

## Shannon Region Attractions Win Major Heritage Awards

*Two attractions on Ireland's west coast have emerged triumphant in the 2007 Interpret Britain and Ireland Awards.*

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The Atlantic Edge Exhibition at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience, County Clare, and Foynes Flying Boat Museum, County Limerick, were described as 'magnificent' and 'fascinating' in the prestigious award scheme run by the Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI).

Popular Irish actor, Frank Kelly, presented the awards today at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience in County Clare. The awards recognise the very best examples of interpretation - the art of helping people explore and appreciate our world.

Judges said of the Atlantic Edge Exhibition, designed by Martello Media, "It succeeds magnificently in offering world-class interpretation that cleverly draws visitors to explore and discover the many well-presented displays."

The report for the Foynes Flying Boat Museum, designed by Jack Harrison, said: 'The museum tells a fascinating story that re-creates, through the quality of its interpretation, the ambience of a unique period in flying history.'

A third award was won by Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow, while commendations were given to five heritage sites in England.

Mayor of Clare, Cllr. Patricia McCarthy, who officially opened today's awards ceremony, congratulated the AHI for recognising the role played by the Shannon Region's heritage attractions in developing Irish tourism.

According to Ms. Katherine Webster, Director of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience, "We are delighted that the AHI has staged their awards ceremony here at the Cliffs, the first time it has been held outside of Britain. We, along with Foynes Flying Boat Museum, are very proud to have received these awards. It goes to show that the Shannon Region is leading the world in the quality of the experience that visitors will find here."

'This prestigious award is the one of a number received to date by the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience since it opened in February this year. The project has so far received awards for accessibility & interior design as well as commendation for architecture and construction', added Ms. Webster.

Speaking at today's awards ceremony, actor Frank Kelly expressed delight that two Irish sites had been officially recognised by the AHI.

Mr. Kelly, who spent much time in County Clare during the filming of the television series Father Ted, added, "Acting is all about telling stories and bringing people and places to life. So I am fascinated to see how heritage sites are using interpretation to tell stories, and inspire and excite people about history, culture and the environment."

The award scheme, now in its 23rd year, is supported by English Heritage, the Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI) is the UK membership body for people working and teaching in the field of heritage and environmental interpretation. AHI members are drawn from a wide range of fields including museums, government agencies, local authorities, trusts and charities, universities and colleges, national and country parks, and consultancies of many kinds. Membership is open to everyone with an interest in communicating about our natural and cultural surroundings.

Interpretation is defined by AHI as a process that enriches lives through engaging emotions, enhancing experiences and deepening understanding of people, places, events and objects from past and present.

For more on the AHI log on to [www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk](http://www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk)

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Founded in 2006, **Dunphy Public Relations** is a communications group led by Mark Dunphy from County Clare. Mr. Dunphy previously held the position of 'Head of News and Current Affairs' in Clare FM Radio.

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**For more information, Please contact:**

**Mark Dunphy**

Director - Dunphy Public Relations  
00353868534900

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