

# The 2011 visit of Chris Stout with Catriona McKay – the first incoming Shetland Travelling Fiddlership exchangees - a report for sponsors Bill and Diane Sides

Judy Turner – June 2011

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**Thank you from all of us for an unforgettable ten days!**



## **Background**

Thanks to a long standing friendship between the Sides family of Melbourne and the Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club (sparked by the Club's interest in helping the family of John Anderson descendants to reconnect Anderson fiddles with the music they were born to play) an annual exchange has been set up enabling a fiddler to go from Melbourne to Shetland (Angus Downing, 2010) and a fiddler to return from Shetland to Melbourne (Chris Stout, 2011). The purpose of the "travelling fiddlership" when first proposed to the Club committee and the Sides family was to build links between our Club and the Shetland fiddling scene, and to build our knowledge of Shetland fiddle playing – its history and where it is now.

Angus Downing had been a brilliant first exchange heading to the Shetlands (see his separate report) and we were looking for a really top notch fiddler with a big reputation to launch the exchange here in Australia. In Chris Stout we found exactly the right combination of qualities to make this visit - from April 1 to April 10 in Melbourne, and with other side trips which are reported on below – a resounding and unqualified success. Gus also put a tremendous amount of work into the legal side of the tour getting the visas and ABNs all sorted out, which turned out to be harder than anticipated. In addition he and Chris got on line a house on fire, as you can see from the picture below taken by Catriona on our last night together.

As Chris was keen to make this an Australian tour with his long time playing partner brilliant harpist Catriona McKay, the Club played a key role in finding other work for the duo while in Australia and acting, to an extent, as tour manager. This took the Club out of its comfort zone and proved to be the only difficulty associated with the tour. Where possible we have included feedback from other groups.

The members of the Club thank Bill and Diane for all their support and interest and for making this visit possible. As the person who founded the Club and has built it over 16 years, I can honestly say that Chris has been the best teacher we have engaged and that the whole week was as life changing as any other in the Club's history. My personal thanks go to the Sides family and other Anderson descendants for their enthusiastic support for the Club and for Scottish fiddling in Australia.



The lads after a few cheeky pints

## Melbourne Friday April 1 The Boite Gig

Gig for The Boite, at the world music cafe, Mark St. Hall, Fitzroy, 8-10pm

Key collaborators were Boite Directors Therese Virtue and Roger King.

Audience – around 120 – full to overflowing in this tiny hall.

The pictures below show what an exciting event it was, and for the Club members as this was our first chance to see the duo live, we were grateful for the small hall which meant we could get close to the action. The extent of their virtuosity began to be revealed at this first Melbourne gig, attended also by Kristin Marriott our Benalla gig organiser, who took the news of their amazing virtuosity and dynamism back and ensured that it was spread around the north east of Victoria as well.



The screenshot shows the website for 'the Boite' artists' directory. The header features the 'the Boite' logo and the text 'boite artists' directory'. Below the header, there is a navigation menu with links: 'boite home >>', 'welcome', 'info', 'artist list', 'events', 'search', 'join', and 'login'. The main content area is titled 'Catriona McKay & Chris Stout, Scottish Harp & Shetland Fiddle'. Below the title, there is a photograph of the duo standing together, one holding a harp and the other a fiddle. To the right of the photo is the 'INFORMATION/BIO:' section, which includes a paragraph about their music, a paragraph about their 2010 album 'White Nights', and a paragraph about their sound. Below the bio, there are several quotes from reviewers and a list of awards. At the bottom of the page, there is a website URL 'www.mckaystoutmusic.co.uk' and a link for more information: 'http://mckaystoutmusic.co.uk?'

**boite [Fr] bwaht.** | [boite home >>](#) | [welcome](#) | [info](#) | [artist list](#) | [events](#) | [search](#) | [join](#) | [login](#)

### Catriona McKay & Chris Stout, Scottish Harp & Shetland Fiddle

Catriona McKay & Chris Stout, Scottish Harp & Shetland Fiddle

**INFORMATION/BIO:**

Catriona McKay (Scottish harp) and Chris Stout (Shetland fiddle) play a dynamic and adventurous exploration of traditional Scottish music. Performing together for 15 years, they are connected to the traditions of their instruments while being highly aware of and enthralled by the possibilities they hold. They pursue a path to explore sounds that connect and challenge.

Their self-penned 2010 album *White Nights* is a modulation between past and present, between summer and winter, between reliability and risk. Music inspired by the heightened senses during the long light nights of summer in the north, and in contrast, music which celebrates reflections of winter landscapes and sounds.

Through colour and depth of tone, they abandon themselves on a journey to create one sound, yet they carve out space for one another to allow a musical dialogue. It is this unity along with communication that makes their music so compelling.

"...a gobsmakingly wonderful duo." TAPLAS  
"This really is a stunning album...truly inspired." FIDDLE ON  
"glittering harp work...exceptional bow control" The STRAD  
"clear and strong...always a startling freshness and spontaneity at work...virtuosic and physically engaging..." LIVE AT THE QUEEN'S HALL NOV 2010  
\*\*\*\*\* The Glasgow Herald  
"...worth buying for its stunning opening track alone..." \*\*\*\*\* The Scotsman  
"...this music is breathtaking." ROOTS  
"Extremely powerful" Living Tradition

[www.mckaystoutmusic.co.uk](http://www.mckaystoutmusic.co.uk)  
more info: <http://mckaystoutmusic.co.uk?>



### **Sat April 2nd: Fiddle Workshop with Chris Stout**

10-430 at St. Aidans Uniting Church, Duggan St. North Balwyn.  
Club members only; 30 in attendance.

Our first teaching session with Chris was a great success. He started by teaching two jigs, then decided to focus in on a set we could play together at the concert. Thus three classic Shetland Reels were taught by the master. Many of our participants were amazed at how easily Chris got everyone on the same page. His teaching technique was fast, lively, demanding and took no prisoners. The reels were fairly standard so very suitable for imparting nuance of his style, without being too prescriptive. One very notable thing was the way Chris was able to teach for the group rather than for the individual, which is what most teachers do, even taking into account the cellists and what works for them when playing in a group. Focusing in this way on the collective he achieved much more than most teachers who imagine they are teaching for one student.



**Sirocha and Chris**



**Name:** Sirocha Bruckard / Instrument: Fiddle

**Sessions attended:** Saturday workshop YES Wednesday workshop YES Private lesson NO MLC gig YES

**What I got from the sessions I attended:** I really liked the pace at which Chris taught. I was worried that it would be slow but I found it challenging which was great. I loved the tunes that he taught and the workshops gave me greater exposure to the Shetland style than I had ever had previously. I thought his comments on playing in a large group were interesting - the importance of thinking as a group, not playing 'soloistically', how it's not important to all be playing the same ornaments, but to know when to have a clean sound etc. It seemed to me that he really didn't like big fiddle groups and it is because of that I think that his comments were perhaps even more valuable!

**Also – if we do this again, how could it be improved:** I thought the program worked well. The only thing I was unhappy about is a small thing really. I felt that there was perhaps a little too much pressure on the group before the performance on Sunday. People are only ever going to be able to do their best and I think it is important to remember that and to tailor the instruction accordingly. I felt that there was a bit of a stressed/panicky vibe before the gig when we really should have been excited about the gig!

**Any other comments you want to make:** I am very excited about the exchange program. In Australia, I think we can feel quite remote from some of the great fiddle players - only knowing them from their cds or by making trips to Scotland - but this exchange brings us that much closer. It's wonderful!

**Name:** Shirley Hunter/**Instrument:** violin  
**Sessions attended:** Saturday workshop YES Wednesday workshop YES Private lesson NO  
MLC gig YES

**What I got from the sessions I attended:**

I enjoyed the Sat workshop very much. Playing tunes round and round 10 or 12 times and at speed gave me a lot of confidence as did the emphasis on playing with energy and passion and not trying to play exactly the same as everyone else. For me, playing mostly by ear and without any formal training, this style of teaching is easier, possibly for others, with a more formal approach this style may be a bit confronting. Just my thoughts anyway.

Loved the concert and Chris and Catriona. The concert was a bit long but this is always going to happen when there are two different groups plus thank yous etc. Probably couldn't be avoided however, we left them happy with the dancing and Shetland set – good idea!

**Improvements – hmmm!!**

This whole event was pretty successful, thanks to everyone. I really feel privileged to have had this opportunity to learn and participate with so many wonderful musicians in the fiddle club. Good if we could do it again just the same, some time. Many many thanks !



**Name:** jack wilson / **Instrument:** fiddle and piano

**Attended:** Saturday workshop YES Wed workshop YES Private lesson YES MLC gig YES

**What I got from the sessions I attended:** Chris really was inspiring in the way that he motivated every person in the room to listen to their playing and get right into it. We played a b part round and round for 5 minutes and it wasn't boring at all because we were so engaged with what we were playing and the sound of the group. It was pretty incredible. Lesson with Catriona was fantastic. If only it could have gone for longer and if only I could play piano better! **Also – if we do this again, how could it be improved:** I was lucky to have an individual lesson which was fantastic. Not sure how the fiddlers did in group lessons. Maybe some one on one time would've been good for them. The group workshops were great. Chris was able to do his own thing and we all got right into it. I don't know what more you could hope to get out of it!

**Any other comments you want to make:** It was treat that Catriona was with him cos it meant she could work with the rhythm section and get them looking at accompaniment in new ways and exploring different grooves and sounds etc. Chris was inspirational, and had many pearls of wisdom to share and he posed many important questions. It was great to have the opportunity to see them perform too because the show is absolutely mind blowing in the way they deconstruct your typical performance of Celtic music and play tunes and musical ideas in a completely unique way.

**Sat April 2nd: Harp Workshop w/ Catriona McKay:  
10- 430 in Malsbury with the Harp Society of Victoria.**



*Where : Malsbury Town Hall*

*What: Harp workshop with Catriona in from 10.30am to 2.30pm with an hour break for lunch. Followed by a concert featuring Catriona, the Braemar College Harp Ensemble, Andy Rigby and other local harp players*

*Who :Harp players and friends from around the area and Melbourne.*

*Response: Very positive response. Everybody loved Catriona, she was wonderful – a lovely person, talented harp player and very generous with her time.*

*Any other comments : This was a terrific opportunity for harp players in Victoria to have some time with an international performer. Catriona was inspiring and a very enjoyable day was had by all who attended. It is very important for local musicians to have this exposure and access to international players.*

*Frances Thiele*



## **Session: Dinner & session at Sides' residence – Glen Waverley**

**Name:** Judy O/ **Instrument:** fiddle

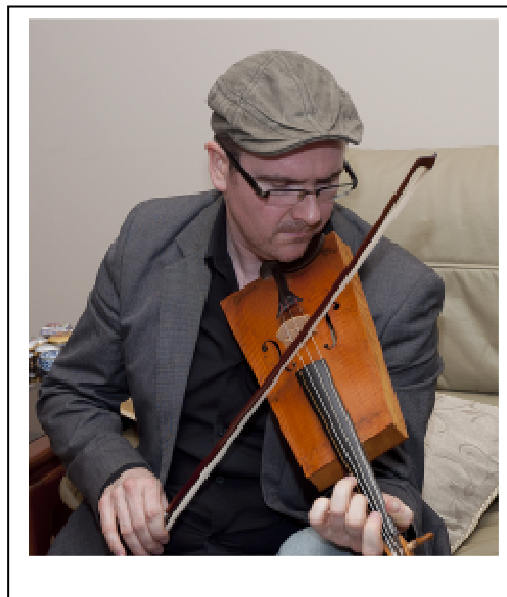
**I attended:** Saturday workshop NO/ Wed workshop 1/2 hr at end/ Private lesson YES/MLC gig YES

**What I got from the sessions I attended:** Favourite CS moment was informal session at Bill Sides - we don't do enough of this, although with everyone's schedules there's a good reason why.

Please no more private lessons with 3 other 15 y.os! More chat than play - well, Kate and Alex are pretty quiet, but the other one...!

**Also – if we do this again, how could it be improved:** The recordings on the website weren't a complete guide for what we were playing at the gig. Because I didn't make the workshops, this left me a bit panicky.

**Any other comments you want to make:** Intense, but very fun!



**Name:** Melody O'Meara **Instrument:** Fiddle

**Sessions attended:** East Kew workshop, Boite gig, Tyers gig, MLC gig

**Saturday workshop NO/ Wednesday workshop YES/Private lesson YES MLC gig YES**

**What I got from the sessions I attended:** I really enjoyed everything I attended involving Chris & Catriona. Musically amazing and great fun, they challenged everyone's abilities in a most enjoyable way - I was only scared for a little bit!! I particularly enjoyed my private lesson with Chris. He kept it simple but useful with a focus on skills that could be applied to any music. Turns out Judy was right - it really is all about intonation!:) The Tyers gig was beautiful - an intimate little hall absolutely packed to the rafters with appreciative locals.

**Also – if we do this again, how could it be improved:** More of Catriona - she did fantastic things with the rhythm section! In general though, if we did a similar thing with someone else, I think it would be good if we had a social night that became a really great session rather than stemming from a rehearsal. If we locked it in a bit earlier then we might get a bigger turn out. We could also do this sort of thing more than once maybe so that everyone has a chance to be included.

**Any other comments you want to make:** Although the organisation of this visit was quite high maintenance and even difficult at times because, to a large extent, we were working things out as we went along, the end result was well worth it! From my point of view it was brilliant just to make it to the music part!!

## **Sun April 3rd: Tyers Folk Club gig**

730-10pm, Tyers Hall (near Traralgon)

Contact Barb Brabets, President

Chris Stout and Catriona McKay's performance for the Gippsland Acoustic Music Club was inspirational. They performed at the Tyers Hall, 200km East of Melbourne near the Latrobe Valley.

As a small acoustic venue, Chris declared it the most intimate setting of their tour, and hence very special for achieving the pure sound which they aspire to.

Over 60 people packed the small venue. The club does not charge entry to School aged children hoping that the inspirational benefit will be passed on through the generations.

As a duo, their playing was a brilliant combination of Scottish fiddle and Celtic harp. Each had great command of their music, highlighted by great examples of how to "attack" a tune. Lots to learn from. It was a delight to meet Chris and Catriona, and offer them a special experience in a rural setting for an appreciative audience.

We eagerly awaited their arrival. The organisation leading up to them playing had gone very smoothly. It's of great benefit for volunteer committees when acts are easy to deal with, and communication is straight forward. By the time they arrived we felt we knew them and we were keen to finally meet them and hear their music.

We were not disappointed and we eagerly look forward to their return.

Many thanks for this opportunity to host them.

Barry Stuckey

for Gippsland Acoustic Music Club Inc

### **Wed April 6th: Workshop, 7-930, East Kew Uniting Church**

Members and community were invited to this City of Boroondara sponsored workshop, and in addition to around 25 members there were 5 community members present. Some comments were collected and appear below:

- *Thanks for the sponsorship*
- *Great!*
- *Great opportunity for fiddle club members and to meet other fiddlers/interested people/networking.*
- *Excellent workshop*
- *Excellent - best thing I've attended in ages.*
- *Awesome! Inspirational. Thanks!*
- *Big but not too big.*
- *Good because I didn't have to rush from work to get there.*



## **Tues April 5th (Kew location): Private lessons for fiddle, harp or piano**

See elsewhere in the report for comments on the private lessons – special thanks to Louise Godwin and Guy Lecouteur for hosting, and for the gnocchi recipe!

## **Thurs April 7th (Kew location) & Private lessons for fiddle, harp or piano available.**

The private lessons with Chris and Catriona were an essential part of the project and 16 or so fiddlers as well as 2 harpists and 2 piano players took advantage of this offer. Two harpists (from outside the group) paid for the lessons, but the rest were included in our agreement. All who attended enjoyed them immensely, for some they were real eye openers and changed the way they will approach their instruments in future. It was brilliant to be able to get up close and personal with this leading fiddle player for us fiddlers, and to feel the enormous commitment and energy that go into his playing and composition.

Some comments are in italics throughout this report.

**Name:** *Tom Loewe*; **Instrument:** *Fiddle*

**Attended:** **Sat workshop** *NO*; **Wed workshop** *YES*; **Private lesson** *YES*; **MLC gig** *YES*

**What I got from the sessions I attended:** *Bowling technique, how to get the full use of the bow and joining notes to make the tunes sound interesting and rhythmically.*

**Also – if we do this again, how could it be improved:** *I felt a little rushed in learning his tunes and then applying the correct techniques to the tunes in only one session. It might be an idea to get a recording of the tunes to listen to before the actual lessons or workshop.*

**Any other comments you want to make:** *He has been an inspiration to me in playing the fiddle.*

## **Fri April 8th: Benalla gig at Benalla Art Gallery, Bridge St.**

Gig started at 5.30pm and was part of a three day festival at the Art Gallery – Chris and Catriona played to a totally sold out house (standing room only) and two media reviews are attached below, courtesy David Dore President of the Gallery Music group. The picture is from Simon Klose Gallery Director.



**CS and CM wow the capacity crowd at Benalla Art Gallery**

*Please thank the sponsors again on behalf of the Benalla community - their support in bringing out such extraordinary musicians was a really great boost for the town and for music at the Benalla Art Gallery. The newspaper review is attached below.*

*David Dore*

*Name: Kristin Marriott Instrument: Fiddle*

*Sessions attended: Saturday workshop YES Wednesday workshop NO Private lesson NO  
MLC gig NO Benalla gig YES*

*What I got from the sessions I attended: Inspiration. Great ideas about how group playing works. Lovely tunes. Reconnected me with my love of Shetland fiddle. So lovely to meet Chris and Catriona.*

*Also – if we do this again, how could it be improved: hard to improve for me unless I could attend more....*

*Any other comments you want to make: Just so many thanks to Bill and Diane for their wonderful sponsorship and ....we will never forget Catriona playing the harp down by our lagoon over breakfast!*

# MUSIC delights crowds

The Benalla Art Gallery mini-festival of quality music, dubbed "April in Benalla" proved to be a great success with excellent audiences at all three concerts.

The first of these was held Thursday, April 7, and was presented by the AYO String Quartet.

The Australian Youth Orchestra is recognised as one of the top youth orchestras in the world and consists of musicians of less than 25 years of age from across the country.

From it, there are various ensembles who are assisted to tour and give concerts within Australia.

The AYO String Quartet, in between performances at the Castlemaine Festival, was able to visit Benalla, where they played music by four very different composers.

Their concert began with a sunny *Haydn Quartet*, followed by a work by the contemporary Australian composer, Richard Meale - *Cantilena Pacifica*.

After a short interval, they played three *Fantasias* by Henry Purcell, followed by the marvellous Shostakovich *String Quartet No. 3*.

Considering that they had only been together for a matter of a few weeks, the playing of this talented group was amazingly coherent and utterly enjoyable.

The second concert was a total contrast to the first, a spectacular evening of music in the traditional Scottish style, given by world-renowned fiddler Chris

## APRIL IN BENALLA review by Alan Monger

Stout, from the Shetland Islands, together with Catriona McKay on harp.

The energy and passion of these two performers was quite dazzling; most of the items having been written by themselves.

Their fame having preceded them, an audience of more than 150 packed into the Ledger Gallery to hear one of the best performances of this merry music-making that they would ever expect to hear.

Finally, on Saturday evening, we were treated to a feast of top-quality piano playing from Christine Stevenson, an Australian now based in England.

Ms Stevenson played a wide variety of pieces, beginning with Percy Grainger, working through Chopin, Mendelssohn and Alkan, and finally some beautiful and virtuosic pieces by Franz Liszt.

In Grainger's quaint *Zanzibar Boat Song*, she was joined by her husband and also well-known Melbourne musician Dobbs Franks for the unusual sight of three pianists playing simultaneously on the one keyboard.

The performer spoke about each item with great knowledge and her playing was absolutely brilliant.

BENALLA ENSIGN WED, APRIL 13, 2011



Breakfast by a real billabong – courtesy Kristin and Max Marriott



Catriona meets a famous Scottish horse – Collesie Motivator



The road into the Marriott's farm

## Saturday April 9th – extra session and dinner

This was a chance for whoever was available to get together and put some more time into the tubes for the concert the following day – very worthwhile gathering, and a friendly happy time and special thanks to Judy Oleinikov who is the hostess with the mostest. The pictures are from Catriona.



**Name:** Alex Grenville **Instrument:** Violin

**I attended:** Saturday workshop YES Wednesday workshop YES Private lesson YES MLC gig YES

**What I got from the sessions I attended:** Some great new tunes and techniques, along with ways to make my playing sound heaps better than it did before, plus lots of fun! Chris was a very thorough teacher.

**Also – if we do this again, how could it be improved** The workshop on Saturday was very long with only short breaks, so by the end of the day I was pretty overloaded with stuff. It was great to learn so many tunes but in such a short space of time they kind of all blurred together after a while.

**Any other comments you want to make:** The workshop on Wednesday was great. I'm really glad I went to that, because I was originally not intending to go, but after Saturday's workshop, I got really motivated and decided that my homework could wait!

## **Sun April 10th: Concert with MSFC for The Boite**

Concert at James Tatoulis Auditorium, MLC, Kew with the MSFC

It was a full hall and a very exciting culmination to the whirlwind ten days with Chris and Catriona. Their commitment to make the tour work was delightful and Chris' way with the fiddlers while very pushy and demanding really had us all on the edge of our seats. The audience were thrilled with both halves of the program and the culmination, when we all played together the tunes Chris had taught us, was one of the most satisfying and exciting moments in my 16 years with the Club – everyone was totally switched on and whatever was asked of them (beyond the comfort zones of almost all of us!) was given back. The concert was followed by a truly heart warming event – a session- at The Retreat in Abbotsford.



The rapt attention you can see here being given to Chris at the gig was the same at every meeting.



Going for it at The Retreat

## **Thursday and Friday April 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>: They went to Canberra**

### **Here's the report from Lachlan Green; Artistic Director, Canberra Scottish Fiddlers**

It was a truly fantastic experience to have Chris and Catriona visit Canberra. It's not often that Canberra audiences get to hear folk musicians of this calibre, especially outside of the National Folk Festival.

#### **Concert:**

We held the concert at the Merry Muse folk club. It was too late notice to book them in a theatre or concert venue and to use any formal advertising, but the Merry Muse kindly allowed us to hold the concert, even postponing another performer to allow this concert to happen. The concert went very well, with one of the best turnouts the Merry Muse has ever had. We don't have exact numbers on how many people came, but there would have been around 120 in the audience. I advertised the concert through posters throughout Canberra, the folk society, local entertainment websites, an interview for Catriona and Chris on the local ABC radio station's popular Drive program and as much word of mouth as I could manage, so many of the people who came to the concert were not the sort who would normally come to folk music concerts.

The audience response was overwhelmingly positive, with more than one person saying to me that the concert was the best they'd ever seen at the Merry Muse. As a long-time fan of Catriona and Chris, I myself was very much looking forward to hearing them play and they exceeded my (already high) expectations. For me and, I believe, for many other people at the concert, it was one that I'll remember for a very long time.

Chris and Catriona also enjoyed the concert and told me that they liked the friendly and relaxed atmosphere at the concert. They enjoyed it enough to play us several encores and take the concert beyond the planned finish time, anyway! They are very keen to come back to tour again in Australia some time in the future, either as a duo or possibly with Fiddler's Bid, and hope to return to Canberra when that happens. I was very pleased to give Canberra audiences some exposure to Catriona and Chris' music - they represent a strand of progressive, innovative folk music that we rarely hear.

#### **Workshop:**

The workshops were held at my house, in Evatt - also the meeting place of the Canberra Scottish Fiddlers - where we have two large rooms suitable for workshops. Chris ran a workshop for an hour and half for fiddlers, which was attended by all the Canberra Scottish Fiddlers. Due to the workshop being held on a Thursday evening, we were unable to get many more people attending, but those who did learnt a lot. Chris was very professional and engaging, and quickly gauged the level of the participants to make the class interesting and informative for a variety of levels. He spent almost as much time talking about Shetland fiddle music and fiddle playing as he did teaching us tunes, which was excellent - anybody can learn tunes, but the we don't get the opportunity to be told about Shetland fiddle music otherwise! Catriona also ran a workshop for harps. Unfortunately, we only had two participants in her class, one of which travelled from the Blue Mountains. We had advertised the workshop with the Canberra Harp Society, but due to the university holidays, we didn't manage to get any of the uni students from the Canberra School of Music. Catriona, fortunately, was very gracious and the two students were ecstatic to get such close tuition from her. Catriona and Chris were overall extremely pleased with their tour in Australia and were glad to get such a good reception from their audiences throughout the tour. Sending them off to their plane home, they had every intention of returning to Australia some day. A week after their concert, I met many people at the National Folk Festival who had seen their concerts elsewhere on their tour and got a thoroughly positive response from them as well. This was my first time doing anything like this - at times it was stressful, not knowing how to go about things, how to advertise, whether we would cover our costs (which we did - we even managed to get a bit of extra money to give to Catriona and Chris!), difficulties in communicating with Chris and Catriona, whether we would get enough at the concert and workshops. I personally learnt a lot from the experience and if I ever have to do something like this again, I hope I'd be able to do it even better next time! However, for me, it was worth it simply to hear them play in concert and let Canberra audiences enjoy the music that I love. I'm very grateful to Judy to give Canberra the opportunity to host them, and to our sponsors to allow Chris and Catriona to visit Australia.

## Tuesday and Wednesday April 12th and 13th they went to Adelaide

Report and photo to come from Adelaide Scottish Fiddlers

### And from the stars of the show:

*Dear Judy and Neil,*

*Hi!! Firstly, thank you so much for making us so welcome and for looking after us in Australia. It was a really great time for us and we are delighted that it was a sharing of music and joy amongst us all. I'm very grateful for all you did, the many hours thinking and planning and proceeding to make this happen for us. Now a beautiful connection is made and we look forward to seeing you both soon over here or in Australia!*

*There were several highlights, the wonderful food and wine, the trip to Benalla and staying with Kristen and Max on their farm (thanks so much for including this!) and meeting you both, spending time with you both and the Melbourne Fiddlers.*

*Catriona*

*Hi Judy and Neil*

*Thats very kind of you. We are so glad that our time with you all was fruitful. Its always a little hard when there has been so much 'buzz' for a while to adapt to normal life again, this affects us too..*

*It was a fantastic trip for us and we got everything we wanted and more from it. You are fantastic people and Judy, you have done a wonderful job nurturing the group. You should be very proud.*

*We had a nice meeting with Robyn Archer who is the artistic director of the Canberra 100 festival. She put us in touch with Sebastian Flynn who came to our gig and really wants to make something happen in 2 years time. So there is a chance we could be down there again so perhaps keep an open mind and we could see you all again, who knows...*

*Hope all is well with you both and thank you so much once again*

*Keep in touch*

*Chris*



What it's all about!