



MEDIA RELEASE

WEBSITE QUIZ CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS OF BRINGING HISTORY TO THE COUNTY'S SCHOOLCHILDREN

County Clare, IRELAND, 2nd March 2007 – The most successful outreach project ever to be undertaken by Clare Museum celebrates its fifth anniversary this week. Since its establishment in March 2002, the **Clare Museum Website Quiz** has recorded thousands of entries from 38 primary and secondary schools around the county.

Hosted by the Clare County Library website www.clarelibrary.ie, the Clare Museum website was launched in February 2002 as the first fully integrated museum website in the country. The first outreach project to be undertaken through the website was the website quiz. Held in association with Clare Education Centre, the initiative is part of an ongoing programme aimed at providing wider access to the museum collection.

Commenting on the quiz, Dr. Kyran Kennedy, Director of Clare Education Centre said, *"The Clare Museum website quiz is having continued success as a unique educational resource for schools in Clare. A positive experience for the student is considered to be an important aspect of the quiz. It not only informs children of their local history and heritage in an entertaining way, but also gives them experience of using IT, and raises the profile of Clare Museum."*

According to John Rattigan, Museum Curator, *"With the dramatic increase of available Internet-enabled PC's in our schools, the challenge for the museum was to*

find a way of using its website to help promote the collections as educational resources for the community. Following consultation with the Clare Education Centre it was decided to run monthly quizzes based on the captions that accompany the artifacts displayed on the site. Students answer the questions, which are placed on the Clare Education Centre web site, by visiting the museum site from their school PC. With prizes awarded to the winner of the quiz, the initiative has proven very successful with schoolchildren.

The virtual exhibition experienced by pupils entering the quiz also promotes the museum and its exhibitions to schoolchildren, and entry to the quiz by a class is often followed by a physical visit to the museum. Indeed, the number of school field trips to Clare Museum has increased year on year since the abolition of admission fees for all school children in early 2002. During 2006, 1748 school children visited the local authority-ran Museum. The students came from 36 different National and Secondary Schools in Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Kerry, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, Meath and Offaly.

“2006 was a phenomenal year for visitors to the museum and is a reflection of the hugely successful Website Quiz as well as the wide ranging and unique collection of artifacts and exhibits on display. Clare Museum is a wonderful heritage and tourist attraction and I hope that even greater numbers of schoolchildren will visit us in 2007. The museum is an excellent resource for the curricular needs of schoolchildren and helps to illustrate that history is not a thing of the past”, Mr. Rattigan continued.

He added that the most successful schools are the ones that enter almost every month. *“Ennis CBS have won more first prizes than any other school while Rineen National School has finished in the top three more often than any other school. Other schools that have done well in the Website Quiz include Carrigaholt NS, Cree NS, Bridgetown NS and Quilty NS. The most successful quiz was in April 2006 when there were more than 900 entries. Usually there are about 300-400 entries”, Mr. Rattigan said.*

Maintained by the IT section of Clare County Library, the Clare Museum website is designed to be a user-friendly resource for schoolchildren, students, historians and the general public alike. Since its establishment five years ago, the site has continued to receive increasing numbers of hits from all over the world.

“The Clare Museum web site has proven to be of great benefit, as with this facility the museum is never closed. The collection is no longer restricted within the building, but is available throughout the town of Ennis, the County of Clare and beyond”, Mr. Rattigan concluded.

For more log on to www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/claremuseum.