

## **REPORT ON WISPS WRITING RETREAT AND RESEARCH WEEKEND**

**DECEMBER 2-4 2005**

**THE BURN, GLENESK, SCOTLAND**

The first WISPS writing retreat and research weekend, designed to provide space, discussion and guidance to progress a specific research project, took place in the tranquil surroundings of The Burn House, Glensesk.

Amidst the hospitable and welcoming atmosphere provided by the staff of The Burn (including much-needed comfort food), the participants combined precious time for reflexion and writing with a series of group workshops over the weekend, based on the principles of action learning. Facilitated by Professor Jean Gilkison, Dean of Research at the University of Wolverhampton, the workshops allowed participants, working in action-learning sets, to identify the challenges that their specific projects presented, and to develop successful strategies to overcome these.

On Saturday morning, a professional development workshop on ‘Developing a Research Profile’, facilitated by Professor Tony Kapcia, University of Nottingham, enabled participants to explore the coherence of their individual research career, and to discuss options for the future. Saturday night hit a somewhat different note with a Murder Mystery competition (for those who had the brainpower).

All in all, the weekend provided relaxation, support, encouragement and invaluable advice for all the participants, and several of the participants have agreed to continue meeting in their sets in the future. The final session on Sunday morning was dedicated to sustaining the momentum of the weekend, and to discussing the format of future Wisps retreats. All in all, a spectacularly successful event, and many thanks to all – participants, facilitators, friends and staff of the Burn – for travelling the distance and for creating the perfect atmosphere. See you again in 2006, location tba!

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