

EMBARGO - Friday 6 March 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

Tills Ring As Books Open In Ennis

Friday, 6 March 2009 - Over 3,000 literary enthusiasts from throughout Ireland and further afield will gather in the Clare County capital this weekend to attend the third annual Ennis Book Club Festival.

The three-day programme of events, in association with Clare County Library, is expected to inject in excess of EUR1 million into the local economy. The Festival programme will feature author visits, readings, lectures, workshops, exhibitions, musical entertainment and chocolate tasting in various venues around the town.

The line-up includes **John Boyne**, author of "The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas"; **Salley Vickers**, best selling British novelist and author of "Miss Garnet's Angel"; **John Breen**, author of "Alone It Stands"; **Jennifer Johnston**, Booker Prize nominated writer; **Allan Guthrie**, Scottish crime novelist; **Mark O'Halloran**, award winning writer and actor; and journalist and broadcaster **Kevin Myers**.

The festival launch this evening will include a "giant book club gathering" featuring a mass reading and discussion of "The Book of Lost Things" by novelist **John Connolly**.

One of the highlights of the weekend will be the Sunday Symposium during which the theme of 'Reading Politics' will be explored by Sinn Féin President and published author **Gerry Adams**, journalist and political analyst **Conor O'Clery**, Public Relations consultant **Terry Prone** and Labour politician **Michael D. Higgins**.

Meanwhile, students from **Trinity College Dublin** will stage an exclusive performance of "The Trial of Oscar Wilde" at Ennis Courthouse. The only other enactment of the trial, which led to Wilde's public disgrace and two year imprisonment for acts of "gross indecency", was held at Trinity College in April.

Other festival participants will include **Gerard Stembridge**; novelist, film director, playwright and co-author of the satirical radio show 'Scrap Saturday'; **Colm Liddy**, Newmarket-on-Fergus author of "40 Fights Between Husbands And Wives"; **Gerard Donovan**; author of the Booker Prize nominated "Schopenhauer's Telescope"; **Aifric Campbell**, author of "The Semantics of Murder"; travel writer **Manchán Magan**; and **Denis Sampson**, broadcaster and author of a book on John McGahern entitled "Outstaring Nature's Eye".

Poetry will also feature prominently at the festival. Winner of the Rooney prize for Irish Literature, **Medbh McGuckian**; founder member of Aosdána and winner of the Marten Toonder prize for Literature, **Micheal O'Siadhail**, awarded an Irish American Cultural Institute prize for poetry in 1982 and in 1998 the Marten Toonder prize for Literature.; Dublin-based Russian poet, **Anatoly Kudryavitsky**; winner of the 2003

Cúirt Festival Poetry Grand Slam, **Kevin Higgins**; new poet **Tom Conaty**, Galway writer and poet **Órfhlaith Foyle**; and poet and dramatist **Rita Ann Higgins**, whose many accolades include the Peadar O'Donnell Award, will all delight and challenge their audiences during the Festival.

Frances O'Gorman, Chairperson of the Ennis Book Club Festival said that the event - one of the largest of its kind in either the UK or Ireland – will provide a welcome boost to the local tourism sector while presenting a unique opportunity for book club members to meet and exchange ideas about all aspects of literature

“Those who make the trip to County Clare will enjoy poetry, readings, workshops, walking tours and drama in the various venues around Ennis all weekend” she added.

Commenting on the festival line-up, Ms. O'Gorman said: “The involvement of so many high profile authors, academics and literary figures will no doubt contribute greatly to what will be a diverse programme of events.”

The inaugural Ennis Book Club Festival was held in 2007. Past participants include Patrick McCabe, Edna O'Brien, Ann Enright, Joanne Harris, Brian Keenan, Roddy Doyle, Diarmuid Gavin, Hugo Hamilton, Dermot Bolger, Fintan O'Toole, Theo Dorgan, Lorna Landvik and the late Nuala O Faolain.

Both 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 300 Private Book Clubs.

For further details on the Ennis Book Club Festival 2009 see www.ennisbookclubfestival.com.

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

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Notes to Editor:

- To arrange an interview with Festival organisers or participants please contact Mark Dunphy of Dunphy Public Relations on 086-8534900 or media@dunphypr.com
- High resolution images are available from Eamon Ward on 087-2337975