dutch, Finnish and Russian.

‘*The Gold of Tradaree*’ will premiere at the Newmarket on Fergus Community Centre on Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at 8pm. A gala performance will take place in Glór, Ennis on May 5<sup>th</sup> while a further performance will be staged at It will be performed in Kilrush Community School during the summer.

For further information please contact the County Arts Office at 065-6846267 or [arts@clarelibrary.ie](mailto:arts@clarelibrary.ie).

- **Jenny Walsh Bassett Biog** - After Graduating from Royal Holloway, University of London and Trinity College Dublin where she specialised in writing, directing and devising theatre. Jenny directed her own adaptation of Lewis Carroll's 'Alice Through the Looking Glass', entitled 'Alice' that was performed by Axiomatic Theatre Company that toured London. Other direction includes work with DBT Theatre Challenge devising performances in 12 hours across Theatres in London. Jenny has also worked as a drama teacher in further education colleges and a drama facilitator with a variety of client groups in secondary schools throughout London and was Writer and Director of a major Theatre in Education project with Fusion Carnival Community Arts. The project funded through London Borough of Brent Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme, bought together 12 infant schools and 4 youth clubs culminating in a carnivalesque theatre production 'Write On.'
- Jenny's dream has always been to return to her Irish roots and nurture a theatre company here in Clare. In 2004 Banner Theatre Company ( BTC ) was set up in Clare to produce and tour precision driven drama. BTC Drama productions include 'Turning of the Tide' written and directed by Jenny Walsh Bassett, 'Golden Egg of Peace' Written and Directed by Jenny Walsh Bassett. BTC has participated in a mentoring programme that culminated in a site specific performance with Welsh performance company Earthfall. BTC has run community drama workshops for adults, teenagers and children and has developed educational partnerships with St Joseph's Secondary School, Kilkee and The Boys summer project Kilrush leading to performances for stage and radio. Jenny has recently written and directed ' Fishy Tales on a Kilkee Corner' a comedy series for Radio Corca Baiscinn that is to be broadcast in the autumn.
- **Miriam Gallagher Biog** - Her Selected Plays are published: Fancy Footwork (Dublin, Soc. Irish Playwrights, 1997, 2nd Edition) and Kalahari Blues & Other Plays (Dublin, Mirage, 2006) Her novel Song for Salamander was published in 2004 (Trafford, Canada) and launched at the United Arts Club, Dublin by Macdara Woods, a leading Irish poet who called it 'A paradigm for our times.' Her short stories are published in several anthologies of Irish Writing. Her film Gypsies had screenings in Ireland, UK, New York, San Francisco and at the International Children's Film Festival in Hyderabad, India. She received Arts Council & European Script Fund awards for Girls in Silk Kimonos (feature length screenplay celebrating Constance & Eva Gore Booth) Other awards include MHA TV Script Award for Kevin, EU Theatre award and a Writer's Exchange to Finland. Miriam has served on the committees of Irish PEN, Irish Writers Union, Irish Copyright Licensing Agency, Society of Irish Playwrights and as a judge for the O.Z. Whitehead Play Competition. She has been a visiting lecturer at universities in Athens, New York, Boston and Pretoria. Her Mss are in the National Library and film work in the Irish Film Archive.
- - **TRADAREE\*** or **\*TRADRAIGH:** The ancient parish of Tradaree was associated with the extensive parish of Newmarket, which stretches from Bunratty bridge to Latoon bridge. Tradition has it that a Milesian leader called Cormac Cas married the daughter of Oisín, the son of Finn MacCumhaill. It was a descendant of Cormac, Lughaidh Meann, who expelled the Fir Bolg from Clare while his son, Conal Eachluaith, succeeded him. Conal Eachluaith had a son called Cas from whom the Dal gCais later descended. The eldest son of Cas was Blod from whom descended Brian Ború some centuries later. The twelfth son of Cas was Lughaidh Delbaeth whose daughter married Trad, the son of Tossach. Tossach was a chieftain and a druid. Trad being the father of a large family was given the large tract of land later to be known as Tradaree. For more log on to [www.clarelibrary.ie](http://www.clarelibrary.ie)