

THE SCOTTISH FIDDLER



www.tellingtales.net

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 6

July 2005

HEADING TO HAWTHORN!!!

*Now is when we prepare for our biggest gig of the year –
the Hawthorn Town Hall concert on Sunday August 14.*

WE NEED YOUR MAILING LISTS

*Council will mail any number of people providing we give them the lists –
PLEASE BRING YOUR LISTS IN ANY FORMAT AT ALL TO THE JULY
MEETING AND WE WILL HAVE THEM PUT INTO AN EXCEL SHEET!!!!*

IMPORTANT NEW ZEALAND ANNOUNCEMENT

FINAL PAYMENT DUE JULY MEETING

*The final payment of \$400 is due at the July meeting. AS we are paying the
travel agent the next day, we must have your money!*

THANKS!

(Gosh – how exciting ...New Zealand is not many sleeps away at all...)

From Judy

Schedule for July 17 meeting

2pm All together: Learn a new set of Jigs for playing with the Hawthorn Pipe Band - 100 Pipers, Cock o the North and one more chestnut tba; Revise the Dark Island and Hoere Mai from Mansfield; go over Blacktown Jig and Drovers Dream

3.00pm Slower group: revise Chris Duncan's set from Mansfield

Faster group: MSFC originals; St Kilda to Kings Cross; Alex Legg song;

Break for arvo tea (bring something to share)

Afterwards Jenny Thomas songs – introduce and learn Catalpa

June – another huge month for the MSFC

It seems impossible for a small group to do as much as we do, and June is no exception for our over achieving members — since we last wrote we have conquered Portarlington and made mincemeat of Mansfield. Judy's brief reports are below:

CeltFest

Our three gigs were all successful – but before we hit any stage at all, we had the usual fun work out in the pub, attracting a crowd and allowing us to warm up our fingers for the coming ordeal! As well as playing good gigs to enthusiastic crowds we also had the pleasure of a workshop from Cathy Fraser and sitting in on the ceilidh dance with some great Irish players.

And what's more the weather was great too – who could ask for more?

Mansfield

We can't say enough in praise of our friends Kristen, Julia, Julie and Dave n Di Alleway, for the work they put into making this great weekend even better than ever.

We have all decided that Mansfield is the new Benalla, and with good reason — great venue, great accommodation (cheap too) great pub food, and culminating (for the first time in our north-east adventures) with a concert in front of a large and wildly enthusiastic audience.

After paying the school and contributing to NESSIE's funds we took home \$1800 towards our NZ fundraising, which was a marvellous result.

Chris Duncan added enormously to the quality of the weekend experience, with his great playing and teaching, all of which augurs well for our first week in NZ with him.

Another bonus- we talked our cello playing friend Claire Alleway into coming along to NZ with us, which will be a great boon musically and socially, as the squeals of delight from the young corner contested.

Thanks heaps to all our NESSIE friends- let's do it again soon!

Fundraising

Our little raffle at Mansfield was a big success raising about \$400, and we are going to repeat it at the Hawthorn Town Hall with (we hope) a bigger crowd. Prizes have been donated by Wild Trout Downunder, Bunnings and the MSFC and we will look for one more – please let JT know if you have ideas.

Fiddlers Raffle

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE sell the tickets or bring them back to a July meeting- we will draw this at the concert on August 14, so only have a few more weeks selling time. Well done to Margaret Williams who easily sold all hers in Geelong- if you have spare she might be able to shift them for you!

Sponsors

We are still looking for a NZ based sponsor to advertise on the side of our tour bus — watch this space.

Hawthorn TOWN HALL Concert — July and August dates you need to know

- 16 3pm Small group at Judy's place followed by soup and bread b4 the gig
- 16 Small group gig - Box Hill Golf Club – details emailed to you

The Scottish Fiddler – July 2005

- 18 Practice with pipe band – in Hawthorn- small
- 20 Practice at Westgarth - all
- 25 Practice with pipe band – in Hawthorn- small
- 28 Practice at Westgarth - all

NZ travellers - Dates you need to know

- 17 July FINAL PAYMENT OF \$400 DUE FOR NZ
- 30 July Pot Luck Supper re NZ - Athalie's place in Box Hill

New MSFC Uniforms are here!

All at Mansfield were able to pick up their new shirts, jackets etc - if you weren't there you will be given yours at the July meeting. We will be placing another order for jackets, so it's not too late to order if you are NOTY going to NZ but would like one of these splendidly cosy items which are great brand promoters for the club. YOU MUST HAVE A SHIRT to play at the Hawthorn Town Hall gig.

CALENDAR UPDATE!

The MSFC Calendar has now been updated and is in this issue...

PLEASE CHECK AND MARK ALL THESE DATES IN YOUR DIARY NOW!

ALSO, DON'T FORGET TO REGULARLY CHECK THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN EACH NEWSLETTER.

THANKS!

MSFC Club pictures

Send your pics of fiddle club activities to Ronald McCoy rmccoy@ocean.com.au for the newsletter

Fiddle club or orchestra?

Dear Members,

Last month Judy threw open the question “Should we call ourselves a fiddle club or an orchestra?” and asked for people to write in. In my experience as an editor of many publications, such requests often fall on deaf ears. You can imagine my delight when the MSFC newsletter received not one, but three letters (including one from Scotland!! In publishing terms, this represents a flood, and I think represents how active club members are. Thanks to all of those who wrote in, but I know for every letter written there are ten people out there talking about it. Why don't you tell us your thoughts by writing to either Judy or sending to Ronald McCoy for the newsletter at rmccoy@ocean.com.au

Here is what the members say:

Dear Fiddle Folks,

Hi from Bonnie Scotland. Still get newsletters and read them to keep up with what's going on down there. An excerpt of one of my recent travelogues has made it into the last newsletter, nice that stories and news are flowing both ways across the global fiddle community! Email is so great for keeping in contact with everyone.

Anyway about the fiddle club name. I'm a bit of a folksy and even though not an active, paying member, here's my two bob's worth! I kinda think if I were still there I'd be happier not calling it a club OR an orchestra, mainly to avoid sounding too exclusive. An orchestra also sounds rather classical which may be the genre that most folk come from these days but not essential to be in the club?? (You do need to do lots of practice tho if you're new to music reading/the fiddle or a slower player as I discovered when I joined!) It's true that it's rather good, I suppose because of all the work that people put into their playing, but 'club' may have a wee bit of an exclusive sound to it, and 'orchestra' possibly a lot more, and might indicate to the public that you need to come from a formal or

classical background to join. What about Melbourne Scottish Fiddlers? To me it was always more of a huge fun band. Anyway, my 2 bob's worth as I said. Good luck with the debate! Oh by the way, are you still making a new CD and are all our award winning original tunes making it onto it? Can't wait to be famous...Bye for now and enjoy New Zealand!

Lotsa love, Melinda.

Just my thoughts on the naming of the club for the newsletter. I would rather we be called “Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club”, as opposed to the Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Orchestra. I feel the name Orchestra gives the impression of just that, which is what we are not. An orchestra is seen as being more serious and organised, while we are a more spontaneous group designed to have fun, for our audiences to enjoy and participate with foot tapping and clapping. I like the idea of Melbourne Scottish Fiddlers, but I know there is already a group called the Melbourne Fiddlers, and I guess it would be too much the same.

Regards, Margaret

I also wanted to respond to the debate surrounding fiddle club vs. orchestra. My opinion most definitely falls on the side of orchestra (for performing at least) as I think it has a more professional sounding overtone and inspires more confidence (only to those who haven't seen the club perform of course) than the word 'club'. I think the perception of a 'club', particularly among the 20–30 year old, largely non-musical population is of something quite different to what the group actually does. I'm making this statement based on the reactions I have received from aforementioned friends since joining the club. I think 'fiddle orchestra' speaks for itself more, gives a clearer indication of what audiences can expect from the group and requires less explanation. If you think this will offend anyone please don't print it!!

Melody.

Why not have your say on this fascinating topic? Club or Orchestra? email the editor, Ronald McCoy at rmccoy@ocean.com.au, — We'll print ALL responses to stimulate discussion.

NESSIE...check out these dates..!

NESSIE (North East Scottish Strings Including Elbow pipes) meets on the 1st Sunday for every 2nd month. SO if you're in the area on 7/8, 2/10 & 4/12 drop in and join in the fun! For more information contact Claire on tel: 5963 3277 or Kristen on tel: 03 5766 6282.

MSFC members especially welcome!

Raffle prizes- can you help?

You will notice some advertisements in this newsletter as we have been very lucky to have some generous sponsors. We are still looking for prizes to raffle and fundraise, and if you know of anyone who could donate, please contact Judy, An iPod would be a great 1st prize; a dozen bottles of wine a great third..... A night at a hotel in town? Please put on your thinking cap and ask around — feel free to give out Judy's email address or phone number to anyone in business who might make a donation we could raffle.

PORTARLINGTON PICS!

Here are some pics from the warm up for Portarlington....



Early morning practice...



Go Bjorn!



Judy and Matt get down to the business at hand..



They really look like they are enjoying themselves, amazing what a liquid breakfast can do!

Go Mrs Gilmour....!



MSFC CLUB CONTACTS

The Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club (MSFC) meets at 2.00 PM on the third Sunday of the month at St Aidan's church hall in Duggan St, North Balwyn. For more information contact:

Musical Director - Judy on 9893 6332 or tellingtales@bigpond.com

President - Matthew on 9484 8076 or matt.madonna@bigpond.com

Secretary (and daughter) - Louise or Pria on 9758 4486 or at ask@netspace.com.au

Gig Manager/CD sales - Sue on 9481 7268 or sdarbyoleary@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor – Ronald on 03 9527 1375; mob: 0407 318 911 or email: rmccoy@ocean.com.au

Mansfield pics

*My goodness, there are a lot of pictures this issue!
Oh well, here are some more for your enjoyment*



Matt, Pria and the two Chrises playing to Kristen's mobile phone for a telephone interview with local radio!



Matt doing the teaching thing...



Session time....



Young people everywhere, playing and eating, and eating and eating...(great food!)



Serious conversations...



Serious eating...



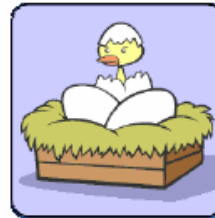
We all had such a great time!



**Do you need a nest egg?
SO DO WE!**

Buy your **LARGE FREE RANGE EGGS** and help fundraise for the MSFC.

Large fresh free range upcountry eggs
DELIVERED TO FIDDLE CLUB PRACTICE!



- \$7.50 for a tray of 2 1/2 dozen
- \$3.00 for a dozen if you bring your own carton,
- \$3.20 for a dozen in a carton.

GREAT PRICE! GREAT VALUE
REALLY FRESH – SHELF LIFE OF FOUR WEEKS

BYO EGG CARTON AND SAVE TWENTY CENTS! (More environmentally sound and easier with the change...!)

Email your name and order to: dicrick@telstra.com

(write in your order Att: Darron Crick, MSFC EGGS)

If you don't have email, leave your order on tel: 03 53432548 the Friday before fiddle club (which is held on the 3rd Sunday of each month January) and it will be passed on!

2 0 0 5 CALENDAR UPDATE

AND... a 3
Month
Countdown



*NB Items marked * are yet to be confirmed – keep reading the newsletter!*

Jul	
Date	What
8	Sue & Louise to prepare NZ Info Book Newsletter Notice of August AGM
10	Small group 2pm Judy's place
16	Small group gig - Box Hill Golf Club
17	Monthly Meeting - FINAL PAYMENT DUE
18	Treasurer to pay Travel Agent
18	Practice with pipe band – Hawthorn- small
20	Practice at Westgarth - all
25	Practice with pipe band – Hawthorn- small
28	Practice at Westgarth - all
30	Pot Luck Supper re NZ - Athalie's place Distribute Booklet

Oct	
Date	What
16	2 pm Monthly Meeting
19	7 pm - Rehearsal Westgarth for ALL
27	7pm - Rehearsal Westgarth for ALL
23	2 pm Small Group at Judy's
28-31	Maldon Folk Festival

Aug	
Date	What
3	Practice Westgarth- all and Pipers
11	Practice Westgarth – all and Pipers
14	Concert - ALL - Hawthorn Town Hall and rehearsal that morning- leave whole day please Merchandise for NZ organized - Sue
17	NZ only - Westgarth
21	Monthly Meeting - AGM
25	NZ only - Westgarth

Nov	
Date	What
3rd	CD Rehearsal – venue tba
9th	CD rehearsal – venue tba
12/13	Record CD - venue TBA
20	2 pm Monthly Meeting
27	St Andrews Day gig - McRae Homestead on Mornington Peninsula

Sep	
Date	What
1	NZ only - Westgarth
4	Final meeting/rehearsal for NZ only at St Aidans
7	NZ only - Westgarth
10	Rhythm section – Judy's – 2pm
17	Depart for New Zealand
18	Monthly Meeting - Guest leader
25	Clan MacKenzie Gig in Melbourne if we have enough takers – Steve is in charge!

Dec	
Date	What
7	7 pm Rehearsal Westgarth for ALL
9	? Small group Rosebud
11	Rats of Tobruk Rye Small Group
15	7 pm Rehearsal Westgarth for ALL
18	2 pm Monthly Meeting and Tune competition
18	6 pm End of Year Concert at The Big House - ALL

Enter these in your diary — NOW!

Postcard from Scotland

Dear All,

If you are not already aware, the July issue of the MSFC newsletter is coming direct from not-so sunny Scotland.

The Dark Island

In fact, most of Scotland is sunny today, but I am staying in the middle of a big fog on the Isle of South Uist. Apparently during summer, for about 7 to 10 days, a fog sets in on the Island and then it is very clear for some time. So, I'll have to put up with it a few more days.



A typical South Uist Scene not far from Flora MacDonald's birthplace

South Uist's claims to fame are many, but is probably best known as the birthplace of Flora MacDonald, the champion supporter of Bonnie Prince Charlie. Some of you may even know the fiddle tune by the same name, as Chris Stone taught it at the Benalla MSFC/NESSIE weekend two years ago. Flora MacDonald was born in Milton on South Uist, which also happens to be where I am staying at the moment.



The fields of South Uist are covered in wildflowers at the moment.

The Scottish Fiddler - July 2005

The Isle of South Uist is in the Western Isles of Scotland, and this island, and the neighbouring island of Benbecula, was the site of a very strange television series in the early 1960s about a pagan Wiccan cult with strange goings on that I won't bore you too much with. But the name of that series was 'The Dark Island' and those on the recent Mansfield weekend will be familiar with the theme song that was written specially for that series. There even is a Dark Island Hotel on Benbecula.



As the steamer leaves Oban...

One of the main transport routes to the islands are the large ferries which replaced the steamboats that ran for many years in these parts. For those of you who heard the song *The Dark Island*, there is a line in it that says "as the steamer leaves Oban and passes 'Tiree.'" Oban is the main ferry port on the West coast of



Scotland and is often called the gateway to the Isles. To get to South Uist, the ferry sails up the Sound of Mull past Ardnamurchan. Occasionally the ferry will stop at the Island of Tiree as well, which is close by. After leaving the Sound of Mull, the ferry sets out into open sea towards the Western Isles. I took

some pictures so MSFC members will know exactly what the song is describing.

Another piece of trivia: for those of you who know Rory Sinclair, the Scottish guitarist that lives in Geelong, he hails from Ardnamurchan, which is Gaelic for "Point of the sea dogs" which is an old Gaelic word for otters, which are found in this area.

While I was taking these pictures, Sky Television was broadcasting the unfolding events of the terrorist bombings in London that happened that morning which have really shaken everyone up here.

Anyhow, I have been spending time visiting friends here and wandering about the place. I have even, been, believe it or not, practising my fiddle! I am staying in a house in Milton of Neil and Ann MacMillan, who have 11 children, including 9 boys now all grown up. None of the children spoke English when they went to school, and Gaelic is very much the first language of the household.

The eldest son, Seonaidh, is married and lives next door with his wife Fiona, and daughter Sarah and son Niall Dònán. Sarah is completely bilingual, being totally fluent in both Gaelic and English, although Gaelic is her first language. Niall Dònán has no English at all!

Sarah and Niall Dònán often just wander in to see Granny, and yesterday I was playing the fiddle and Niall Dònán stood there in amazed. He picked up a walking stick and started tapping it on the floor in time with the music dancing about, and when the music stopped, asked for more! He seems to have a particular fondness for hornpipes....



Niall Donan tapping his walking stick to the fiddle..

Last night I went to a welcoming ceilidh for the annual week of Gaelic language and music here called Ceolas. The ceilidh had singers, pipers from all over Scotland and Brittany, fiddlers and dancers. I went there three years ago and had a great time, and when I turned up, all the locals had remembered my name, were all very welcoming and incredibly hospitable.

The Scottish Fiddler – July 2005

One young lass played a really interesting tune and she is going to put it down on minidisk for me, so I'll have at least one new tune to bring back. She didn't even have a name for it, but it was great – had interesting modulations, like those in Izzy's Jig, but quite different still.



There were heaps of people of all ages performing all types of traditional music of an incredibly high standard, so I'm looking forward to a great week ahead.

See you when I get back – or as they say in Gaelic *Tioraidh an dràsta – bye for now!*



***NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING!***

***JUST A REMINDER AMONGST OUR
BUSY SCHEDULES THAT OUR
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WILL BE HELD AT THE AUGUST
MEETING***

21 AUGUST 2005

***The AGM will be at some time during
the 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm meeting time***

***THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENDANCE. APOLOGIES
TO - Louise on 9758 4486 or at ask@netspace.com.au***