MSFC Travelling Fiddlership between Shetland and Melbourne

Notes on the inaugural trip, by Angus Downing
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Acknowledgments:
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Judy Turner’s tireless commitment to the Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club and her endless creativity and initiative – always looking for the next exciting opportunity for developing the club and providing rich experiences to the MSFC members – also deserve an enormous thank you!

I’d also like to thank Matt Robertson and Ronald McCoy;

Matt Robertson - the MSFC’s incredible president, for his encouragement, tunes taught, and for making many initial contacts in Shetland which proved to be invaluable while I was there.

Ronald McCoy - for the many hours he put into his video ‘Da Road To Shetland’ – now seen by many across the world.

My new friends in Shetland deserve a mention too! Thanks for making my time there so enjoyable! (too many of you to mention)

Finally, I’d like to thank the MSFC committee and all the MSFC members, as well as my parents and siblings for their/your encouragement, friendship, love and support over the years.

I love you all!
Intro:
This document gives an overview of the inaugural ‘Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club’s Travelling Fiddlership’ between Melbourne and Shetland.

I travelled to Shetland, arriving on 5 August 2010, and after spending a few days acclimatising and getting my bearings, I enjoyed a full-on week of new tunes, new friends, media engagements, family history and Anderson fiddle research, official functions, concerts, dances and one or two Scotch whiskeys.

It was an intense week of pure fiddly goodness, and this document summarises the highlights.

Overview to Lerwick and Shetland
Shetland is a stunningly beautiful place, with purple and green rolling hills where almost no tree can grow because of the strong oceanic winds and soft peaty ground.

Ruins of ancient houses are dotted around the countryside, and the scars in the hills where peat has been cut out are reminders of Shetland’s distant and recent past. Many of the people I spoke to told me that when they were children they would cut, dry and carry peat back to their homes for burning. In fact, many people in Shetland still cut and burn peat.

Here and there you will see a Castle, and although they are now tourist attractions, the locals will talk of the hatred they had of the English kings and lords who forced the locals to go without food and rest, using their own eggs and flour as cement to hold the stones together while building these castles. “You will

Funny side-story; While I was in Lerwick I met a lady who moved to Shetland with her husband. Her friend back in Skye had a tree removed from her back-yard, and as a joke she has been sending the tree, slice by slice, to the couple in Shetland, who are now piecing it back together again in their garden!
see that the castle in Scalloway has no roof, and nor will it ever have any roof!” one man told me.

Although you might think it is just a stereotype, Shetland ponies are everywhere in Shetland. Peter from the Valley B&B (where I stayed for the first three nights) explained to me the varied history of the Shetland Pony. (I always thought that a pony was just a baby horse, but it actually relates to their size; technically, a pony is less than 14.2 hands tall (147cm), and of course a baby horse is a foal.). Some time back in the day, a group of Englishmen bought the island of Noss, to the east of Lerwick (on the other side of Bressay) and they used it for raising Shetland Ponies to use in the mines. As they are strong, have a good temperament (when properly trained) and work hard, they were used in coal mines in Britain. These days Noss is famous for bird-watching.

Peter told me that about ten years ago there was very little interest in Shetland ponies – you could literally buy one for 50 pence!

There has been a revival however, and these days ponies are popular as pets. Eg; Maggie Adamson has one. Nevertheless, they still only fetch £100 each.

N.B. Shetlanders do not consider themselves to be Scottish – an attitude stemming from their Scandinavian heritage and geographical distance from the rest of Scotland. Also, they never say ‘The Shetlands’ – it is either ‘Shetland’ or ‘The Shetland Islands/Isles’
The Capital of Shetland is Lerwick

There is a brilliant new museum in Lerwick, on the harbour, and within the next couple of years, the new performing arts centre (with cinema) will be completed.

Shetland's economy originally relied mostly on fishing, however these days oil/gas has taken over, with massive Oil Terminals and pipes connecting Shetland to.. holes in the ocean, and economically connecting Shetland with the UK and the rest of the world. While you might imagine that the oil industry ruins Shetland's beauty, it has provided much wealth to the Islands, and Shetland is currently quite a prosperous place. It is also quite pioneering as far as renewable energy goes, with several giant wind turbines and hundreds more proposed.
Many mussel and salmon farms can also be seen around the islands; another major part of the economy.

The population of Shetland is roughly 12,000 and consequently it seems that everyone knows everyone. If you’re caught speeding in Shetland, chances are that will be written up in the Shetland Times; even with your town and name included apparently!

Everyone in Shetland is incredibly friendly, and so almost every conversation you have there will end with you saying “Sorry, I really do have to go now”, because every Shetlander will have so much knowledge about Shetland, so many relatives in Australia, so many fascinating stories and such a love of their home, that they can’t help sharing it all with you.

It is a very special place.

And, it definitely seems true that if you throw a stone over a fence or dike in Shetland, you’ll hit a fiddle player. Every second person I met (and I’m not just talking about people I met at the festival!) plays the fiddle, along with most of their family. Thanks to Tom Anderson’s passion for preserving the local musical tradition, and the work of those who continue what he started, Shetland is a hotbed for really phenomenal playing, and musical innovation. There really is a disproportionate number of ridiculously good fiddle players in Shetland, and I was lucky enough to meet many of them!
Overview of the Week – Basic Travel Diary

Before arriving in Shetland I had already been in touch with many of the people there, such as Louise Thomason (Shetland Times) and Jane Moncrieff (BBC) as well as people from Shetland Arts, who run the festival. This meant that I could hit the ground running and really make the most of my time there.

DAY 1: Thursday 5 August 2010
I arrived in Lerwick in the afternoon. Straight away I met very friendly locals – including Gavin from the plane who showed me around Lerwick and explained a lot of Lerwick’s geography, culture and recent history.

After a quick look around the town, I went to the Valley B&B where I was staying for the first three days (as the hostel was unavailable for the 1st and 3rd day of my stay). This turned out very well as I had food poisoning and benefited from a room of my own!

Day 2: Friday 6 August
I got up late feeling much better. Peter from the B&B suggested I cross the road and visit the Shetland Pony farm; run by his neighbour Mr David Robertson (Gott Shetland Pony Stud). That was good fun - he had a few incredibly cute pony foals which were only a few months old and stood at under two feet high. I sent some emails in relation to the media commitments then went into town to have a proper look around.

Article on the Fiddlership - p3 Shetland Times, 6 Aug 2010
After missing the last bus back to the B&B, I decided to check out the place that Gavin had recommended as a good session bar; The Lounge. When I walked in, I first met Ross the bar-tender. The first thing he said to me was 'You must be the famous Australian fiddler!'. (no pressure!).

Ross’ girlfriend is Kirsten Hendry, and she was a tutor at the festival. The Lounge has such a fiddle culture that they even have two fiddles hanging on the wall, which are for people to pick up and play whenever they want. Ross asked me to play one of them, and luckily there were a few other people there with instruments, so we had a nice small session. Given my photo had been in the paper that day and apparently everyone knew who I was (they were all taking photos of us playing at the session!), I was a bit worried that I wouldn’t know enough tunes to make a good impression. I think I did alright – I knew many of the same tunes the others played, and I played a few that they didn’t know. There were many, of course, that I didn’t know though, which is a good thing because it meant I could get a lot out of being there. So I played for a while, and got to meet some of the locals. Great night!

On my way back to the B&B I met some of the local teenagers, which was also fascinating – I would never have a reason to speak to random teenagers at home, but being a foreign visitor in Shetland, it seemed everyone was interested in chatting to me, and so I got totally different insight into the place.

**Day 3: Saturday 7 August 2010**

In the morning, Peter gave me a piece of paper with Alison Sinclair’s phone number on it. Alison is married to Sydney Sinclair – a descendant of John Anderson’s wife’s family. They have a fiddle which was ‘revoiced by John Anderson’, and they invited me over to meet them and to see the instrument. I told them that I would love to come to meet them and see the fiddle, and then out of curiosity I also asked how they managed to track me down (the article did not give any contact details). Alison’s answer was a laughing ‘Oh, this is Shetland!’. She explained...
further; after reading the article in the paper, they looked at the Fiddle Frenzy program, and, knowing many of the teachers and performers, they contacted Bryan Gear's parents. By coincidence, Bryan's parents are neighbours of Pat and Peter at the Valley B&B and Pat had been speaking with them about me just that morning. Too easy!

By coincidence, Alison and Sydney were on p5 of the same newspaper, as Alison was the 250,000th visitor to go to the new museum in Lerwick!

That afternoon I went to the Voe Show (agricultural fair) with Peter. There we saw many of the local produce and livestock, as well as hearing music and seeing an ‘Up Helly Aa’ demonstration (men and children dressed as Vikings). After the show we went to Franky’s Fish & Chip shop in Brae (best fish and chips in Shetland! The local mussels I had at there were incredible!).

In the evening I had a nice chat with Peter and Pat, I played a few tunes for them on the fiddle, and they shared some of their very special whiskey with me. They asked me to play a waltz that a man had composed for Peter’s parents’ wedding anniversary (‘Stena and Lowrie’s Diamond Wedding’, by Peter Wood, 28/7/2006). It is a nice tune, and that was only the 3rd time they’d ever heard it.

At one of the fiddle club monthly meetings, it would be really great if we could all play through the tune and record it to send them.

Day 4: Sunday 8 August 2010
On Sunday morning I moved to the Islesburg Youth Hostel, registered at the festival, and met many of my new fiddle friends. One of the people I met was a New Zealander called Loraine. She told me that there were quite a few Aussies at the festival. ‘Do you know Lachlan?’ she asked. ‘I know quite a few Australian guys called Lachlan’ I said..

A couple of minutes later Lachlan Green, from the Canberra Fiddlers walks over. Small world!
After the registration there was a short official ‘welcome’ to the festival where we got to meet the teachers and the Shetland Arts staff who had organised the festival. We then had the first session – during which people could determine their learning speed while we learnt our first tune of the festival.

That night we all enjoyed a welcome dance.

Day 5: Monday 9 August 2010
Classes started!

We had classes all day, first with Bryan Gear and Violet Tulloch, and then in the afternoon with Ross Couper. It was a really awesome feeling – having us all there excited to soon have some great new friends and works in our repertoire.

It was today that Bryan played the Anderson fiddle- he was impressed with its strong and warm tone. I took a recording of this.
That night I had dinner with Alison, Sydney and Alan Sinclair. They were lovely people, whose sense of humour made me feel like we’d been friends for years. We had a lovely meal and they showed me the fiddle that had been 'revoiced' by John Anderson. One of the pegs had snapped off, but luckily that string was still sufficiently in tune for me to just tweak it with the fine tuner. It had quite a nice sound. Apparently John Anderson sent it to Sydney when he was younger and when the family lived in Sandness. Although Sydney had a couple of lessons, he didn’t become a fiddle player. One of his family friends though, Brian Robertson, used to play it quite a bit. Brian was a member of the 40 fiddlers, and Brian’s son used to play it too; he apparently used to stand at the top of the stairs and play it there because he liked the acoustics. Brian’s son played it until he won a particular award (I can’t remember which). Once he had won the award, he stopped playing – he’d achieved what he set out to achieve.

I had a play of the fiddle, recording the sound and I took a few photos. I did not manage to get a good picture of the label, but it said;

“Violin - Revoiced by J. Anderson 36 Leslie St Elsternwick 1953”

After dinner, there was a concert with the Heritage Fiddlers, Harris Playfair’s very impressive ‘Big Band Project’, and the festival’s tutors. Following the concert was a session in the ‘festival club’.
Day 6: Tuesday 10 August 2010
Classes continued on Tuesday, with more great tunes from Bryan and Ross.

At lunch time we all attended a CD launch of Jenna and Bethany Reid’s new album ‘The Shetland Bus’. The Shetland Bus operated during the Second World War, whereby Norwegians would sail between Shetland and Norway disguised as fishermen but in reality ferrying supplies and people to and from Shetland. The story of the Shetland Bus, in particular Jan Baalsrud, is a very moving one, and now set to the music of the Reid sisters, I think this could be a huge hit at music festivals all around the world.

After the CD launch, I went on a walking tour of Lerwick, organised by the festival, which included a trip to the Shetland Soap Company, the Town Hall and other attractions in the town centre.

Following that, I met up with Marian Young (of Anderson descent) at the Shetland Family History Centre, where I played a few tunes on the fiddle for her. Marian explained some of the family connections and drew me a map so I could find relevant places of interest in Yell.

That night the concert featured the hugely talented Bryan Gear and Violet Tulloch, as well as The Irine Sisters and a band called Kolliforbolli.

We didn’t stay at the session bar too long this night because we had an early start the following day, however we did get a few good tunes in!
Day 7: Wednesday 11 August 2010 - Trip to Yell.

In the morning, Chelsea (a Melbournian) from Shetland Arts drove me around South Yell in search of John Anderson’s childhood home (Bonnie Brae), the school he attended as a child, and the graveyard where his family members are buried in Hamnavoe.

Although we did not have any trouble finding these places, this did take us quite a long time because everyone we met along the way was so friendly!

A man called Stuart MacIntyre lives in Bonnie Brae at the moment. He moved in at the age of 4, in about 1956. Luckily for us, he was home when we visited, and he kindly showed us which parts of the house were original and which have been added since John Anderson left. The house can be seen from the ferry and there is a remarkable view from the house looking south. I took some photos and explained to Stuart that he might get a visit from another MSFC player in two years time. He said he’d be very happy to meet them and show them the house.

The school house is currently owned and lived in by Billy and Doreen Arthur. Doreen was a student when it was still a school. Although we only wanted to take a photo of the outside of the house, Billy insisted we come in and have a chat. In the kitchen they had fish (seth?) hanging from the ceiling having been preserved in salt. Billy plays the fiddle and so we shared a tune together. Doreen and Billy know quite about family history and recommended a website;

http://www.bayanne.info/Shetland/

MEDIA IDEA: go onto that website, it says this:
I have been contacted by Blast! Films of London who are making a new serries for BBC TWO that explores and celebrates families. They are looking for people to take part in the series. They can be contacted on 0 or by e-mail at: celebration@blastfilms.co.uk
I’m not sure how old that notice is, but if they’re still looking for people it could be a great option for the Sides.
Billy told us that one of the Hendersons, from Fiddlers’ Bid, is a cousin of his.

After visiting the school house, Chelsea and I went to Hamnavoe, to see the cemetery.

Having tracked down some of John Anderson’s childhood landmarks, we headed up to Cullivoe to join the others, and there I learnt some more tunes from Ross, and also from Jenna Ried, and then we had a session with the famous Cullivoe Fiddlers (a couple of them had a play of the Anderson fiddle, complimenting its sound).

Playing at the high-energy concert that night were the Cullivoe Fiddlers, Maggie Adamson and Brian Nicholson, and Eunice Henderson’s group; Birls Aloud.

There was a dance following that, however I came back after the concert with Chelsea because I had another early start the following day and didn’t want to be too tired when being interviewed on the radio.

A distinctive element of the Cullivoe playing style is that they tune up the G-string to be an A. They explained that the origin of this technique is from the days before electronic amplification; by tuning up the string and double-stopping it, they could make more noise while playing at weddings and other functions. This was particularly important because often there would not be many instruments playing.
Day 8: Thursday 12 August 2010

On Thursday morning I went into the BBC studios for an interview with local radio presenter Jane Moncrieff. We had a chat and I played Da Trowie Burn and Da Farda Ben Da Welcommer. I did not know this until later, but at the very same time, Ross Couper was teaching Da Trowie Burn to the other festival students!

After the interview, I headed back to the Islesburgh Centre for the workshops (via High Level Music, where I bought quite a few books of sheet music, which will form the initial items in our new library – see below).

That afternoon I had my ‘wan-to-wan’ with Brian and Violet.

WAN-TO-WANs

During the festival, all the students have the opportunity to have a 20 minute masterclass (known ironically as a ‘wan-to-wan’ with Bryan Gear and Violet Tulloch). During my wan-to-wan I asked them to give me some tips about phrasing and ornamentation. Given that Tom Anderson seemed to have been a very strict teacher and to have very strong ideas about how tunes were to be played, I also asked them to comment on my phrasing in Da Trowie Burn (as Ross Couper’s interpretation is quite different when it comes to timing). I was reassured by them that when playing Shetland tunes, you are permitted to have your own interpretation – there is no ‘right or wrong way of playing’ the tunes. That said, by listening to the great masters of Shetland music, you can get a good feel for how a native Shetlander would play.

That was one thing that struck me during the week; how Bryan, Ross and Jenna (as well as all the people who played at the concerts) have quite different styles, despite all being authentic Shetland fiddlers. It’s a place with a rich past, a dynamic present and a very bright and loud future!

After the workshops and wan-to-wans, there was an official function at the Museum; all the Fiddle Frenzy students (and others) were invited by Sandy Cluness – Convener of the Shetland Islands Council – to a civic reception for the ‘Shetland Bus Premier’.
Immediately after that, the concert began, with the feature being Jenna, Bethany and their band performing the Shetland Bus suite. Also playing at the concert were the young Shetland fiddler of the year, and Harris Playfair with Ross and Ryan Couper. (I think Lachlan Green recorded some of this. Also, apparently the sound guy (probably Andrew Tulloch – Violet Tulloch’s son) recorded the whole concert. To get hold of that sound would be fantastic!!)

Again there was a lively session afterwards, both at the festival club and at the Lounge. Lachlan and I went to the Lounge for a while, and there, we met Linda from the 40 fiddlers.

Day 9: Friday 13 August 2010 – Excursion to Hillswick

Nice and early on Friday morning we got on the bus and headed to Hillswick, near the top of the main island. One great part of the festival is that every couple of days it heads to different towns throughout Shetland; giving students the chance to see the islands and giving Shetlanders in more remote parts of the islands the chance to enjoy the concerts and dances.

After a quick morning tea and look around Hillswick (including seeing the two orphaned seals and a peat fire in the ‘Bod’), we got down to business, learning some tunes from Jenna Reid and Ross Couper.

In the afternoon I went on the field trip to Esher Ness – home of Tom Anderson. At the cliffs we were lucky enough to see some puffins (having been told that most of them would have left for the season). Then we went to the cemetery of Tom Anderson where we paid our respects by playing Da Slockitt Light. We didn’t empty a bottle of whiskey over the grave though, which apparently is another tradition.
That evening we were treated to a concert by the Shetland Fiddle Association ("the 40 fiddlers") led by Shirley Mills.

Throughout the week I had been doing my best, making phone calls and meeting people, to track down the other John Anderson Fiddle. I had been told to get in touch with a Graeme Jamieson, who might be the owner of the #16 JA fiddle.

I had managed to contact Graeme and we had arranged to meet on the Sunday (my last full day in Shetland), but as it turned out, Graeme, who plays with the 40 Fiddlers, decided to go along to the concert and surprise me there. It was a great pleasure meeting him and getting to see the fiddle. I had a play and thoroughly enjoyed seeing it in action at the concert.

Despite a very full-on day, perhaps feeling that our Frenzied week was coming to a rapid end, all the Fiddle Frenzy students made the most of the dance that followed the concert – dancing, drinking, and chatting, and I guess we all found our hidden reserves of energy, because we played our fiddles all the way back to Lerwick! (Don't worry Bill – I played VERY Carefully on the bus! – a seatbelt for me and a seatbelt for the fiddle!)
Day 10: Saturday 14 August 2010

In the morning I went for a quick look around the museum before meeting Marian Young, who took me to her house for a lovely lunch with her husband Jack and her.

I played the fiddle for them, and Marian showed me many of the photos she has of the family.

After that, I attended Peter Cooke’s lecture on the history of Shetland Music. Peter has spent a huge amount of time over the years recording and documenting Shetland music. In particular he is credited with inspiring the Cullivoe Fiddlers and being responsible for their fame.

Then, after a quick rehearsal, we had the final concert. Performing were: the students, Filska and Maggie Adamson & Brian Nicholson. (Catriona MacDonald was originally going to the main act in this concert however she unfortunately could not make it).

As many of the students were taking the ferry back to mainland Scotland the following afternoon, the session that night (‘The Final Fling’) was epic.

An interesting difference I noticed between sessions in Shetland and sessions in Australia is that in Shetland they generally only played tunes twice before moving on to the next. Conversely, the same tune might get played on numerous occasions during the one session.
Sunday 15 August was my last full day in Shetland. Although I had managed to pack so much into the trip, it really felt as if the time had disappeared very quickly!

I began the day by visiting Graeme Jamieson and his wife Rosie at their home in Sandwick.

Graeme explained how he came to own the fiddle; he saw it advertised in the newspaper about 25 years ago, and he was looking for a fiddle for his son at the time. He bought it from the previous owner for £35. The previous owner had been looking after it for a friend called Laurie Matheson (to whom John Anderson had sent the fiddle on 3 Dec 1945), but when Laurie died, the man decided to sell it. It’s a beautiful instrument, very similar in appearance to the #10. This is the fiddle which was played before the Queen mother.

As always, I took some photos and recorded the sound of the instrument.

Just before I left, Graeme gave me a copy of a CD which he produced – containing several tunes he has written for various family members.

A newspaper article reported that when asked how it was to meet me, Graeme responded that it was ‘fine’.
Next stop was a quick trip to Maggie Adamson, Fiona Adamson and Brian Nicholson’s house, where we had a nice chat about what they’ve been up to, Maggie’s sailing, etc, and we played and exchanged some tunes.

Finally, Maggie and I headed into town for ‘The Survivors Session’ at The Lounge. I have a 5 ½ hour recording of this session (though I wasn’t present for the whole thing – a few of us headed to an Indian restaurant for a typical Shetland meal some time in the middle of it all.)

It was sad saying goodbye to everyone, but we all had the feeling we’ll meet again.

Day 12 Monday 16 August 2010

Via a quick trip to the music and book shops, I said goodbye to Lerwick and was given a lift to the airport by Marian and Jack (scenic route, of course!).

As a final reminder of how easy it is to make friends in Shetland, and how everyone seems to know everyone, at the airport, I ran into the Tullochs (Violet, Andrew and Andrew’s girlfriend) and Louise Thomason from the Shetland Times. It really is a tight-knit place!

Next stop was Edinburgh where I met up with Andrew Gilmoor (not Gilmour) and had a few awesome days seeing the Fringe Festival and meeting with Chris Stout.

Although Andrew and I did drop by a recommended session bar – The Royal Oak – the three people with instruments there seemed to be performing rather than having a session, so I didn’t get the fiddle out.

For several weeks after the festival ended, I had tunes stuck on repeat in my head!

FANTASTIC TRIP!
The Anderson Family members currently living in Shetland
The family tree below represents some of the branch of John Anderson’s family that stayed in Shetland. [Please excuse the formatting. Microsoft Word doesn’t seem to like making family trees.]

John Anderson’s parents were Gilbert Anderson and Helen Anderson (née Henderson).

John Anderson had an older brother called Henry James Anderson (30/7/1880 – 16/3/1917). Henry married Anne Jane Hall, and they had three children; Helen Jane Anderson, Andrew Anderson and Gilbert Anderson, as shown below.

John’s brother Gilbert William Irving Anderson stayed in Shetland, but has no living descendents (Johanna was his daughter).

As far as I know, John’s other family members came to Australia.

Marian married Jack Young and their children are Neil and Jacqueline.

Emily Jane married Edward John Night, and their children are Ramsay and Emma, and Joan Jamesina married an Allan Cameron and their children are Euan and Murray.

For more information on the Anderson family tree, please speak to Bill Sides.
In the map above, (from google maps) you can see the bottom of South Yell.

People mostly arrive at South Yell by ferry from the mainland. This ferry leaves from Toft and arrives at Ulsta, which is where John Anderson spent his early years. Take the small road which is shown leading to the word ‘Ulsta’ on the map at the bottom left of the island. At the very beginning of this road (or just before it) you will see a small house with a square fence surrounding it. This is the school house (confirm the house by seeing the sign next to the front door; ‘School House’. This is one of the closest buildings to the ferry terminal (except for the shop) and there is a bus stop opposite.

Further up the old Ulsta road is Bonnie Brae, the house in which John Anderson lived as a child and in which he was possibly born. As mentioned above, the man who lives there today is called Stuart MacIntyre. He is a very nice guy, and knows that a MSFC member will be coming to Shetland in 2 years. If you are lucky and he is at home when you visit, he’ll say hi and show you around. Stuart thought that John Anderson was not born in the house, but said he wasn’t sure. Bonnie Brae is the first house you’ll see on the left of the road. Further up the hill is another, newer house, which is actually lived in by an Anderson; Will John Anderson.

If you head to Hamnavoe, you’ll see a big white simple-looking church. In the church’s grave yard you will see many Anderson graves, including those of John Anderson’s parents; Gilbert Anderson and Helen (Henderson) Anderson.
Louise also wrote a follow-up article which appeared in the Shetland Times the week after I left. The online versions of the articles can be found at;
http://www.shetlandtimes.co.uk/2010/08/06/australian-musician-bringing-old-john-anderson-fiddle-home-for-frenzy
and
http://www.shetlandtimes.co.uk/2010/08/20/downing-hails-‘fantastic’-week-of-music-action

I have a copy of the BBC radio interview that Jane Moncrieff produced for her program ‘Good Evening Shetland’. This was aired on 13 August 2010, and if anyone would like to listen to it, I would be happy to lend you the disc.

In relation to ‘The Shetland News’, I heard back from Karen Emslie who ended up doing a story, available at:

I didn’t hear back from Malcolm Younger – I’m not sure if he ended up doing a story on the exchange.

Ronald McCoy also did a lot of work, putting together his YouTube video ‘Da Road to Shetland’, which has been viewed hundreds of times and which has been cited in many secondary (and sometimes totally random) websites, including;
http://wn.com/Da_Road_to_Shetland (‘world news’)  
http://www.livingwithyourdog.com/healthydog/Angus+Downing/ (‘living with your dog’)  
And my favourite:
6packabsinsider.com... how’d they know?!

Recommended Shetlanders for future trips
All of the acts and teachers at the festival would be great ambassadors of Shetland.
A key question is – does the returning person need to have an act of their own, and do they need to come to Australia with their act, or could they simply come by themselves and perform with us? If they need to come with an act, this makes the undertaking more costly. In any case, this is something to be considered by Bill Sides, Judy, Matt and the committee.
In addition to Chris Stout from fiddlers’ bid, the following would be great people for the fiddlership;
- Bryan Gear and Violet Tulloch (most people I spoke with in Shetland said this duo be the ideal and obvious choice).
- Ross Couper (with brother Ryan Couper on guitar and/or Harris Playfair on piano) – a phenomenal trio!
- Jenna and Bethany Reid – with the Shetland Bus act. (and/or their band ‘Filska’).
- Eunice Henderson – a very good player, a student of Tom Anderson’s I believe, and a great raconteur.
- Catriona McDonald – a world-class performer.

A lot of the younger players, such as Kirsten Hendry, Liza Fullerton (2010 Shetland Young Fiddler of the Year), Merran Nugent and Danny Garrick etc, would be good to keep in mind for future years.

If they come on a Working Holiday Visa, this will make the task of obtaining a visa much easier, however WHVs are not available to people over 30 years old. Otherwise, it appears the ‘Entertainment Visa’ (subclass 420) would be the way to go. Obtaining visas can be very complicated and professional advice should be sought (N.B. In most cases it is illegal for a person in Australia who is not a registered Migration Agent to give immigration advice).

**Tunes:**
The main sources of tunes:
- workshops with the tutors – Bryan, Ross and Jenna.
- Popular tunes played in sessions
- Tunes taught/given by various people along the way, such as Graeme Jamieson and Peter and Pat from the B&B.

See ‘MSFC Travelling Fiddlership Tunebook #1’ for the sheet music to most of these tunes.

**Tunes taught by Bryan Gear, Ross Couper and Jenna Reid at the festival workshops:**
Jamie Stewart
The Artful Lady
Mr John Irvine (Cunningsburgh)
Peter Davidson
Da Fashion o da Deltin Lasses
The Crying Taing
Tilley plump
Da Trowie Burn
Da Lass dat Made da Bed for Me
Up da Stroods da Sailor Goes
Da Crook ida Burn
Da Aith Rant
Sassakia (by Ross Couper)
Wheena Burn (taught by Ross Couper)
Square da Mizzen
Train (by Ross Couper)
Gillian’s (by Ross Couper)
Bratholm
Hjerdefeld
Burravoe
Molly and Rory’s
Kale an Knockit Koarn
The Fiddler from Santa Barbera
Bimbo’s Bobby Crowe of Bullmallo
Third Time Lucky
Johan Elizabeth Jamieson’s Favourite
Da Bonxie
Da Waas Lasses
Uncle Jarm

**Tunes from Sessions and Concerts;**
The Joy of it (see Bold – Catriona MacDonald)
Bumble’s lament – (Eunice Henderson played it).
Clueless (I have a copy on itunes of pipes playing Clueless).
Taybank Shenanigans (part of AD’s new Shetland Set)
A Curious Beetle (Jeremy Kittel)
The Wrong House
Hen’s March Through the Middens
The Four Poster Bed
(and others for which I have recordings but don’t know the names)

**Tom Anderson’s tunes (chosen by Margaret Scollay for the final concert):**
Da Rod to Moreview
Da Eshaness Two-Step
Aly’s Soond
Violet Tulloch’s Hornpipe
‘Peerie Willie’ Johnson
The President’s Hornpipe
The Secretary

**Tunes given to me by people I met, such as Graeme Jamieson and Peter and Pat from the Valley B&B;**
Callum’s Tune (by Graeme Jamieson)
Daniel’s Rant (by Graeme Jamieson)
Waltz of the Three Roses (by Graeme Jamieson)
Liam’s Nee-naw (by Graeme Jamieson)
Stenna and Lowrie’s Wedding (by Peter Wood)
Useful Terms – Dictionary:

Although the main language in Shetland is English and people in Shetland do not speak Gaelic, Shetlanders nevertheless have a language of their own, as shown by this sign which apparently warns drivers to go slowly. You'll pick it up quickly, but here are a few of the Shetlandisms I picked up along the way;

Fae – from
Peerie – small
Muckle – big
Kin – know (how do you kin her? We went to school together)
Benkled – bent or dented (possibly the origin of the Aussie word ‘bingle’).

For more, please go to:

Costs:

New Library of Shetland CDs and Sheet Music

After buying a lot of CDs and music books, originally for use as presents, I thought a better use might be to put them in a library to be owned and managed by the MSFC. I spoke to Bill Sides about this and he thought it was a good idea, and so he agreed to pay for the following books and CDs for the club;
[so if you’re wondering why you didn’t get an awesome present, that’s why.]

Books:
Spencie’s Tunes, vol 2
The Tom Anderson Collection, vol 2
The Chris Stout Collection, vol 1
Musical Reflections by Arthur Scott Robertson, vols 1-4
The Shetland Violinist (Gideon Stove), vol 1
The Wilderness Collection, vol 1

CDs:
The Cullivoe Fiddlers (signed by Chris Thomason and Angus Henry)
‘A Thousand Miles Away’ – Filska
(signed by Jenna and Bethany Reid, Gemma Wilson and Andrew Tulloch)
‘Da Bride’s a Bonny Ting’ – Shetland Fiddlers’ Society
(signed by Linda, who also works for Shetland Arts)
‘White Nights’ – Catriona McKay and Chris Stout
‘Wilderness – fiddle and Piano from Shetland’ M Scollay
Further, Bryan Gear and Violet Tulloch also gave me a copy of their CD, which will be included in the library; ‘Kebister Head’ – Bryan Gear & Violet Tulloch, given by Bryan and Violet.

In addition to the above CDs and books, I was given several books and CDs along the way by various people, including Marian Young, Maggie Adamson, Graeme Jamieson and Shirley from the 40 Fiddlers etc. It feels strange to give these away as it is like insultingly re-gifting, but I would not have been there but for the fiddle club and Bill Sides’ generosity, so at the very least, the following other items can be borrowed from me at any time;
- a copy of ‘Shetland's Young Heritage’ album ‘bridging the gap’ (from Marian Young).
- A copy of the ‘Shetland Session Tunes – Fiddle Frenzy Collection, vol 2’ book and CD, given by Ross (bar-tender at The Lounge)
- a copy of a CD called ‘the Chair’.
- A copy of ‘Tunes Composed by William A Hunter’.
- A CD of tunes written and recorded by Graeme Jamieson (owner of the #16 fiddle).
- Maggie Adamson’s three latest albums; ‘Back to the Hills’, ‘Anidder een!’ and ‘Tammy Norie’.

Tasks for people who go next time:
- Show the fiddle to Ewen Thomson – he’s a fiddle maker in Shetland (perhaps Sandwick). Apparently he’d like to see the fiddle.
- Contact and meet Henry Robertson – a Shetlander who apparently met John Anderson in Melbourne when he was sailing. (HR called the BBC after hearing the radio program.
- Visit Eddie Night and Gilbert Anderson. I didn’t get to meet them. (contact details above).
- Get a better photo of the Sinclair’s fiddle? – I couldn’t get a good shot of the inside label.
- Have a totally awesome time and bring back some kick-arse new tunes for us to play!