

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND CONGRATULATES  
OUGHTERARD CULTURE & HERITAGE GROUP –  
RECENT AWARD WINNERS AT THE  
GALWAY COUNTY HERITAGE AWARDS**

The National Museum of Ireland – Country Life, Turlough Park, Castlebar extends best wishes to the Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group who were recent runners-up in the Galway County Heritage Awards.

One of the original community groups to join the Museum of Country Life's Community Archive Project, the Oughterard group was formed four years ago to collect, archive and share their local history. They were the first of the groups in the project to digitally catalogue their collection of many thousands of items.

The Community Archive Project is an innovative community-based initiative and was launched in late 2011. It showcases the work of communities from **Oughterard, Co. Galway**, as well as groups from Ballinrobe and Louisburgh/Killeen, Co. Mayo who have been working with the Museum's Education & Outreach Department since 2009.

The Oughterard and the other participating groups have collected, preserved and made accessible their local histories online. Each group has developed a website designed to encourage active participation from a global audience.

The ultimate aim of the project was to engage communities, in an exciting and innovative way, with the National Museum and its collections. The volunteers from each community have gathered their communities' family photographs, memories and other ephemera, and through extensive training, have learned how to digitise and upload these unique collections to a website that they have developed themselves.

By creating a Community Archive website this information is digitally saved for posterity. Each site is regularly updated to enable people with links to each locality to contribute their own information for inclusion on the community website. The groups have joined together to form a Network of sites so they can share knowledge, skills and resources and cross-promote their websites.

In conjunction with this community project, the Museum of Country Life has launched [www.ouririshheritage.org](http://www.ouririshheritage.org) which features articles on local history and heritage from around the country. Anyone with an interest in their local area can contribute to this website which, it is hoped, will eventually reflect the local history of the island of Ireland. Groups and organisations are welcome to promote their cultural and heritage events via the online events form.

Galway Heritage Awards: **Connemara Electoral Area:**

**Runner Up:**

**The Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group**

The Oughterard Heritage website, [www.oughterardheritage.org](http://www.oughterardheritage.org), is the first open access website in the country dedicated to archiving, sharing and educating the local community and the worldwide diaspora about the heritage of Oughterard by using stories, video, film, audio, historical reference and vernacular resources. A modern, entertaining and easy to navigate experience has been created. All Groups and individuals, both local and international, are able to contribute directly to the website under the editorial control of the Oughterard Heritage Group.

**Ends.**

**For further information please contact:**

- Bernie Byron, Marketing Executive, National Museum of Ireland - Country Life. Tel: (094) 903 1773; Mob: (087) 798 7439; email: [bbyron@museum.ie](mailto:bbyron@museum.ie)
- Lorna Elms, Education & Outreach Dept., National Museum of Ireland - Country Life. Tel: (094) 903 1751; email: [educationtph@museum.ie](mailto:educationtph@museum.ie)