

# Young Farmers Ambassadors

## Scottish Region

Newsletter

May 2016

**Grand Raffle – First prize £100, tickets are now available from the Secretary – proceeds raised go towards supporting the YFC exchange movement**

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### How to contact us:

Chairman: Andrew Baird

[andrewbaird87@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:andrewbaird87@hotmail.co.uk)

07850 164186

Secretary: Mary Turner

[yfa-sec-scottish-region@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:yfa-sec-scottish-region@hotmail.co.uk)

07817 166637

Treasurer & Newsletter Editor: Mary Turner

[mary.turner2@btinternet.com](mailto:mary.turner2@btinternet.com)

07817 166637

### On Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/yfa.region](http://www.facebook.com/yfa.region)



**A note from the Editor** - appreciate those who pass us bits and pieces for the Newsletter, but always looking for articles and your support, so get in touch 😊

### Going to the Royal Highland Show?

YFA Scotland invite all present and past YFA Members to a **Drinks Reception**



Upstairs at the Young Farmers Centre **Friday 24 June at 6.30 pm – see you there 😊**

### Chairman's Blog – Andrew Baird



At the AGM in March, I was re-elected as your chairman. It was held in Carnbo Hall and it was good to meet the delegates who are going on their exchanges this year and hope they have a great time wherever they are going - near or far! The presentations from the recent exchangees, reminded us, what an opportunity the exchange movement offers!

The main event on the YFA calendar is our annual Drinks Reception at the YF Centre on 24th June. It is a great social evening catching up with past exchangees and a time when we can all relive our travel experiences! We will be selling raffle tickets throughout the evening and you will also have the chance to win a bottle of Whisky by rolling a £1 coin and trying to get the closest to the bottle. So, come along and enjoy the fun.

Before that we have our annual incoming exchange Away Day on the 15th June. The programme is still to be finalised, however, it is likely to be similar to last year,

including a visit to the Kelpies and Falkirk Wheel. Helpers are always needed, so if you are free that day, please contact Mary or Andrew. I look forward to meeting the 13 Exchangees from Europe, North America and New Zealand.

## Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Young Farmers Ambassadors Scottish Region was held on Sunday 13 March, 2016 at Carnbo Village Hall. Starting off in the early afternoon with a light lunch provided by Dicky & Harold, with a rolling presentation of photos from exchange trips, YFA & IFYE Events in the background. The Office Bearers and Committee elected are:

**Chairman:** Andrew Baird

**Vice Chairman:** Neil Brims

**Secretary:** Mary Turner

**Treasurer & Newsletter Editor:** Mary Turner

**Contact Member for IFYE:** Paul Fraser

**Ex Officio:** Elaine Meikle

## Representatives to YFA National Executive:

Elaine Meikle and Andrew Baird

**Committee:** Following a decision at the 2014 AGM, all the outgoing Exchangees are automatically elected on to the Committee for a two year period. In addition, Richard Wilson was elected

**Auditor:** Alan J Turner, CA

After the formalities were over, the following gave us an insight into their recent trips:

**From 2013:** Karen Gemmell – Wales

**From 2014:** Robert McKechnie – Tasmania

**From 2015:** Gillian Stewart – Canada; Andrew Baird – Colorado; Rachel Matheson – Montana; Laura-Anne Logan – Wales (M Turner presented on behalf of Laura-Ann) Fiona Parkin & Sarah Jane Urquhart – European Rally in Austria

**Thanks to all for their informative presentations and making us wish we could do it all again! We look forward to seeing presentations from those who could not make it, next year!**

## OUTGOING EXCHANGEES 2016



The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs held interviews in February 2015. This year's lucky members selected to represent Scotland are as follows:

Zoe Wilson (Kilmaurs)	New Zealand
Gemma Bruce (Udny)	Tasmania
Sarah Ferguson	Canada

(Machars)	
Mhairi Lake (Carluke)	Colorado
Lucy McClymont (Lower Nithsdale)	Kansas
Hannah Adam (West Fife)	Montana
Zoe Clarke (Loch Lomond)	Ulster
Hannah Lumsden (Strathbogie)	Ulster
Helen Hamilton (SSS)	Wales
James Peat (Carluke)	Wales
James Gemmell (Mauchline)	European Rally – N Ireland
Eilidh McCulloch (Carluke)	European Rally
Michael Rattray (Srathearn)	European Rally
Kim Taylor (Turriff)	European Rally
Katie Burns (Kilmaurs)	Autumn Seminar



## Down Under with Robert McKechnie

Having been lucky enough to be selected by SAYFC I set off for Tasmania in April, 2014. All was well leaving Glasgow airport, however when making my first connection flight in Dubai, the size of the task just to reach my exchange destination became apparent! There were also connections to be made in Kuala Lumpur and Melbourne before finally arriving in Hobart, the capital city of my host state Tasmania.

Upon arrival, I was greeted by Noel Beven, a past Rural Youth State President and founding chairman of Australia's premier agricultural field day, Agfest. For the first week of my visit, I would be staying with Noel and his family at their farm Westfield, outside the village of Campania. As well as being a sheep farmer, Noel also runs a contracting business and works for a company called Tasmanian Alkaloids who are responsible for the growth and sale of poppies. Over 90% of the worlds medical supply of alkaloids come from Tasmania; so this is major part of the agricultural industry in this part of the world with any semi decent arable land available sown with poppies. As there is no such specified machine as a poppy harvester available on the machinery market one had to be built from scratch and this was done at Noel's farm.



Whilst staying with the Bevens I helped with general farm work and went on lots of visits to neighbouring farms. I also had a good time socially with big family dinners, especially over Easter weekend, going to the zoo and meeting up with some of my fellow exchangees and Rural Youth Members. At the end of my second week I would be attending Rural Youths main event Agfest and with Noel having been the founding Chairman he gave me a great insight as to what went on there.

My next host was with state president Simone Hayers where I was joined by fellow exchangees Mirijam from Switzerland and Lou-Ellen from Northern Ireland. I should say at this point that most Australians and foreign exchangees alike were struggling with my “dulcet Lanarkshire tones” so to meet up with Lou-Ellen who could speak the lingo at the same speed as myself was brilliant! The Norwegian exchangee claimed we had some sort of secret language, as it did not resemble any sort of English!

The most enjoyable part of my trip came with the week of Agfest, which is completely run and funded by Rural Youth. There is no involvement from agricultural societies or any other third parties and the actual show site, Quercus Park, is also owned by Rural Youth. It is very hard to put into words the effort and commitment that is involved with the organising and running of this event. Agfest runs over 3 days, but it really is a year in the making. I arrived at Quercus on the Saturday before Agfest where all Rural Youth members and volunteers stay on site in permanent accommodation. An unbelievable amount of work was to be done, everything from car park marking, road making, grass cutting, site marking, running and covering electrical cables, clearing wood and too much more to mention. Of course, the highly important task of keeping the crib rooms drinks fridge packed to capacity at all times, could prove extremely difficult!

During the days of Agfest itself everyone was up at 4.30 am to start with car parking duty and there were numerous other jobs to be done during the day from attending gates to making sure that all the catering vans and tents were kept supplied with enough water. Agfest is the biggest event of its kind in the whole of Australia with turnover being well into the 7 figures. It's hard to believe that all this is achievable by an organisation where everyone is under the age of 30 and with a membership of only 200 and not even everyone helps with Agfest. It was absolutely brilliant to be a part of this wonderful week, here are the volunteers



Over my two month stay in Tasmania I got the chance to take part in a whole host of different experiences from touring the Cascade Brewery to driving a potato harvester.

To get a chance to travel the world and meet new people and experience their cultures in the way you can through the exchange programme is second to none. I feel that the International Travel programme is an underutilised part of SAYFC and hopefully with people looking at all of the previous reports and pictures will encourage more people to apply.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the SAYFC International Trust, Young Farmers Ambassadors, Avondale Young Farmers and Lanarkshire District who all helped fund my trip. My exchange between SAYFC and Tasmanian Rural Youth was great from start to finish and my only real complaint is that my time in Australia was simply not long enough!

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## Montana 2015 – Big Sky Country – Rachel Matheson

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 I set off to Montana, USA as part of the International Young Farmers exchange (IFYE) programme, which I became involved with through SAYFC. Montana is in the far north of the USA, bordering with Canada, the state is five times the size of Scotland, but with a population of only 5 million, which is five times less than Scotland. It is a typically dry, hot state, with a lot of its area being mountainous. With regards to agriculture, Montana has over 2.25 million head of cattle. The average farm size is 2,500 acres, and it produces over 3 million tonnes of wheat per annum.

My first week in Montana was spent in Bozeman at the Montana State University (MSU), where Montana 4H, which is a youth organisation similar to YF for people aged 9-19, were holding their congress. On arrival I met the other 13 IFYEs from all over Europe and Asia, and everyone got on really well. The week in Bozeman was spent camping, stock judging, learning how to line dance and attending dances, trying local food, white water rafting and so much more! It also involved hosting a stand to educate about your individual country – the Montanans found it pretty funny that Scotland's national animal is the Unicorn! I spent most of my time with the Welsh, English and Northern Irish exchange girls. The four of us found the dances very entertaining, though different to what we were used to, as the US drinking age is 21 and this is very strictly enforced! By the end of the week we were all really sad to be separated, but we have arranged to meet up again in future

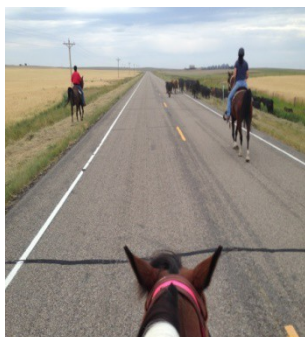


I was collected from MSU to go to my first host family, the Kinyons, by Casey, the nephew of the family I was to be staying with. He took me on an 18 hour road trip around Montana, Idaho and Wyoming and round the whole of Yellowstone National Park – including a stop off at Old Faithful, the world’s most famous geyser, which was amazing! I met my host family, Ramona, Bruce and Emily late that evening, and they were so welcoming, I felt immediately at home. I stayed in the settlement of Galata, which is basically an old western ghost town, on the Montana Highline, which is a very flat open area. From the house I was staying in you could see 80 miles in each direction, which I found strange having come from the Highlands. The first day in Galata was spent with Stephanie, a neighbouring girl who worked on her cousin’s 7,000 acre farm. On our first day Stephanie and her cousin Trevor summer fallowed about 400 acres with a team of CAT Challengers – each with 350 + HP!!!

I got to visit lots of different farms including combining wheat, peas and lentils, swathing and baling hay. I also attended the county fair for five days, similar to my local show, and went to the nightly rodeos, demolition derby, and pig wrestling!

Steph and Casey took me to visit nearby towns and tourist attractions, such as Inverness, Montana for combine parts, with a population 50, and visiting the shortest river in the world, Giant Springs. We also spent a lot of time shooting, boating and fishing, and I managed to shoot a few Gophers and a lot of cans; caught a few fish, which we ate the following day. I was quite amazed by the gun culture in the USA, particularly up north in Montana, which is very rural. Everyone aged over 13 has a gun, and most people have 4 or 5 guns, with semi-automatic handguns being normal!

Another highlight was moving cattle at Ramona’s brother’s farm down the highway and across fields on horseback, which was great fun until my horse stood on a rattlesnake! We also attended Church most Sundays which was held outside, the minister actually turned out to be a native Glaswegian who had moved to the States 40 years ago! He and his wife took me for a day trip to Glacier National Park, which was a great day, and entertaining as we got pulled over by the police for speeding! I was so sad when my three weeks in Galata were over, as I felt so at home there, but was looking forward to going on to my next family who lived a few hundred miles away in a town at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.



At the end of July, I moved on to stay with the Evenson family, and found them instantly a fun family to be around! They lived in the town of Kalispell, which is in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, on the banks of the Flathead Lake, and right beside the entrance to Glacier National Park. The family had two girls, Jayme, 18, and Tia, 15, who were both active 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) members! Though they didn’t live on a farm they had strong farming connections and spent a lot of time at the ‘VoAg’ which was an active farm run in conjunction with the local school, where students can choose to go for part of their secondary education. The concept of this was totally new to me but so interesting, it meant that teenagers were able to focus on things they enjoyed, such as agriculture, rather than having traditional school subjects forced on them. It made me think that maybe if the UK adopted something similar it would help encourage, and equip young people to choose a career in agriculture. Though it was summer holidays, we went to the VoAg twice daily to feed and halter train the steer Jayme kept there that she had entered in the local fair. Tia also kept two pigs at the VoAg which were entered for fair.

The first four days of my stay with the Evensons were spent road tripping around the state. We visited the Lewis and Clarke Caverns, attended rodeos, went to the Hungry Horse Dam, got a tour of a Honey Farm and picked our own honey (kind of) and visited the Grant-Kohrs ranch. On our travels we went straight through Glacier National Park and this was amazing, as I got to see a black bear, mountain goats and long horn sheep all in the wild!

Between trips, and looking after the animals, I spent a lot of time hiking, swimming in the lake, and hanging out with the girls and their friends at the local Dairy Queen, along with a few wild parties in the woods and a day trip to Canada! The last four days of my trip were spent at Kalispell County Fair. I helped Jayme to dress her steer on the two days she was showing, and was so pleased when she got reserve champion in her class. As it was far too hot for the animals outside, the whole Fair was held in a huge shed. Tia also did well with her pig, and her dog got reserve champion in the dog show. On the last night of my stay we camped at the fair and saw the band Sugarland, who were so good! The Evensons were

so kind, and made me feel part of the family. They even surprised me one night and had arranged for a family friend who owned a plane to take me up on a flight. This was amazing flying over the Rockies and the Lake at dusk, and they even let me have a go at the controls!



My trip was the most action packed seven weeks, and I have only included a fraction of the adventures. The people of Montana were so warm and welcoming, and everyone I met genuinely wanted to speak to me and had an interest in what I was doing and where I was from. The families I stayed with were accommodating and keen to ensure my trip was amazing!

My trip wouldn't have been made possible without SAYFC, 4-H, the SAYFC international trust and YFA, so I'd like to thank them hugely!

#### Dates for your Diary

UK YFA Reunion - this will be held from 28 October to 31 October, 2016, in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown, Northern Ireland – the invitation from the Irish, should be out later on in the summer, but in the meantime, put it in your diary!  
Future European IFYE Conferences  
 23 – 30 July 2016 – Estonia  
 2017 – Switzerland  
 2018 – Northern Ireland (60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)



Included in the 25 group from GB & NI are 8 Scots heading to Estonia on 23 July for this years European IFYE Conference - given the success of the Conference last year at Gordonstoun, it is a little disappointing that more Scots haven't signed up for it. Look out for the Report in the next YFA Newsletter

Also check out the European IFYE website for news on IFYE <http://www.ifye.org/pages/europe/default.htm>



To the following :

Lorna (Hamilton – YFA Award 2003) & Tony Read - a son, Samuel; Amy (McNee – European Rally 2003) & Alex Henderson – a son, Taylor; Fiona Leitch (European Rally 2004) married James Menzies

The following death has been reported: Michael Dunlop – USA 1966; Michael was also Secretary of the International Trust and a former SAYFC Chairman

**DON'T FORGET - £10 MEMBERSHIP** Subscriptions due for 2016 – this really is a plea to those who are still to pay their membership. The vast majority have set up a Standing Order, which really helps to keep YFA in business. We do provide generous donations to the outgoing Exchangees, and without the support of our members, we would not be in a position to continue the level of donation. This year our only fund raiser is the Grand Raffle, so more and more we do depend on membership payments. It has been increasingly difficult to encourage the newer Exchangees to join and without their help and support the organisation will have no future. So PLEASE PAY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION. You can pay by Standing Order, online or cheque – all the details are on the attached Standing Order form.



We are extremely grateful to both Aldi & IFYE Scotland 2015 for their assistance with the Drinks Reception



COME AND JOIN US



An open invitation is given to present and past members of YFA to join us at our **Drinks Reception at the Royal Highland Show on Friday 24 June, from 6.30 pm**. A special mention is given to the undernoted people who are celebrating special years since their exchange trip. We really hope that as many as possible can join us, it will be a great opportunity to renew old friendships. It will also give you a chance to meet the Incoming delegates from all over the world. **The event will be held upstairs at the Young Farmers Centre and although it is an open invitation, to assist us with the Drinks order, it would be helpful if we can get as many responses back as possible.**

## Anniversary of Exchange Trip: Roll of Honour

1956 Nan Bryson (Anderson), Sandy Stirrat, Sandy Blackhall, Alasdair Grant, Bunty Howden (Miller)  
(60 yrs)

1966 John Paterson, Margaret Durston (Struthers), Rhoda McQuarrie (Gall), Sheila Fleming (Ferguson), Elsie Welch  
(40 yrs) (Gall), Sheena McNaughton (Buchanan), Tom Simpson, Willie McConachie, John Duncan, Stewart Stevenson,  
Margaret Wright (Ross)

1976 Margaret Bridgewater (Arbuckle), Shelagh Arkley (Lawrie), Eleanor Garrow (More), Helen Smith, Margaret  
(40 yrs) Stewart (Sommerville), Jennifer Davidson (McBride), Jean Fisher (Johnstone), Anna Swanson (Munro)  
Kenneth Brookes, George Orr, Willie Marwick, Robert Frame, Mary Laidlaw (Drennan), Anne Patterson, Eric  
Forster, Alan Duncan, Brian Bayne

1991 David Paterson, Janey Jack (Barbero), Chrissie Angus (Ferguson), Hugh Ironside, Paula Taylor (Clark), John  
(25 yrs) Goulding, George Stirling, Jennifer Wilson (Adam), Kirsty Craig (Barr), Dorothy Goldie (Clark), James Hodge,  
Helen Crozier (Jackson), David Stevenson, James Cousar, Dorothy Brown (Greer), Andrew Bevis, Neil Sands,  
Fiona Ewen (Wight), Fiona Ross (Stewart), Robin Traquair, Richard Snow

2006 Russell Allison, Fiona Alexander, Mark Ingram, Susan McCornick, Duncan Barrie, Aleck Nairn, Richard Wilson,  
(10 yrs) Grant Woodburn, Julie Briggs (Lowry), Adam Lawson, Alisdair Davidson



**SUNDAY 14 AUGUST** - Bike Ride along part of the Forth and Clyde Canal and from the website, <https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/activities/cycling/forth-clyde-canal/> it looks a very easy, calm family friendly route, free from traffic. This is a fun day out and not a sponsored bike ride and there are opportunities to hire bikes.

We are really hoping that this will appeal to many of you. We are proposing to start at **Grangemouth at 10.00 am** and you can cycle as long as you want, bring your own picnic and make a fun day of it. If you are interested in coming along, **please contact either Andrew or Mary**, contact details on Page 1