

Young Farmers Ambassadors

Scottish Region

Newsletter
January 2016

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Chairman's Blog – Andrew



Happy New Year to everyone and hope you all had a good Christmas. It's been quite quiet on the YFA front lately, other than the UK Reunion. This was held at the Aberavon Beach Hotel, Swansea Bay, Wales at the end of October. This was my second Reunion and it was another great weekend catching up with some old friends and meeting some new ones. YFA is for everyone, and it's a pity that more younger members from Scotland don't attend. It will be held in Northern Ireland this year, always a welcoming place to visit.

The interviews for the 2016 international trips are being held in Elgin on Saturday 27th February. Hopefully there will be a good turnout of people applying this year so they can experience the great trips on offer.



A note from the Editor - appreciate those who pass us bits and pieces for the Newsletter, but always looking for articles that our members would find of interest. Ever thought you could contribute to YFA by going on the Committee? It doesn't matter when you went on Exchange, so give it some consideration – we value your support to keep the organisation going – so get in touch 😊



Andrew's trip to Colorado

Having been lucky enough to be selected by SAYFC to go to Colorado for 2 months, I set off on 21st June 2015. I flew from Edinburgh Airport to Chicago, successfully made it through customs and made my connecting flight to Denver. I got the shuttle bus up to Windsor where I was dropped off at my first host family who were Mike and Melissa Barton. Their house was located in a nice resort where there was a golf course, clubhouse and next to the house was a lake which I went out on a lot using the kayak.



The first week of my exchange was when the 4H State Conference was being held at the Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Mike and Melissa are Event Planners and this was one of their events. The 4H State Conference is where 4H members aged from 15-18 from all over Colorado come together to take part in many competitions throughout the week including Livestock Judging, Horse Demonstration and Public Speaking. This was where I met the 3 other exchangees who were Jacki from Northern Ireland, and Angharad and Laura from Wales. We helped on the Monday to get everything ready for the members arriving on the Tuesday. Throughout the week we got to go to a couple of workshops and see some competitions. We went to see the horse judging and stock judging. The one thing that I noticed

they did differently from us was that before each class began, the competitors had to turn their back to the ring until the class started so everyone had an equal chance. We gave a presentation to some of the students about our own country, Young Farmers and being an exchangee. We did an overview of Young Farmers and compared it to 4H and then we each did a bit about our own country. Evening events included the opening of the conference with a live auction of state officers and a Hypnotist. The next night there was a county dinner with a Superhero themed dance later on. We got to learn some swing dance which is really popular and good fun. About 400 people attended the Farewell Banquet, and we were introduced to the company, collected our certificates for attending the conference and gave a short speech on how we enjoyed the event.

Working from home, Melissa and Mike had more time to show me around. There are a lot of breweries in Colorado, many of them being in the north, near Fort Collins. We started off by going to a beer festival, trying out the local beers. However, it was especially interesting to visit the Budweiser Brewery. Unfortunately the world-famous Clydesdale Team of horses weren't there as they were away on tour. However, it was good to learn all about the process and their history especially the part about there being Dalmatian Dogs guarding the horses, and sitting proudly next to the driver.

I enjoyed a couple of rodeos, the first one being at the Greeley Stampede. It was a great experience from bull fighting, mutton busting and steer wrestling to the parade of longhorn cattle and horse and carts. I even managed to get tickets to see Kenny Rogers on the first night of the Stampede. What a great concert, especially hearing his well-known hits "The Gambler" and "Islands in the Stream". The other rodeo was at the Larimer County Fair which is like one of our agricultural shows. One of the

events for the kids was catching a lamb or goat and halter it in the quickest time.

I also got the chance to go and see a baseball game. Melissa managed to get free tickets to see the Colorado Rockies and the seats were 6 rows from the front, it was great to watch. Melissa has a friend in Kansas who is a farm manager and was busy with his wheat harvest, so I got to spend 3 days with Terry. It was good to see the process that goes from the field to the sheds. Firstly I spent some time in the combine with Terry then I had a shot in the lorry where the grain was taken to the sheds to be stored. The lorry was weighed, the grain sampled and stored in the bins until it was needed to go away. They grew 4,000 acres of corn and 4,000 acres of wheat where they used 19 irrigators and some drip irrigation. The drip irrigation was where they fed water and fertiliser underground. The landscape was really flat and the roads were long and straight – I don't think I could live there! The east of Colorado is similar. Some of the other places we went to see were the Rocky Mountain National Park and also a Drive-in movie where we saw the Minions.

After 7 weeks I moved on to my next host family who lived on a ranch near New Castle. I stayed with Amy and Nick; Amy is a vet and Nick a rancher and they live on one of the ranches owned by Amy's parents. At the ranch, they mainly grew Alfalfa to make hay and spent a lot of time irrigating because they are on the edge of the desert. I spent a couple of days with Amy on some of her calls. She specialises in equine but did large animals as well. The first call that we went on, was to Highland Cattle, two of them had sore feet and the other one had diphtheria. The other calls were mostly to do with horses with one of them needing their teeth trimmed. We also went to a call to see some pigs that weren't well.

I spent a day with Nick where we were checking on some cows and moving them to new pasture by horseback. We met up with other people that were going to be helping us, one of them being Amy's mum, Sheila. We got all the horses ready and put them in the trailers and took them to the top of the mountain which was about 10,000 feet at the highest point. We shifted some cattle to new pasture and checked round the rest of the cattle to see if they were all ok and doctored the cows and calves that were sick or lame. We were riding for 8 hours so my bum was a bit sore by the end of it, but I really enjoyed it and it was a great experience to see real live roping in action. I also spent a day with Sheila, and she showed me round her ranch where she lived and we took salt licks up the mountain for the cattle. The next day we went to do some branding on some of the later calves and a couple of yearlings who were missed from the previous session. The yearlings were branded inside the crate while the calves were lassoed by Haysus and held down by Amy while Sheila branded them. I got to hold down the youngest calf because Amy said there was a special technique.



After we finished the branding we got showered and changed and Amy, Nick and I went to Aspen for a day out. After lunch we went for a walk round Aspen and saw some of the ski slopes. We took the shuttle bus to see the Maroon Bells which is a beautiful set of mountains with a lake at the bottom.



Nick and Amy couldn't host me for the last couple of days of my trip so Kellie Martindale who is a past IFYE exchangee, hosted me. I got the Colorado Mountain Express bus to Denver where I met Kellie. She lives in the suburbs of Denver in a town called Broomfield. She entertained me for a couple of days before I flew back home. The flight home was a bit of an adventure! I was flying from Denver to Chicago then on to Edinburgh. However, due to the weather, my flight from Denver got diverted to St. Louis. We sat on the runway for a wee while before flying to Chicago. By this time, I had missed my flight to Edinburgh, got put up overnight in Chicago, to catch the 6.15 pm flight the next day. When I was sitting on the plane ready to leave, having a window seat, I saw the bags going on to the plane. My bag was a bright red Northface bag so it stood out and it was on a separate trailer with 2 other suitcases. All the other suitcases were put on and my bag and the other two were scanned and then taken away. I alerted the steward who spoke to the captain and he said all the bags should be on the plane. However, when I arrived in Edinburgh there was no bag and they said it would be on the next flight tomorrow. The next day my bag arrived and was delivered to my door, just as well that was the end of my trip! The couple who had the other 2 bags, it was the start of their holiday!

I would just like to thank SAYFC for giving me the opportunity to go to Colorado and to the International Trust, YFA and Bankfoot JAC for the funding towards the trip. **Andrew Baird**



UK YFA Reunion

It was YFA Reunion time again, and on Friday 30 October, around 120 YFA members headed for the Aberavon Beach Hotel, Portlbot, Wales, which is situate just opposite the beach. Having settled in, it was time to get into the mood with the Fancy Dress Party, with an apt theme of "Rugby World Cup Nations" and dancing to Hefin's Disco.



In no time it seemed to be Saturday morning, and after breakfast, the group photo and some anniversary guest photos were taken, and then it was off on the trips.



There were a good range of visits, something to suit everyone. I went to the Aberdulais Tin Works and Waterfall, run by the National Trust, and the

guides were passionate about the history of the works, long since stopped. Power has been drawn from the waterfall since 1584, when it first provided energy used in the manufacture of copper and later on tinfoil.



All coaches were back by 4.00 pm to watch the final of the World Rugby Cup.....and there were no surprises to the winners. All spruced up, for the formal dinner with guest speaker Meurig Raymond, MBE farmer and President of the NFU. We had an excellent meal, and danced the night away to the Hay Band, learning some traditional Welsh dances. **Celebrating 25 years since their exchange: -**



Andrew, Donald & Keith Spencer – 3 generations of exchangees from one family!

Sunday, time for the religious service, regional meetings, lunch and check out for those leaving. Some headed to Swansea, whilst others stayed at the hotel. Huw and Angharad organised a Smite competition on the beach and the weather for 1 November, just couldn't have been better - it was more like summer! Meg and I were the runners up in this fiercely contested event :)



A smaller group for the evening, we were entertained by Glamorgan YFC Choir, finishing off with Hefin's Disco. No YFA gathering would be complete with Martyn from Isle of Man singing, and this time we also had some guitar playing from Nicklaus from Switzerland, who had been travelling around the UK since Gordonstoun in August!



Thanks again to Welsh YFA for organising such a great weekend. Looking forward to Northern Ireland, where we can do it all again! **Mary**



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 **£915.96**. Your help and assistance is much appreciated; this was our only fund raiser in 2015, allowing us to continue the level donations to the outgoing exchangees.

£100 – Vicky Smith

£50 – David Paterson

£25 – David Brown

£25 Morrisons Voucher – Kirsty Walker

£15 Boots Voucher – Beth Hardie

Bottle of Oak Eden Mill Gin & Vouchers for Tour

of Distillery in St Andrews – Jean Kennedy

Bottle of Grants Whisky – Andrew Turner

2 prizes of Lees of Scotland 120 Snowballs each

– Gillian Marshall and Colin Manson

Dunlop Golf Umbrella – David Paterson

Bottle of Isla Negra Merlot – Jacqui Brand

2 Famous Grouse Tumblers – Jean Kennedy

Goodie Bag with Chocolates, Keyring & Sticker –

Jacqui Brand

Address Book & Chocolates – Fiona Brown



Thought we would share more positive feedback from the event last August - firstly from **Phillip Rüeger, an Exchangee from Switzerland to Scotland during 2015** - here is his report from both his Exchange and Gordonstoun:

The summer of 2015 was probably one of the best summers I ever had. Thanks to SAYFC and IFYE Switzerland I had the chance to spend seven weeks in such a beautiful country. Six weeks on an exchange and one week at the 57th European IFYE Conference at Gordonstoun School.

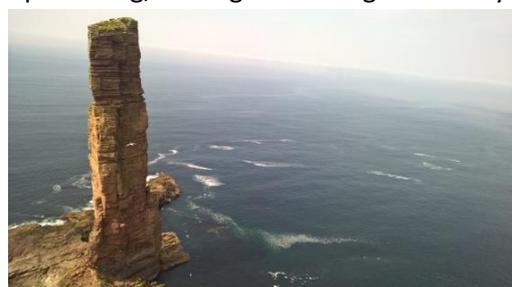
During my exchange I was travelling almost all over Scotland. I was able to see so many nice

places, coastlines, castles, farms and distilleries. The Young Farmers with whom I stayed, were all so keen and helpful. Normally we started the homestay with a meal or a relaxed talk in the living room with a cup of coffee; it felt like home!

After three weeks SAYFC sent two other exchangees and me for a week to Orkney - wow! What a breath-taking island. We all stayed within the same family, a young couple with a lovely daughter. The weather in this week was good, sunshine, blue skies and almost 20 degrees!



We did things like, hiking, fishing, sightseeing, eating and other touristy activities. Not to sound negative on the other places, but it was the best week of my exchange. I was already impressed how long the days are in Scotland, but on Orkney, they were even longer. So the days were very long and sleep was less than in other weeks, but I didn't want to miss any hour I was up chatting, visiting or relaxing on Orkney.





After my six week exchange, I spent four weeks in Edinburgh in a language school. I was mainly there to improve my English but also to set up a bridge between my exchange and the 57th European IFYE Conference, which was hosted in Elgin. So after my Edinburgh experience, I took the train with another IFYE from Switzerland and headed north.

Once we arrived in Elgin, the fun started. Everyone enthusiastically welcomed the “Baby-IFYEs” –first time attenders to a conference. They took good care of us. The week was packed with many visits such as a distillery, a fort, farms, a host family day and some activities like hiking or biking. The last one, the bike trip, was my personal highlight during the Conference. The weather was perfect that day - one of the best days during my already ten weeks in Scotland.



In the evenings they kept us busy too with Ceilidh Dancing, DJ Music, a Burns Supper and a Cruise on Loch Ness.



All these activities made the Conference an unforgettable week; however, it’s not just about the programme, most important were all the people who attended making it such a fantastic week. Then, of course, there is the committee who did such a great job organising the whole thing so well – without them there would not have been a week like it was!

I often asked myself why there are IFYEs attending Conferences for more than thirty years, and after that week, my first conference, I knew why! Once you were on an exchange, once you experienced such an adventure, once you met so many nice people and once you find a country with which you build up a special relationship, you know what makes IFYE so great! When I asked others, what is IFYE for you? They said, thanks to IFYE I had one of the best summers of my life... if not the best one!

But to come to a conclusion, the Conference was a great experience and it’s an opportunity where people with different backgrounds, in different life stages and different ages come

together because of their past exchange and their love of travelling, for a week of fun and good memories.

**Thanks again and all the best from Switzerland.
Phillip**

Now for some highlights from Pasi Piiponen and Exchangee from Finland to Scotland in 1995 :

We all agree that Gordonstoun School was a perfect place for the Conference. The school itself is such a notable Scottish institution. It was great to meet IFYE friends again - as well as making new friends. Let me mention that I met an Australian IFYE friend for the first time since 1995!

The conference week was packed with interesting activities and excursions. Biking in the Cairngorms National Park was good fun - great trails and stunning views - what else does a biker need?



RAF Lossiemouth visit was another highlight of the week as well as the sail on Loch Ness. The host family day gave us an excellent opportunity to learn more about the Moray region. The entertainment in the evenings and having a good time with IFYE friends crowned the conference days at Gordonstoun.



Many thanks to the Scottish IFYEs for your hospitality! Pasi



IFYE Conference 2015, and an IFYE Exchange on Two Wheels - most people made their way to Gordonstoun by plane, train or car. Yes **Karin Jakob** from Switzerland arrived by plane, brought her bike with her and cycled all the way back home, stopping off with IFYEs on her way! **Here's a snapshot of her 2,100 mile trip that took 56 days:**

Mid-August, it was finally time to travel to Scotland for the **IFYE Conference**. I could hardly wait, as it had been a long time since the last meeting with so many international friends, and it was as always: what a great moment to meet everyone, to give and receive many big hugs. I am happy to be part of the big IFYE Family!

There were so many highlights during that week, kind of hard to pick them out. The welcome on Sunday with the Pipe Band was great – can it be more Scottish? I don't think so! Besides all the excursions during the week, I really loved the Host Family day. What a great chance to meet locals and to learn something about their everyday life. I also appreciated the chance to spend the evening with our hosts and many others back at Gordonstoun.

Evenings were filled with fun and laughter, usually ending in the bar until very late. The sporty ones learned some of the Scottish dances – it looked like great fun. The biggest surprise for me during the week, **we really liked Haggis!** During the Burns Supper, we emptied the plate in a few minutes! Lucky me, my holidays were not over yet! I had a special idea **"Riding on a bicycle after the Conference from Scotland to**

Switzerland “– “**how did you come up with that idea?**” Many conference participants asked me that question! The answer was easy, because I want to and because I have a lot of time!

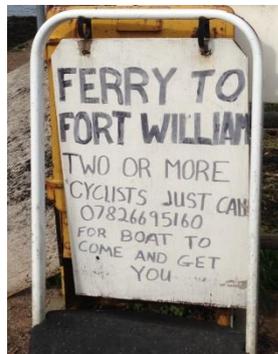


The first two weeks of the long trip, I had the company of my Swiss friend Barbara. We enjoyed riding through the north western part of Scotland. The first few days, we ran into other IFYEs almost round every corner – many of us were enjoying some travelling days after the Conference. The ferry brought us to the Outer Hebrides, where we got in contact with some new Scottish friends: the Midges, however after only two days they became bored and left us – we did not mind at all! But now, strong headwinds wanted to test us. It needed quite some power to bike further south. Lucky for us, Nicklaus the young Swiss IFYE who was travelling around Europe in his old yellow campervan, showed up! After a nice dinner in Lochmaddy, the deal was set: We would load our bikes into his van the next day and join him on his way south. Easy and relaxed we arrived on the Isle of Barra and headed up north on our bikes the next day, with the wind on our backs – Lochmaddy was reached after only a few hours.

Next morning, after a ferry ride, we arrived on the Isle of Skye, where we met the most famous IFYE host: **Alan Duncan!** He had so many IFYE visitors before and after the Conference but was still very happy to welcome us. **Thanks Alan!**



A few days later, it was already time for Barbara to fly home and I looked at the map of Europe, to make further plans. Whilst at home, I had the idea to make a stop in Edinburgh and then ride down the East Coast of England. However, at the Conference I had so many invitations from IFYEs in the western part of the British Isles – I really had to change my plans.



Mary Turner was my guide for almost a whole week, she loves cycling and the Isle of Islay and enjoyed showing me around that special place. Perfect weather, good company, nice landscapes – what else shall I wish for? Nothing!





Thanks so much Mary!

From the Isle of Islay, Northern Ireland was just a stones throw away. Thanks **Linda**, that you have been motivating me to come to your country! I not only enjoyed the beautiful bike rides, no, most of all the perfect hospitality of so many IFYEs. It felt like a short term IFYE exchange! Thanks for teaching and showing me many interesting things. I'm already looking forward to going back **to Northern Ireland for the Conference in 2018.**



Lucky me, there are ferries from Belfast to Douglas, Isle of Man, home of other good IFYE friends. **Angela** offered me a bed, **Martyn** proved he is a good cook and **Gill** showed me the southern part of the island while I cycled through the northern part. **A big thanks to my Manx friends!** Still on the west of the British Isles, Wales was awaiting with hilly routes, so the visits to IFYE friends had to be earned – there were a few hundred miles and a lot of altitude to overcome until I visited them all. But the big smile of **Donald Spencer**, the oldest

participant at Gordonstoun, made me forget my efforts! Two “Future Famers of America” met for tea – Donald to the US in 1950, and me 40



years later – **IFYE connects!**

After some biking days in England, I finally took the train through London to the English East Coast and took the ferry to the Netherlands – the cyclists paradise. I met up with IFYEs there, before pedalling to Germany and crossing the Swiss Border to see the first Swiss mountain after 8 weeks! So some statistics from the trip: visit 24 people, including 18 IFYEs; 2 flat tyres both in Scotland; 6 hitch hiking rides; 3 train rides and 19 ferry trips. **Life is not about the journey, it's about the friends you meet on the way and the adventures you have together.**
Karin



Calling all Exchanges, but for those between 2013 and 2015, a discount is available

You will have read the reports and feedback we have had for the Conference at Gordonstoun both in the October edition and this newsletter. You can't fail to notice the enthusiasm shown and on the back of Gordonstoun, we really hope to encourage any and every member to attend a Conference. If you enjoy meeting people, getting to know new cultures and having fun, like you did on your YFC Exchange, then why not give IFYE a go – if you attend once, you will be

back again and again – it’s addictive! You can read more about this years Conference in Estonia in the box. All newcomers are welcome, but in particular the European Board want to encourage the more recent exchangees to attend their first European IFYE Conference and it will be worth your while. All eligible newcomers will receive a contribution of 160 CHF, circa £110 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 three years following their exchange trip (an IFYE in 2015 could receive the contribution in 2016, 2017 or 2018)
- 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 travelled in 2013 or after, now’s your chance for a discount and we all love a bargain, you wont regret it!

Dates for your Diary

YFA AGM and Social to be held at Carnbo Hall on Sunday 13 March, 2016 – 1.00 pm - come and see the photo presentations from the 2015 Exchangees and meet those going out this year – more details to follow



YFA Drinks Reception - in YF Centre, Ingliston on Friday 24 June, 2016 – our main event of the year, so put it in your diary now

UK YFA Reunion – Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone 28 – 31 October, 2016 – a weekend not to be missed – more details to follow in the summer



Future European IFYE Conferences

23 – 30 July 2016..... only 6 months away – and it will be held in Estonia, a new country to host the event. The venue is about 100 miles south of Tallinn- Jõulumäe, Pärnumaa
The cost ranges from €300-€600 (Euros) depending on standard of room, however full details are available on the Website: <http://ifye2016.wix.com/ifye2016> If you are thinking of going, get in touch with Mary urgently, so that you can be included in the group money transfer;
2017 – Switzerland
2018 – Northern Ireland – 60th Conference

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. 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, only £10! You can pay by Standing Order, online or cheque – get in touch with Mary – contact details on Page 1



to Raymond (Euro Rally 2007) & Laura Crerar twin boys Alistair & Robbie