Richmondshire Museum's interactive Discovery Centre now open

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Visitors and schools are set to benefit as a result of the official opening, by popular author and former school inspector Gervase Phinn, of Richmondshire Museum’s new Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) interactive Discovery Centre.

The fully interactive Discovery Centre Gallery with learning space using new ICT facilities, including projection equipment and interactive screens, has been created in the museum. The versatile gallery, based upon an oil painting of Richmond Market Place painted in 1900 by local artist William Sanderson, will be open for museum visitors. School and community groups will also be able to explore and use the gallery as a study research room, a revolving display of artefacts, and an interactive ICT learning centre.

The Right Honourable William Hague, The Museum's Patron, Foreign Secretary said: "I was delighted to hear that the Richmondshire Museum had received a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to provide a new gallery and education room. This is great news and will enhance the facilities already on offer at the Museum".

Museum chairman, Mike Wood, said: "Our new discovery centre widens the educational outreach of Richmondshire Museum and will hopefully be of great use to schools both local and regional. Our gallery space has also been extended so that visitors can now enjoy more of the museum’s collections previously kept in store."

The museum team says that an educational launch, attended by 500 people over three days last year demonstrated how the characters from the oil painting can be ‘brought to life’ for visitors to discover how people lived in Victorian Richmond. The museum plan is to enable continued collaborative work with educational establishments and target younger learners and their families so that they can explore their local heritage. Workshops will be provided for schools, families and groups and an on-going oral history programme will be carried out in the centre and recordings prepared. There will be new opportunities for local people to become more involved with their local museum.

Notes to editors

Richmondshire Museum, funded by donations and run by volunteers, was opened in 1974 and since then much has been added to make the attraction a 'must' for any visitor to the town. Packed with a wide range of local and folk history items and displays, the building appears small on the outside but is a veritable 'tardis' once entered. Displays include artefacts from Roman times to the present day including reconstructions of a cruck house, post office, chemists, ironmongers and Fenwick’s plus displays including lead-mining, gems, toys, transport and last but not least the actual BBC TV James Herriot - All Creatures Great and Small set. The Wenham Study Centre is used for lectures, study groups, workshops and research. New for 2013 - HLF funded interactive Discovery Centre opened by Gervase Phinn.

The museum is open daily April-October from 10:30am until last entry at 4:00pm. Please contact the office for all other access or information at other times throughout the year.

Further information

Contact the museum on 01748 825 611, e-mail: museumrichmond@yahoo.co.uk or visit the Richmondshire Museum website.