

Young Farmers Ambassadors

Scottish Region

Newsletter
January 2017

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Chairman's Blog – Andrew Baird



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Happy New Year and hope everyone had a good Christmas. It's been quiet on the YFA front lately, other than the UK Reunion in October which was held in Cookstown, Northern Ireland. It was another great weekend making this my third consecutive reunion, my first being in Irvine. It was great to see many younger people coming and hopefully they will come back and bring their friends. I would really encourage more Scots to attend, and see what you're missing! If you drink cider then you'll like the venue of the Reunion this year as it's going to be held in Somerset, which is cider country!

The interviews for the 2017 international trips are being held on Saturday 25th Feb at Perth Racecourse, and where our AGM will also take place - please come along and help make this a success.

Hope to see some of you in Switzerland for the IFYE Conference in July. This will be my first one so it would be great to see a good turnout from Scotland especially those who haven't been before. I've heard great reports about these events and for those who have been on the European Rally it's supposed to be similar to it. **Andrew**



Hannah's trip to Montana

After arriving in Bozeman, Montana, I travelled to Montana State University, where I attended the Montana 4H Congress. It was here that I met with the other international exchangees from all over Europe.

The 4H Congress was a great opportunity to meet lots of new people, not only from America but from all across the world. It was a great confidence boost to be able to share my experiences and stories with people I had only just met. The Congress itself was 4 days of national competitions, workshops and dances for Montana 4H members. Fundamentally 4H is very similar to SAYFC in the activities and overall structure of the organisation; however members can only attend from age 8-18.

During the course of the week, the group of international exchangees took part in some of the workshops, spectated at some of the competitions, and went on trips around Bozeman. One of the highlights for me was visiting the Lewis and Clark caverns. After a mile hike up the mountain to over 5000ft in elevation, we were led into the mountain and through the maze of stalactites and stalagmites. After the hike up to the cavern's entrance in the Montana summer heat, we were prepared for the chill of inside the mountain. As we entered the cave, it was stated by all of the exchangees from the UK, that the caverns weren't in fact cold, but were an average temperature for Britain! The funny thing was that all the Brits were wearing only t-shirts and shorts, compared to the other members of the public who were wrapped up in three layers of jackets and jumpers!

Another highlight of the Congress week was the afternoon of presentations from the exchangees, when we had to teach groups of 4H members a dance, song or custom from their country, and to present any other relevant information. For my presentation, I taught the 4H members some ceilidh dancing, including the Gay Gordons and the Orcadian Strip the Willow, which they all really enjoyed!



I had a 5.5 hours-drive north to my first host family, the Evensons from Kalispell, where I stayed with Sandy & Greg and their 16 year old daughter Tia. Not on a farm, but Tia

reared two pigs as part of the high school's Future Farmers of America project. During my three week stay with the Evensons, we visited many attractions including old gold mining ghost towns, Virginia City and Nevada City. We also rafted down the crystal clear water of the Flathead River, which was beautiful to see! We also visited a huge dairy and creamery, and I spent a day at a 4H camp. One of the highlights was visiting British Columbia, Canada for a day, where we went to visit a place called Fort Steele. Another memorable part of my time with the Evensons was the road-trip I took with Sandy and her friend Sheila, where we had to go to Coopers Lake to pick up a school bus for Sandy's work, and I then got to ride in an all-American school bus all the way home! I also passed a huge fibreglass Hereford bull statue which was definitely worth a picture with!



Back to Bozeman to stay with my next host family, Aaron & Rachel Pruitt and their two young daughters. One of the highlights here was going to the Sweat Pea music festival, and joining the girls when they visited the music shop, a memorable moment as I have been a keen fiddler for the past 12 years! Aaron's mother took me and the girls to visit the one room school house which she attended, and which is thought to be over 100 years old. It was interesting, as a training primary teacher, to see the difference in the classroom compared to the common classrooms in Scotland.



Another highlight with the Pruitts was our camping experience in Yellowstone National Park. We camped for four nights with the first night being quite a sleepless one with the fear of being eaten by a bear and having no bear spray with us! Whilst on our trip to Yellowstone, we visited live geysers, the beautiful Grand Prismatic Spring, and saw wild bears and buffalo!



After a fun three weeks with the Pruitts, it was a journey North to Browning for my final week of my American adventure, staying with the Cundall family on their ranch. They had three daughters ranging from 12 to 17. The ranch was over 19000 acres , with 1300 head of cattle, and was situated on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. Whilst there I helped with general farm chores including milking the goats, feeding the animals, mending fences and also visiting Glacier National Park. During the week I was taken on a tour of some of the ranch, where I got to view the mountains of Glacier National Park, Chief Mountain, and Canada which was only several miles away.



My highlight of the week was undoubtedly when we went out on a ride with the horses. Myself and the three girls rode through the fields and into the ranch's own huge indoor arena! It was amazing and it was my first time riding on a western saddle which was a good experience too.



I am so happy that I took the opportunity and applied for the programme. It has definitely been one of the best things that I have ever done and my report doesn't do it justice to the many experiences that I enjoyed. Finally I would like to say thank you to SAYFC for this amazing opportunity, YFA and the International Trust for their kind donations towards the cost of the trip. **Hannah Adam**



Down under with Gemma

8 flights, 5 TRY delegates (Tasmanian Rural Youth), 8 host families all squeezed into 6 weeks helped make my SAYFC exchange to Tasmania an unforgettable one!

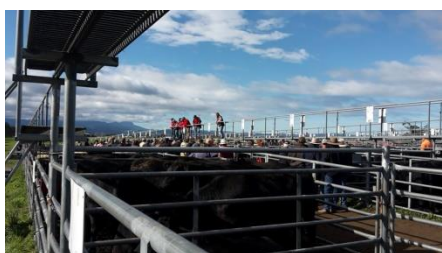
I arrived in Hobart, and spent my first 12 days with Nicole Elliot and her family and during this time I helped out with the riding school run by her mum, Liz. As it was the school holidays Liz was running riding camps for children. Working with horses was a new experience for me and one I was surprised to have enjoyed so much and with a little hesitation I was persuaded to get on a horse for the first time. While staying with the Elliot's I managed a trip up Mount Wellington, the view was well worth the journey, being able to see the highlands, midlands, Hobart and the surrounding islands from the top. During the Anzac Day weekend we managed a trip out to Bruny Island to visit the penguin colony.



After my time with the Elliott family we headed to Quercus Park, Carrick where the Agfest field days are held and my home for the next 10 days. This is where I met my fellow exchangees or the "Imports" as we were known. Eva from Austria arrived at the same time as me, Christa from Switzerland arrived a few days later, followed by Rachael from England and Emma from Northern Ireland. Rachael telling the Australians that Emma and I had strong accents, something I found a harsh claim since she was from Somerset herself! Agfest is the largest annual agricultural field days in Tasmania and takes place over 3 days. The whole event is organised, funded and ran by the members of Rural Youth. It is a pretty amazing achievement and I was very grateful to have had the opportunity to help out before and during the event. As a volunteer you live on site in a compound built by the members over the years. Nights are spent socialising with all the other volunteers in the 'crib' room once all the work was finished for the evening. I spent my time car parking, in ticket booths, a craft shed assistant, driving buses, patching roads, fencing, putting in guide posts, tying down tents, laying bark, the list goes on. The days were long but I have to say it was the best experience on my trip. This is their main fundraising event for Rural Youth.



After Agfest, Emma and I went to stay with my second host Amanda Bayles, in Longford, and her family for 10 days. Amanda was a shed manager at Newham Park dairy farm milking 950 cows. The unit she worked on was one of 3 units owned by the same family. Being from a beef and sheep farm, I have to admit milking cows isn't something I had any experience in. Having spent 2 days milking cows with Amanda we then moved on to help at her family's farm. The Bayles family has 2 farms, Channack run by her father and Mt Joy run by her uncle. The family focused on growing potatoes for McCain's, finishing cattle and lambs. We spent most of our time with her father Rob and their Jackaroo Alby where they farmed 5000ac with 7000-8000 sheep and 200 cattle. They also grew broccoli which when harvested was used for grazing sheep. We went on a trip to the abattoir with lambs and although we weren't allowed inside the site manager did give a tour via the security cameras. The abattoir was killing 2,100 a day with 90% of them being exported to the Middle East. We were also taken to a cattle auction where the cattle are sold by the pen with the main breeds being Aberdeen Angus, Hereford and Charolais cross cattle. Each pen had 2-9 animals in it and could be from a mix of sellers. We spent 2 days working in the shearing shed at the farm rolling the fleeces and grading the wool depending on the coarseness of it.



Rob managed to arrange for us to meet an agronomist from Elders, it was really interesting to hear how new an area agronomy is in Tasmania with them only focussing on potatoes. Alby took us on a tour of the mountains, explaining the building of the hydroelectric system in Tasmania as he spent many years working in these areas. While I was staying with Amanda the milk price sadly fell from 55c to 14c putting the future of the dairy industry into question. On our final day with the Bayles, Rob took us to see The Wall at Derwent Bridge. The Wall is made from 100 wooden panels 1m wide and 3m high all carved with tales of Tasmanian history, it is a very impressive sight and will have taken about 10 years to create when it is finished in 2017.

I then left the North with Emma and Rachael and travelled back South again to Sorrell just east of Hobart to stay with Prue Dennis and Calum Forbes. Prue worked for Roberts, the Tasmanian equivalent of Harbro, in equine products. Prue is also in charge of organising the international exchanges. Prue travelled on an exchange to the UK last year and it was really good hearing about her experiences. After a couple of days in Sorrell the three of us went on a trip to the South East corner of Tassie to Port Arthur to stay with Tobias Ben Tensel at his family's shack. Tobias thought it was a great idea to take us on a ghost tour of the historic Port Arthur site to try and scare us, let's just say I've definitely slept better!

After our night in Port Arthur we travelled up the East coast with Tobias to Swansea, where we spent the weekend at Prue's family shack with some of the other rural youth members we had met at Agfest. It was really good to meet up with them again. We went bush walking and even had a go at 'whip cracking' using leather bullwhips, which is definitely not as easy as they made it look!



Sadly the time passed too quickly and we continued to travel North up the coast to St Helen's where we were hosted by Darcy Toholke. Darcy is originally from South Australia and was working in Tasmania for 6 months for the Green Army Project. Darcy took us round some of the areas

of forest and coast line he'd been working during the conservation project.

We travelled North West to Latrobe where we were hosted by Will, Andrew and Heather Craigie at their farm Heathermoor. While staying with them we soon realised that both our families were from Orkney. The Craigie family leaving about 180 years before my own parents left. The Craigie's have approx. 800ac on which they fatten 200 cattle and fatten lambs. They grow cut flowers and vegetables such as cauliflower, onions and beans which are grown for Birdseye. They also grow poppies for Tasmanian alkaloids which they were busy spraying off while I was there ready for cultivating down. The poppy seeds are covered with an expensive coating to prevent regrowth but sometimes it fails as it had in this case. Andrew explained about the strict licensing that comes with growing poppies including when they can be grown, to background checks on the farmers and their families and the dangers that come with growing poppies. This is also where I found my first Massey Ferguson tractor since arriving and just like buses they all came at once with the Craigie's having 16 in total. Will arranged for us to go on a trip with the other exchangees to the Mole Creek Caves which are famous for their glow worms. It was an amazing sight to see the caves lit up with thousands of tiny lights.



From Latrobe we travelled out to the East coast to Strahan and Queenstown the most remote places I visited. Queenstown had been a big mining town and the landscape looked lunar because of the coal. From here we travelled back to Quercus for the Agfest dinner and my last couple of nights. This was a perfect ending to my trip as I got to see everyone one last time and celebrate a successful Agfest before leaving.

I would like to thank SAYFC, International Trust, YFA, North East Farm Management Association, Royal Northern Agricultural Society and East Aberdeenshire Y.F. District for supporting my exchange without your help and support I wouldn't have been able to go. **Gemma Bruce**



60th Anniversary UK YFA Reunion

It was YFA Reunion time again, and on Friday 28 October, 2016 all roads led to the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown, Northern Ireland. Cookstown's main street laid out over 200 years ago is 1.25 miles long and 135 feet wide - one of the longest and widest in the whole of Ireland. Around 150 people attended, including 7 of our European friends. After checking-in and catching up with a few friends, it was time to get into the mood with the Fancy Dress Party. On the back of the Olympics in Rio, this year it was a carnival theme and there were some creative and wonderful outfits gracing the floor. One thing about YFA members, we love dressing up! The DJ did a great job with the music and the games and soon we were all up on the floor having a blast!



Waking up to another beautiful morning, breakfast and the group photo and then it was off on the trips. I chose the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh. The museum tells the story of three centuries of Irish emigration, with thatched cottages showing the life they had before leaving Northern Ireland, an emigrant sailing ship and the log cabins of the early American settlers. With over 30

buildings to explore, guides in authentic clothing showing how they made traditional crafts and food, it is certainly a great place to spend the day. As it was Halloween weekend, the museum was open until late in the night, with specially booked tours.



Andrew Baird visited the AFBI (Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute) at Loughgall. This visit focused on Orchard research and grassland breeding where they got the opportunity to see several grassland trial plots and an orchard where they grew apples and some pears. At the end of the visit it was cider tasting time! In the afternoon Andrew visited Par Biogas Ltd which is the only AD plant in Northern Ireland which is independently owned by a group of farmers. It was started in 2011 by three beef farmers one of whom is Philip McCrea who showed them around. They realised that their single farm payments were going to be reduced significantly and needed to find another source of income. They decided that production of electricity from Anaerobic Digestion (AD) would be able to do that. The building started in December 2013 and the site was commissioned in January 2015. Silage and poultry litter is supplied through a feeder wagon beginning at 8am each morning – 17 ton of silage and 3 ton poultry litter; it's topped up at 5pm with 6 ton of silage/poultry litter to let it ferment overnight – it was a very interesting visit.

All coaches were back by 4.00 pm, time to spend in the pool and sauna or just relax and get ready for the formal dinner and dance. As it was the 60th YFA Reunion Weekend, a special anniversary cake was made by Avril Herdman; it was cut by Donald Spencer Exchangee to USA in 1950 and Matthew Patterson Exchangee to USA in 2016!



The Guest Speaker was Robin Swann, a YFA member who is a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) – the Northern Ireland Assembly. Following this Claire Woods and Thomas Lennox presented certificates to various anniversary year groups. Linda Steele and 12 former young farmer members gave us a great performance – humour, fun and song. Once a young farmer, always a young farmer! Then it was dancing to live music from Paul Cummings and they really kept it going without any stops.



Sunday and it was time for the religious service, regional meetings, and the National AGM, where Elaine Meikle was elected as Secretary – congratulations to Elaine on taking on this role.



Lunch followed and then check-out for those leaving. Some spent the afternoon enjoying the hotel facilities, whilst others went to Orritor Fish farm which is dedicated to the conservation of the Ballinderry River. I chose the alternative visit to Killymoon Castle, which was very close

to the hotel. The original castle was built in 1671, however, it was destroyed by fire and a new castle in Norman style was completed in 1803. Very famous for many of London's iconic landmarks, John Nash was the architect responsible for the rebuilding of the castle. The present owners the Coulter family, bought it in 1922 for £100 and the current family still live there. On arrival we were treated to traditional afternoon tea and then a tour of the rooms by Mrs Coulter. She gave an excellent insight into the past and present of the castle and a chance to enjoy the beautiful view.



Evening Dinner followed by entertainment from young pipers and dancers, poems, singing and games that we could participate in. It really was a fun way to round off what was a fantastic weekend, very well organised by the Northern Irish team. It will be Somerset in October 2017, when we can do it all again! **Mary Turner**

The following death has been reported: Sandy Blackhall – USA 1956



Grand Raffle Winners

Congratulations to all our winners and thanks must go to those members who donated prizes as well as everyone for helping raise a **total of £554**. Your help and assistance is much appreciated; this was our only fund raiser in 2016, allowing us to continue the level donations to the outgoing exchanges.

£100 – Meg Findlay

£50 – Margaret Crawford

£25 – Alasdair Robertson

Bottle of Ogilvy Vodka – Colin Ramsay

Bottle of Dewar's White Label Whisky – Jean Kennedy

50 cl Bottle of Finlandia Vodka – Elaine Meikle

2 prizes of Scotland Rugby Shirts – Fiona Burness and Fiona Cromie

£10 Tesco Gift Card – Sarah Ferguson

£10 M & S Gift Card – Robin Blair

3 prizes of Bottles of Wine – Chrissie Angus, Joyce Simpson and Jean Reid

Foot Spa Treatment – Alison Roberts

Hat & Scarf set – Sheena Munro

Box of Chocolates – Richard Wilson

YFA AGM - SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2017 will be held at Perth Racecourse on Saturday 25 February, 2017. This is to coincide with the SAYFC Competitions Weekend, and also the Overseas Interviews. To fit in with other events going on that weekend, we will have our AGM and photo presentations from the previous year's exchangees, commencing 9.00 am. We hope this change will encourage more people to attend. More to follow



YFA Drinks Reception – at YF Centre Ingliston on Friday 23 June, 2017 – our main event of the year, meeting the incoming exchangees and our Anniversary Guests. So put it in your diary now!

UK YFA Reunion to be held at the Holiday Inn, Taunton, Somerset from 27 – 30 October 2017 – invitations will come from the English Reunion team and likely to be out earlier than usual.

Advance notice that the Altens Hotel, Aberdeen has been secured for the next YFA Reunion in Scotland from 26 – 29 October, 2018 – put it in your diary!

Future IFYE Conferences



Calling all Exchangees between 2012 and 2016

To encourage exchangees to attend their First European IFYE Conference, all newcomers will receive a contribution of 160 CHF, towards the Conference Fee. It will be subject to the following conditions:

1. Full time attendance at the Conference
2. Valid in any of the first five years following their first exchange trip, eg an exchangee in 2016 could receive the contribution in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021
3. The application form will be issued and submitted to the European Treasurer during the Conference attended and the payment made that week.

This is an increase in the number of years from three to five years. So if you travelled in 2012 or after, that's a worthwhile incentive!

The Conference this year is taking place in Switzerland - from 15 – 22 July, in the village of Vaumarcus overlooking the Lake of Neuchâtel. Check out the website below for details of the costs and room possibilities. Unfortunately there is no Single, Double or 3-4 bedded Rooms left, but the good news, the other possibilities are much cheaper! We hope our incentive will encourage new participants at an IFYE Conference. The closing date to register is March 2017 and as the weeks go by more details will be available on the website. As usual, we will be organising a group payment at the end of January. If you are thinking of going or indeed want any information on these events, **please contact Mary, details on Page 1**

<http://www.conference2017.ch/index.php/en/>

2018 – Northern Ireland will be hosting the event at Greenmount College from 21 – 28 July - this will be the 60th Anniversary Conference, so it is sure to be a week **NOT TO BE MISSED**

2018 – World IFYE Conference, early September, an Alaskan Cruise

2019 – Norway

2020 – England



to Katie Barr (Canada 2007) and Paul Thomson a son, Logan; Stuart Jamieson (Norway 2008 and European Rally 2012) engaged to Christine Struthers (European Rally 2013) ; Isobel Swanson (European Rally 2013) engaged to Jamie Welsh

DON'T FORGET – YFA MEMBERSHIP FEE

The vast majority of members 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. Fund raising events have become harder to organise, so more and more we do depend on membership payments. So if you are new to YFA or have forgotten to pay your membership, please join and get involved – like most things in life the more you put in, the more you get back out. The SUBSCRIPTION is only £10! You can pay by Standing Order, online or cheque – get in touch with Mary – contact details on Page 1

There are some other awards that some of our members may qualify for, including the Nuffield Scholarship, Trehane Trust, Gregor Trust, AgriScot Award, Louise Hartley Memorial Fund - details of all of these can be obtained from their relevant websites



And finally, a note from the Editor - many thanks for all the contributions to the newsletter. We are always looking for news and articles that we think may be of interest to our members. Your feedback and support is also appreciated; if you enjoy the newsletters let us know and if you don't let us know how we can improve them! So.... get in touch ☺