



**Report to Moray Firth Partnership on grant of £500 awarded in 2006 to Workers' Educational Association.**

The grant from MFP was used to part fund two archaeological fieldtrips, the first held on 30 September to Golspie and the Dornoch Firth and the second on 4 November to Elgin and the Moray Firth. Both days were a great success, with 31 participants on the Golspie trip and 37 on the Elgin trip. The weather was fantastic, very warm and sunny in September and balmy enough in November to eat our lunches in the grounds of Elgin Cathedral.

The fieldtrips are part of the WEA's two year Exploring Your Past project, which will offer courses, fieldtrips, and opportunities to contribute to the Highland Environment Record (the HER, which will imminently replace the Sites and Monuments Record). All fieldtrips try to illustrate multi-period sites within a defined area, showing the range of land use and history. In both of these fieldtrips, the proximity to the sea was a major factor.

On the Golspie trip we looked stopped at The Mound (Thomas Telford's sluice gates), Carn Liath (Pictish Broch), Dunrobin Castle Museum (an excellent, and little known, archaeological collection), Skelbo Castle (medieval remains), Embo (Neolithic chambered cairn), Dornoch (medieval burgh), and Creich (medieval churchyard and Pictish stone). – and there were more sites pointed out along the way.

On the Elgin trip we stopped at Quarrywood doocot, Elgin Museum (to view the Birnie finds and Pictish stones), Elgin cathedral, Kinnedar (Pictish site), Duffus Castle (medieval motte and bailey castle), Hopeman (icehouse and planned 19<sup>th</sup> century town), Burghead (Pictish fort and well) and Kinloss Abbey (atmospheric medieval abbey). A similarly large number of sites were also looked at in passing. We had originally hoped to coincide with excavations at Birnie, but this was not possible. Fortunately Elgin museum houses many of the recent finds and has good boards and illustrations.

Evaluation forms were handed out at the end of each fieldtrip. All feedback was positive, though some people would have liked to have seen more sites, and some more time at fewer sites. The comments below show that the fieldtrips were much appreciated, and left many people asking for more:



Comments from the Golspie field trip

*"excellent with no wasted time. Added bonus of fabulous weather!"*

*"lots of information covering a huge period of time - "excellent – more please!"*

*"Susan tells the story so that you want more. Here is to the next chapter."*

*"Lots more trips please!"*

*"Obviously well researched and presented in friendly manner."*

*"I learned something new about a familiar landscape"*

*"Very enjoyable. Please let me know of similar courses or field trips"*

*"Covered many sites and gave a clear explanation of them."*

Comments from the Elgin field trip

*"So many interesting places to see which you would normally just drive past"*

*"I learned about things which I have seen or heard about all of my life but never understood."*

*"A taster with the expectation of returning to revisit at a more leisurely pace"*

*"All the proposed stops and sites were covered, many not usually included in tourist literature."*

*"Lecturer very knowledgeable and made it all most interesting."*

*"This was brilliant, I loved it and I will be back."*

*"Very interesting, day well researched and designed and most enjoyable."*

Further details are available from myself or the WEA office.

Susan Kruse  
Exploring Your Past Project Officer

