

ATTN News Editor and Picture Desk: Images relating to today's festival launch are available from Press 22 at (00353) 61-204222. Interviewees with individual Festival participants may be arranged on request (see Notes to Editor)

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, 13 January 2010

LITERARY FIGURES BOOK IN TO ENNIS FESTIVAL

The growing interest in book clubs throughout Ireland is reflected in the line-up for one of the most eagerly anticipated events on the literary calendar, details of which were officially unveiled today.

Tickets go on sale this Friday for the 2010 Ennis Book Club Festival which takes place in the Clare County capital from March 5-7.

Supported by Clare County Library, the three-day programme of events is expected to attract hundreds of Book Club members and book lovers from all over Europe and North America. The Festival programme features author visits, readings, lectures and workshops, exhibitions, walking history tours, musical entertainment and chocolate tasting in various venues around Ennis. It also includes Ireland's first 'Book Club of the Year Award' and a professional development workshop for library staff.

Among the contributors to the fourth annual festival will be **Lionel Shriver**, prolific journalist and Orange Prize-winning author of 'We Need to Talk About Kevin' and 'The Post-Birthday World'; **Joseph O'Connor**, journalist, screenwriter and author of ten Irish number one bestsellers including 'Star Of The Sea', 'Cowboys and Indians', 'Desperadoes', 'The Salesman' and 'Inishowen'; **Tim Pat Coogan**, biographer, historian, journalist and writer of "Michael Collins" and 'Ireland in the Twentieth Century'; **Diarmaid Ferriter**, author, historian, and university lecturer; **Paul Howard**, journalist, author and creator of the cult character Ross O'Carroll-Kelly; and **Fiona Looney**, columnist, playwright, scriptwriter and media personality.

Other participants include multi-award winning poet, **Paul Durcan**; Irish historian, crime novelist, journalist and broadcaster, **Ruth Dudley Edwards**; Irish author of 'Tenderwire', **Claire Kilroy**; US essayist, poet, short stories writer, funeral director and winner of the American Book Award and The Heartland Prize for Nonfiction, **Thomas Lynch**; historian and author of 1916 Rising novel 'Blood Upon the Rose', **Gerry Hunt**; American poet **Knute Skinner**, Irish journalist, columnist and politician, **Senator Eoghan Harris**; poetry group **Clare Three-Legged Stool Poets**; editor of Irish magazine 'Rí-Rá', **Aidan Courtney**; Ennis-based graphic novel analyst **David O'Leary**; and journalist, broadcaster, author and founder of Grow-It-Yourself Ireland, **Michael Kelly**.

Academic contributors to the festival include **Dr. Paul Delaney**, School of English at Trinity College, who will lead a discussion on popular writer Colm Tóibín's work; **Alan Titley**, author, playwright, poet and Professor of Modern Irish and Head of Department at University College Cork; and **Niall MacMonagle**, reviewer, editor and English teacher at Dublin's Wesley College, who will present a workshop entitled 'How to Read a Novel'.

Claire Keegan, award-winning short story writer and author of "Antarctica" and "Walk the Blue Fields" in reading and discussing her writing with join Clare-based author **Niall Williams**. One of the highlights of the festival weekend will be The Sunday Symposium, during which Tim Pat Coogan, Ruth Dudley Edwards Senator Eoghan Harris and Diarmaid Ferriter will partake in a panel discussion on the subject of "Reading History". The session will be chaired by experienced broadcaster, journalist and communications consultant, Caimin Jones.

Meanwhile, the Festival is inviting library staff nationwide to a free workshop on how to start, develop and challenge a Book Club. The professional development workshop, which will be presented by **Anne Downes** of Opening the Book, has been designed specifically for library staff who are interested or involved in book clubs and will cover areas such as managing group dynamics, injecting new life and bringing new ideas to reading groups".

The 2010 Festival also features Ireland's foremost 'Book Club of the Year Award'. The winning Book Club (up to a maximum of six

people) will receive a prize of free weekend passes to festival events and overnight accommodation at the Temple Gate Hotel in Ennis.

According to Festival Chairperson Ciana Campbell (*available for interview on 00353-879723647*) there has been a surge in membership among new and existing book clubs throughout Ireland. She added: “The festival is a wonderful social and literary event that brings together Book Club members, readers and authors from all over Ireland and beyond. This year’s event presents a unique opportunity for all literary enthusiasts to share their joy of reading, to meet authors, to discuss books, and to have a weekend break with friends.”

Ms. Campbell says the significant increase in interest in book clubs is the focus of a questionnaire by the Ennis Book Club Festival Organising Committee. “We are inviting people to complete the questionnaire on our website, which aims to gather information on the scale and nature of book club activity across Ireland”, she commented.

The inaugural Ennis Book Club Festival was held in 2007. Past participants include Patrick McCabe, John Boyne, Carlo Gébler, Edna O’Brien, Joanne Harris, Brian Keenan, Roddy Doyle, Diarmuid Gavin, Hugo Hamilton, Allan Guthrie, Jennifer Johnston, John Connolly, Dermot Bolger, Salley Vickers, Fintan O’Toole, Gerard Donovan, Lorna Landvik, Gerry Adams and the late Nuala O Faolain. Previous festivals have attracted literary enthusiasts from all over North America and Europe, including members from many of Ireland’s 150 Library Book Clubs and more than 300 Private Book Clubs.

Tickets for all events are on sale at:

Glór Box Office 00353656843103 / boxoffice@glor.ie

Further details on ticket prices and the festival are available from

www.ennisbookclubfestival.com,

www.twitter.com/ebcf

info@ennisbookclubfestival.com

087 9723647 / 085 7758523.

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Notes To Editor:

- Ciana Campbell, Festival Chairperson is available for interview on 00353-879723647.
- Images relating to today's Festival launch are available from Press 22 at (00353) 61-204222. Additional high-resolution images may be downloaded from www.dunphyprimages.com/search/label/Ennis%20Book%20Club%20Festival%202010
- Contributor images and biographies are available on request. Interviewees with individual festival participants may be arranged on request, subject to availability. Please contact Mark Dunphy of Dunphy Public Relations on 086-8534900 or media@dunphypr.com

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