



Clare County Library

MEDIA RELEASE

ONLINE LIBRARY FORUM CONNECTS IRELAND & CANADA WITH INTERNET USERS WORLDWIDE

County Clare, IRELAND, Tuesday 12th June 07 - A new online forum for County Clare has been developed to offer people worldwide an opportunity to share their interest and knowledge about books, local history, arts and culture, and their favourite place in 'The Banner County'.

The **Library Forum** is a joint initiative of the Clare County Library and the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library of Nova Scotia, Canada, and is supported by volunteers and staff.

"This is a fine example of how technology can bring people together around common interests and build community interaction through what people know about a book or a place", explained Noel Crowley, Clare County Librarian.

Mr. Crowley continued, *"The Clare Forum is simple to use but sophisticated enough to share photographs and other digital items. Anyone connected to the Internet can sign up for a username and password and read or contribute information. A unique feature of the Forum is 'My Favourite Place' which gives a person the chance to say where that special spot is in County Clare. Users can also view and contribute to similar topics in Antigonish and Pictou Counties in Canada."*

Commenting on the initiative, Eric Stackhouse, Chief Librarian, Pictou-Antigonish said, *"This is another example of the innovative relationship that Nova Scotia has with County Clare and how cooperation offers our library users to have the best. Public libraries are the heart of the community, locally and online."*

"Although in place for only a few weeks, and with minimum publicity so far, there are already over 50 signed up members of the forum", indicated Anthony Edwards, Senior Executive Librarian, Clare County Library.

“We anticipate that more and more people will see the forum as the natural place and space in which to share information about Clare, books and the arts in general. To view or join the forum simply go to the library website at www.clarelibrary.ie”, concluded Mr. Edwards.

Clare County Library’s website has recorded over 2.3 million direct hits since it first went live in 1998. According to a survey by www.top100ireland.com, the website is ranked at number 45 in an online poll of Ireland’s 300 most popular websites. Recent additions to the portal include Churches with Round Towers in Northern Clare by T. J. Westrop; New Literature of County Clare; Standing Stones, Ecclesiastical Remains, Windmills & Tumuli - Clare Monuments; and Census Search Forms 1841 & 1851.