

The Scottish Traditional Boat Festival MFP grant supported project 2006.

The 2006 MFP grant was requested to finish the Spey coracle started with the support of a MFP grant in 2005, and to teach local children the skills of the basket weaver by producing fish wife's creels.

The Spey coracle was successfully completed with a cowhide covering the wicker structure made in 2005, and a seat and paddle were copied in oak from the original coracle in Elgin Museum. It proved impossible to attract a craftsman during the Festival to fit the cowhide but a craftsman working on a project with Archaeolink earlier in the year was able to do the work. During the Festival the coracle was on display and a coracle maker from Yorkshire made the seat and paddle. The completed coracle is now on loan to the Elgin Museum where it will remain until the Portsoy Salmon Bothy is refurbished and opened to the public in 2008.

Two basket makers worked with local children by the harbours at Portsoy on the day before the Festival to make several small creels, some of which were taken home by the makers, with one kept to donate to Portsoy Primary School. The basket makers then demonstrated their craft to the public very successfully during the 2 days of the Festival and made 3 full size creel baskets. When completed with their rope and sheepskin straps one of the baskets will be donated to Elgin Museum, and the others to the Portsoy Salmon Bothy. Unfortunately serious illness of the Festival Officer leading the MFP project has delayed completion of the creels but they should be finished within the next few weeks.

£300 was allowed in the MFP grant for completing the coracle but only £166 was spent. Archaeolink charged £150 for materials and labour to fit the cowhide cover but the seat and paddle were made with no charge for labour and only £16 for materials. The creels were completed for the amount allowed in the budget.

A photograph showing one of the 3 full size creels, one of the small creels and an unfinished small creel is attached.