

CCiSS Background

The Cultural Coordinators scheme was first introduced by the Scottish Executive in their National Cultural Strategy document "Creating our Future, Minding our Past" (2000). Launched in May 2002, the scheme is administered by the [Scottish Arts Council](#); funded by the Scottish Executive, Scottish Arts Council and the Local Authorities. The intention of the scheme is to employ Coordinators to make the link between primary/secondary schools and all areas of the cultural and heritage sector. Each local authority was given the opportunity to bid for up to 8 posts, although the average is lower, depending on population size. The total number of Coordinators, many of whom are part-time, is 105 across Scotland. The majority are now in post. Coordinators' remits have been interpreted in different ways according to individual local authority priorities and internal structures. Originally a 2 year pilot project, the scheme has since been extended to 2006.

Highland Council applied for the full 8 posts, one for each area – Badenoch & Strathspey, Nairn, Inverness, Ross & Cromarty, Sutherland, Caithness, Lochaber & Skye & Lochalsh. We are now in the second phase of the scheme and all areas have appointed a Cultural Co-ordinator. The remit of the Highland CCs has been outlined as follows:

- Offer advice and information to school staff and pupils about cultural / heritage activities.
- Help arrange school visits to cultural / heritage facilities.
- Work in collaboration with other cultural / heritage organisations.
- Attract visiting professionals and companies into schools.
- Co-ordinate a variety of workshops and projects in schools.
- Identify resources of additional funds for the development of the programme.

As part of my remit as Cultural Co-ordinator for the Inverness area I have developed close links with Inverness Museum & Art Gallery, by working in collaboration with the curators and the Education Outreach Officer for Highland museums. The work that I have done with Inverness Museum has varied greatly from promoting workshops and activities for the schools and organising school visits to the museum as well as running workshops or projects using the museum as a resource. One project that I am just about to commence, called 'Medieval Tales', has received funding from SMCs Cultural Co-ordinator grant scheme and is being match funded by Inverness Museum and my budget.

Medieval Tales

Medieval Tales is basically a creative writing project using the medieval displays and objects as a source of information. The pupils will work with a professional writer to create poem labels for some of the objects on display and a story based around an historic medieval character taken from the Charters in the collection. The labels will be displayed in the cases alongside the objects. In addition the pupils will work with an artist/designer to produce their own booklet with their poems, story and illustrations. This will be made available for the public to pick up during their visit to the gallery and take away as a memento.

The project will involve an initial visit by a group of primary pupils to Inverness Museum and the newly opened Medieval Gallery. The pupils will have a look around the gallery, using worksheets to encourage them to look more closely at the displays/objects. This will be followed by a discussion around specific medieval objects. Before they leave the pupils will be asked to choose an object that they would like to write about. The pupils will then work with the writer to create poem labels about their objects – using what they have learnt & their own imagination.

On a second visit to the museum the pupils will also get the opportunity to look at some selected Charters in the collection – these Charters tell us a little bit about different characters during medieval times in Inverness. Again they will work with a writer and together they will create a story about one or more of these characters.

The pupils' poems and story will be brought together into a small booklet, which will be made available to the general public. The overall project and display of the pupils' work in the gallery will hopefully develop a sense of ownership over the displays and encourage the pupils to bring their friends and families to view their work. It is also hoped that the project will

raise awareness amongst schools and teachers for the potential of using the museum, its displays and collections as a learning resource for subjects like creative writing.