

Young Farmers Ambassadors

Scottish Region

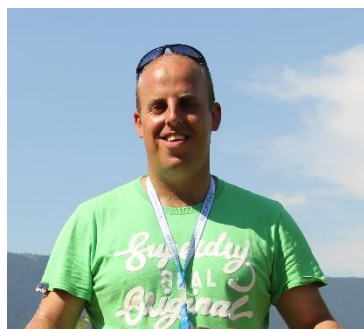
Newsletter
January 2018



Chairman's Blog – Andrew Baird

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a note from the Editor - many thanks for all the contributions to the newsletter. 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 ☺

Happy New Year to everyone and hope you all had a good Christmas. It has been quiet on the YFA front lately, other than the UK Reunion which was held at the Holiday Inn, Taunton at the end of October. This was a good weekend catching up with old and new friends. Being in cider country, I thought it would be rude not to go on the tour of the cider factory! I also went on the tour of a vegetable processing factory where they grew and packaged broad beans, peas and swedes. Both tours were really interesting. There was a good turnout from Scotland and it was good to see Katie Punler on her first YFA Reunion after attending her first IFYE Conference in Switzerland in July. Hopefully see her back and many others, when we host this year's Reunion in Aberdeen. **Andrew**

YFA AGM 2018 – Sunday 11 March - we are going back to our usual venue, at the Carnbo Hall, Carnbo, Kinross on Sunday 11 March, 2018 – starting off at 1.00 pm with a light lunch. There has been a marked decline in numbers supporting this event. The AGM is only part of it, there will be a chance to meet the newer exchangees, as they give photo presentations from their trips. The more who attend and support it, will encourage others to join. It's a nice way to spend a few hours.



Emma Harper – Colorado 2017

On the morning of June 19th 2017 I headed to Colorado, arriving into Denver where I met some of the other IFYE delegates from Norway, Finland, France and Wales. From here we travelled to CSU (Colorado State University) to attend the State 4H Conference.

State conference is a very popular conference where members of the 4H Organisation aged between 14 and 18 attends. Just like SAYFC, they take part in a variety of competitions over the 3 days from livestock judging, horse judging, public speaking and all kinds of workshops. 4H is set up quite differently to our Young Farmers in Scotland; in 4H each state has a State President and Vice President along with a Secretary and a Treasurer. Each district has a representative which they call State Officers, all of whom are elected on the last day of the conference each year.

4H is all about community, working together and it provides leadership opportunities to those involved. It has 4 values, Head, Heart, Hands and Health, and these are the values members work on through fun and engaging programmes. Whilst at the Conference, myself and the other IFYEs helped out at the Livestock Judging collecting cards and keeping our groups together. We introduced ourselves on stage in front of everyone at the Conference Breakfast and helped set up all the rosettes and buckles for the Awards Ceremony. My highlight was giving a presentation on Scotland. After all our presentations were over the kids asked lots of questions, showing a lot of interest in travel.



The conference came to an end and was time to say goodbye to the other IFYEs and move on to our first host families.

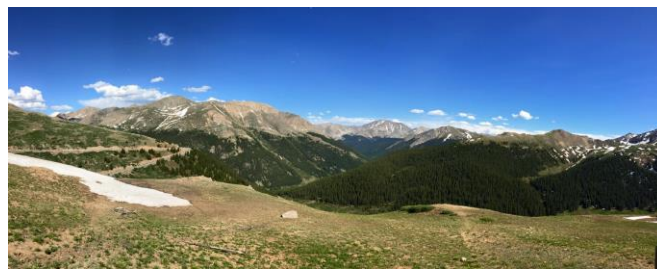
The McGee Family



The McGee family were dad Travis, mum Jennifer, 10-year old daughter Tatum and Norwegian Elkhound, McKinley. They lived in a town 20 minutes south west of Denver called Highlands Ranch. They weren't from a farm so I didn't quite know what to expect, but I knew I was going to learn new things. Travis is an Engineer, in the form of space rockets – I know, I couldn't believe it either! Jen works in a jewellers nearby which gains business from all over the US and Tatum attends Bear Canyon Elementary School. I found myself quite lucky as the McGee's were friends with 2 other families in the same area who were also hosting IFYEs! So, we spent a lot of time together which was nice to not only get to know my host family but my fellow IFYEs host families too!

One of my highlights was to attend my first Rodeo in Colorado Springs; this was a totally new experience for me and one I had looked forward to since applying for the trip. Some parts were as I had imagined and others were nothing like I had imagined but overall it is a memory I will never forget.

By far the best day with the McGee Family was driving through the Rocky Mountains, we went along Weston Pass and Independence Pass, roads going through the mountains stopping at the top and playing in snow on the mountain on July 1st. Although it is a popular tourist destination, it was still so peaceful and if the view didn't take your breath away the altitude certainly did!



Independence Pass: elevation of 12,095ft on the Continental Divide

The Foose Family



Jason and Crystal and their 7 kids live on a family farm in Burlington which is in eastern Colorado 12 miles from Kansas. During my time in Burlington it was the County Fair, and this year they were celebrating the 100th Fair! It revolves around 4-H kids entering many different competitions from showing cattle, pigs and sheep to cake decorating and quilt making. The fair lasted 6 days with rodeos on almost every night and the Saturday night finished with Tracey Lawrence in concert. This was a really great event for me to experience and learn a lot more about how 4-H works in comparison to SAYFC.

I also attended Church which I found interesting as I didn't know much about the Catholic religion.

My host Jason worked on a 24,000-acre arable farm along with a feed lot of 2,700 steers and heifers. I got to experience real Colorado farming life, spraying fields of around 300 acres in a Case 4440 Patriot and combining the last of the 2017 harvest in a Case with a 42ft New Holland header, nothing quite like I have seen at home!

Not just living so far away from a big town or city was new to me, but living with 7 children was also very new to me. I have always been the youngest, being the oldest felt very strange but I got to know that every kid can be so very different from their siblings yet they can still all be super alike! I can say I was certainly kept entertained for my 3 weeks with the Foose family.



The Barton Family

With a month of my trip left I went to stay with Melissa and Mike Barton in Windsor, an hour north of Denver. I had met both Mel and Mike at the 4-H Conference at the beginning of my trip. Mel is an event planner for 4-H, she was behind arranging the conference and Mike often helps her out but his main job is an Estate Agent and both of them do this mostly working from home. Over Mel's lifetime she has hosted many IFYEs from all over the world, she is very enthusiastic about meeting new people and showing them the beautiful State that is Colorado.

During my stay I helped them re-decorate the lower level of their house, so I put my painting skills to the test and after a few days it looked like a different house than when I first walked in! As a reward for painting, not only for myself, but for Mel and Mike too (and also the dogs), they decided we would take a road trip to California to surprise Mike's parents. On route we stopped at the Grand Canyon in Arizona; in California we took a trip over to Coronado Island, walked along the beautiful white sand and had a look around Hotel Del, as well as tasting some Californian Beer! I even tried surfing at Carlsbad beach! On the way back to Colorado we stopped in Vegas so it is fair to say I ticked a few things off my bucket list!

I am very lucky to have been able to learn about Mel and Mike's culture and the Jehovah's Witness religion; they attend meetings in a nearby Kingdom Hall on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons.

In Mel's work she also judges 4H competitions; during my time here, it was Colorado State Fair which took place in Pueblo that was 3-4 hours south of Windsor. We went to Pueblo so Mel and Mike could both judge various competitions from Environment, Robotics, Bicycles and Gardening. I also gained a job helping the judges with score sheets and assigning ribbons and rosettes to the required projects. It was a lot of fun as again I got to meet more 4H members and organisers. On the week of State Fair, Mel organised a Performing Arts Competition, this was a really cool event as it showcased kid's talents. There was Singing, Dancing (ballet, line dancing and hip hop), Short Plays and a variety of Musical Instruments. With my time coming to an end I got a real taste of America by visiting several breweries. I can certainly say now I do have a taste for beer!



As my time drew to an end in Colorado and I began my journey home, I had time to reflect on my amazing adventure. All the things I have done and seen and all the people I have had the opportunity to get to know. I was amazed with the bond created between total strangers from the other side of the world in just a matter of a few weeks.

My exchange has taught me a lot about different ways of life and also a lot about myself. I look forward to sharing what I have learnt on my exchange within SAYFC.

It is clear to say that this has been the best summer of my life and it wouldn't have been possible without the opportunities available through SAYFC and the support of my family and friends as well as financial support from various organisations including YFA. **Emma**

Beth Dandie - Switzerland 2017



I was delighted to be picked to go on the Exchange Trip to Switzerland for a month in the summer of 2017. I'd heard about the beautiful scenery and wanted to see how they farmed with such unique landscapes. Switzerland is half the size of Scotland but has a third more population, but yet the mountains are left untouched by humans and still look as though they did a hundred years ago.

I arrived in Zurich on the 21st of June and was picked up by Sonja – an IFYE co-ordinator and stayed at her house in the north of Switzerland for two nights. It was 35 degrees that first day I arrived, so we spent the day at the lake which had Germany on the opposite side!

The next day I travelled to Urigen, Unterschächen by train, the Swiss people are very specific about times and never running late which is probably the opposite of me so it was a good lesson! In Urigen I stayed up the mountain for the IFYE incoming weekend where I met the 20 other exchangees from around the world. It was amazing to make new friends from places like USA, Taiwan, Tasmania and many more!

We were staying in a house on the side of a mountain which had amazing views over the valley. One afternoon, there was a helicopter further up the mountain which was lifting a big bag along the mountain. I thought it was a hiker who had fallen down the cliff, but it turns out it was actually the farmer shifting the silage from the field to their farm! The mountain was so steep they couldn't use machinery and to cut the grass they either did it by hand or a lawnmower type machine that they would push along the ground.

One of our trips was a gondola ride up to an Alpine Farm and cheese factory. Every summer, a group of farmers would walk their cows up the mountain to the farm and walk them back down in the autumn. They were milked there for the season, and cheese was made. Only fresh cut grass and hay were fed to the cows, to ensure that the cheese tasted the way it always has. Most of the farms up the mountain that I saw either had the shed for their cows attached to their house or had the cows living underneath the house or sometimes just a door from them to the kitchen!

I arrived at my host family in Canton Aargau, Markus and Helena Weittstein with their 4 young boys and also living there was the parents of Markus. They farmed around 75 acres where they did a little bit of everything including grass, barley, wheat, oil seed rape, maize, sugar beet and also fruit including grapes for their small winery that produced 400 bottles of wine a year. They had 240 calves for veal and 120 bulls for beef. They were also large contractors in the area. I went out to feed the bulls and calves every morning, where the calves were fed milk and every week would be given a different ratio of milk powder, milk and water. The most milk the calves would receive one week would only be 55% of the mix. The calves were also given a small amount of hay

each morning to pinken the meat as veal is very pale and people in Switzerland wanted it to look more like beef. A record was taken every morning as to how much milk mix was drank by each pen in the previous day and entered into the computer to see how they are progressing through the 12-week programme.

There are 2 sales of calves every week in Switzerland and Markus bought the calves at around 70kg for (at that time) 11 Swiss Franc per kilo; they were then sold for veal at around 250-300 kg for around 2500-3000 Swiss Franc per calf. (£1- 1.24SF)!

There is no rule in Switzerland for the calves to ever be outside, however the contract Markus has with the two supermarkets – Milos and COOP, required the calves to be able to go outside and be without a roof.

The bulls were given a mix of silage, maize, sugar beet, barley and other high energy and protein feeds. They were fed every two hours by a machine that would move along the shed and change the feed depending on what pen it was. The pens contained different age groups of bulls and every bull had a tracker on its neck which recorded how many times it would go in for water and feed. This helped Markus make sure the health of every bull was good and also see his best performing bull. The reason for more feed every two hours was so that the bulls didn't get too excited and eat too much when they saw the feed only twice a day, causing indigestion and poor fattening. Now, his bulls eat steadily over the day, with no indigestion and fatten quicker than they have ever done in previous years.

After 3 weeks with family Weittstein, I travelled to Vaumarcus in the French side of Switzerland for the **European IFYE Conference**. It really was an amazing event to get to attend! The venue overlooked Lake Neuchâtel, and there were around 250 IFYEs of all ages. They came from all over the world and finally I could speak English!! I got to meet all the friends I made from the incoming weekend and it was so good to share our stories of our experiences.

As soon as we arrived, we had a selection of activities to do over the week and I got to go to the water sports day at the lake where we all tried water skiing. I also took the trip to a tobacco farm and learned that one tobacco leaf would be enough tobacco for 10 cigarettes. I also saw a grain collecting store and took part in group activities at the camp. **It was such a great week and I made so many friends from all over the world; for anyone thinking of going to an IFYE conference I would recommend it!!**





I would like to thank my sponsors – Forfar JAC, Young Farmers Ambassadors and The International Trust for allowing me to go on such a great once in a lifetime trip and would highly recommend it to anyone thinking about doing one! **Beth**

UK YFA Reunion – Oct 2017



The Holiday Inn Taunton, Somerset was the venue for the UK YFA Reunion weekend, that's where around 150 people including 27 Scots headed – so what did we do over the three days

Friday night kicked off with the Fancy Dress party, and with a theme of "wear where you were", it proved quite a difficult one for some!

The Saturday visits were varied, from Trucking firms, Cider making, walking at the Willow & Wetlands Centre, Jurassic Coast to Glastonbury to name but a few.

Having never been to Glastonbury, that was the trip I took – our tour guide, dressed like a monk, gave us a good insight into what Abbey life would have been like. All the time young Tom Greer did a great job of imitating the monk!



There was certainly a feel of the hippy era in Glastonbury with shops of all descriptions and strange smells wafting around! What a great view below taken from Glastonbury Tor



The evening kicked up with a Cider Reception, dinner and entertainment by the Mangledwurzels
We started off Sunday with Sunday service, country meetings and then UK AGM, where our own Neil Brims became the new Chairman - and along with Elaine Meikle as Secretary, they will make a great team!



Sunday afternoon was rather leisurely – enjoying the hotel facilities, “Grouse” Shooting, walking or playing skittles. We were entertained in the evening by the Taunton Morris Men and had one opportunity to join in! **Mary Turner**

More highlights from Switzerland 2017

Andrew Baird, first time conference attendee:

I thought this was a great week and was helped by the fantastic weather. It was good to meet many people from lots of different countries. The highlight of the week for me was the Swiss evening where local musicians were playing and in particular the drummers who I thought were amazing! Another highlight was getting the chance to try water skiing! This was my first IFYE Conference after going on my first exchange in 2010 but I’m already looking forward to Northern Ireland this year!



Marion MacPherson: I really enjoyed the Conference in Switzerland last July; great company, great weather and a fabulous location. One thing I will never forget is sitting listening to a Swiss singer, playing her guitar as night fell with Lake Neuchâtel in the background, definitely a lasting memory. I’m already looking forward to Northern Ireland in July.



Hugh Wallace: I’d heard the term ‘IFYE Conference’ mentioned in many YFA newsletters, and I remember receiving a few invitations by email since my YFC Exchange to Switzerland in 2010, but it was never something I really considered. After all, how many people want to spend their summer holiday at a Conference? Well approximately 250 IFYE’s actually... but this should be rebranded as a Reunion. So, what lured me into going this year? The answer was simple - Switzerland. As I was travelling myself and didn’t know any of the Scottish delegates, let alone anyone else, the first night was the hardest. Who would I sit

with for dinner? Who would I speak to? Who would I be sharing a room with? Well, I shouldn't have worried, it was just a case of sit down, say hello and eat up! Everyone spoke English, which makes life so easy for us. Wearing our name badges with flags from our home nation and exchange country was a good help too and the Swiss people were always keen to hear where I'd been in 2010.

After a week of activities, tours and workshops, a few highlights from my week include the beautiful Swiss views and sunshine, the outdoor Sunday Morning Opening Ceremony overlooking Lac du Neuchâtel, Alyn's evening open air acoustic concert, the city tour to Yverdon-les-Bains, the incredibly talented Swiss drumming boys and the Farewell Dinner. Meeting up with Swiss friends, families, and IFYE's with mutual friends was a delight.

Some other memories include the outrageous costumes at the 'Rock Around the Clock' fancy dress party, being auctioned off as a newcomer to Bettina, my dodgy attempts to water-ski, 6 men sharing 3 bunk beds in a tiny room, the true Scotsman in House 7, and of course the mosquitoes!! I can't go without mentioning my swollen foot. Bitten at the start of the week, it just got worse. Despite resting with a cold cheese spread across it to reduce swelling, it brought a whole new meaning to the phrase 'cheesy feet'. I eventually got to a doctor for the necessary antibiotics.

I really enjoyed my week in Switzerland - the views, the programme and the company.



Margaret Khnichich: Our Swiss IFYE friends gave us a great, fun-packed week with beautiful weather. Everything from massage to making brezeli biscuits and carved edelweiss; growing lettuce and cucumbers, distilling Absinthe, visiting power stations and castles and of course walking in the spectacular mountains at Creux du Van
My top three highlights:

At number 3 - the amazing views, sunrise and sunsets looking out over Lake Neuchâtel from Le Camp on the mountainside at Vaumarcus

Coming a very close second was the visit to Maison Cailler chocolate factory. Chocolate, chocolate everywhere and plenty of it to eat! Heaven!!

At number 1 - has to be the "Rock Around the Clock" fancy dress party where a few Scots excelled themselves. A couple of old rockers certainly looked the part in their stunning blue suits as they demonstrated a few smooth rock and roll

moves. Never-to-be-forgotten star of the show was Punk Rocker Steedsy - no half measures with this guy - makeup, piercings, Mohican hair style, chains..... Big thank you to our Swiss hosts.

Already looking forward to Northern Ireland 2018!!



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 £647**. The money is going towards the UK YFA Reunion in Aberdeen later on this year.

£100 – Helen Ervin

£50 – Andrew Baird

£25 – Paul MacGregor

Bottle of Classic Laddie Malt Whisky – Marion Macpherson

Bottle of Dalmore Malt Whisky – June Will

Bottle of Glengoyne Malt Whisky – Liz Miller

Bottle of Black Grouse Whisky – Alison Ross

£20 Claire Wilson Art Voucher – Margaret Eunson

Art Therapy Colouring Book & Pencils & Room Spray – Fiona Ross

Bottle of Gordons Gin – Vicky Smith

Bottle of Safari Liqueur – Neil Brims

Bottle of Sheridan's Coffee Liqueur – Margaret Eunson

Bottle of Jack Daniels Whiskey – Fiona Ewen

Box of Shortbread & Box of Truffles – Ali Webster

Box of Chocolate Gingerbread & Mug – Russell Lauder

Tin of Monetta Wafers & Cotton Apron – Matt Ralston

Perfume & Body Lotion – Claire Mould

Calendar – Liz Miller

Bottle of Merlot – Janette Smith

Cider Gift Box – David Cartner

Christmas Tea Lights – Alan Baird

Bath time Gift Set & Body Lotion – Alison Spencer

Down Memory Lane – Mary Turner

In the late 70s, 17 fresh faced young farmers went on a trip of a lifetime to all parts of the globe; who would have thought that 40 years later, we are mostly all still in touch! We had different experiences, whether it was in the USA, Australia, Canada or in Europe, but what we had in common

was that we learned a different way of life and culture through the eyes of our host families.



11 or the original group plus 5 partners met up early October, in Glenfarg for an overnight stay. We kicked off the evening with a room party – Meg & I are quite used to hosting such events – and it was a chance to go down memory lane! Sandra MacIver came with her Young Farmers Blazer, which still fits her perfectly!



Photos were shown, with much fun and laughter, talking about our individual trips, things we had done and the friends we had made.



Margaret Crawford - Canada

After the meal, we continued in the bar and Meg entertained us with her guitar. I had a copy of the report I had prepared for SAYFC, and in it I had said “but above all, I made many friends with whom I will never lose touch”! How true this has been for me – I had four host families, I have visited Switzerland on many occasions since and even studied German for several years. It was an opportune time following the IFYE Conference in Switzerland last year to visit 2 of the families, and it brought back so many happy memories of my exchange!

We have continued to meet up as group every five years and to think that most of us hadn’t met before the weekend briefing sessions before our trip, and that is one of the things that bonded us together. Yes, the exchange trip was certainly one of the best things we have ever done!



In the photo – top – Alan James – USA, Sandy Tulloch – Rally, Meg Findlay - Rally, David Irvine – Canada, Sandra MacIver – Sweden, Keith Stewart – Australia; **bottom** - Mary Turner – Switzerland, Fiona Pollock – USA, Margaret Eunson – Canada, Margo Stewart - Rally



Three friends on a biking tour on Isle of Islay – what do they all have in common – they all met through YFA – **Angela Southern from Isle of Man, Mary Roberts from Wales joined Mary Turner** on a week-long biking trip on Islay back in September. We didn’t pick the best week for biking, but still we didn’t let the rain dampen our spirit – there was always a shed to shelter in! We biked many of the quiet roads, with breath taking views around every corner, and enjoyed staying at the Port Charlotte Youth Hostel where the hosts do a wonderful job. We had a few nips at the Bruichladdich Distillery and thanks to Chrissie Angus (YFA member) who was a great help over the few days. If you haven’t been to Islay – then you ought to go!



Dates for your Diary

Drinks Reception 2018



Will be held on Friday 22 June - note it in your diary now, as it's an evening not to be missed, with almost 100 people attending last year, it is our big event of the year - more to follow

UK YFA Reunion next year at the Altens Hotel, Aberdeen from 26 – 29 October, 2018 – we have a small committee making good progress on the activities for the weekend. There will be interesting visits during the day, with plenty of fun and dancing in the evenings. It is a great chance to re-connect with old friends and meet new ones. Lots more to follow on this, but in the meantime, put it in your diary!

Future IFYE Conferences



Calling all Exchangees between 2013 and 2017

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

3. The application form will be issued and submitted to the European Treasurer during the Conference attended and the payment made that week.

So if you were an exchangee in 2013 or after, now's your chance for a discount and we all love a bargain, you won't regret it!

On to 2018, and if our highlights from Switzerland in our October Newsletter and this one, appeal to you why not come to Northern Ireland – from 21 – 28 July for the 60th Anniversary European IFYE Conference. You will have noticed it's more of a reunion rather than a conference, so don't let the name put you off! It will be held at Greenmount College, Antrim - all single rooms, and the cost of the week is £500 for those who are IFYE Lifetime Members, otherwise it will be £520. Registration has been open for a few months now, and places are filling up fast. Please have a look at the website noted below for more information. It was great to see such a large turnout from Scotland in Switzerland, and looks like we are going to surpass that number in Northern Ireland! IFYE is for anyone who has been on exchange no matter when – you will be amazed how people just click. If you want more information on IFYE, get in touch with Mary, details on Page 1

www.ifye2018.com - closing date 31 March, 2018

2018 – World IFYE Conference - an Alaskan Cruise from 8 – 16 September – more details on the website - several Scots have already registered for this wonderful opportunity to visit Alaska: Just type in IFYE World Conference, and you will get all the details

2019 – Norway – close to Oslo from 12 – 18 August

2020 – England

DON'T FORGET - YFA MEMBERSHIP FEE 2018

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. So, if you are new to YFA, 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 Neil – contact details on Page 1