

Young Farmer's Ambassadors

Scottish Region

Newsletter

Summer 2011

'Get on y'r bike.....on the 6th August



Join us for a sponsored cycle ride or just a day out on Bute



All abilities welcome

Cycle Bute, only 20 miles, beg, steal or borrow a bike (or available to hire on the island). Recovery packages available in local hostilleries, stay overnight if you dare, we plan to. Let your hair down, not our tyres!

If Steedsy can do it so can you!

Contact Dickie or Mary for more information

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YFA & IFYE INFORMATION

www.ifye.co.uk www.sayfc.org
www.ifye.org and find us on facebook.

YFA Scotland
invite you to a

Drink's Reception

in the

Young Farmer's Centre
Friday 24th June at 6.30pm

What's going on.....?

The Annual General Meeting of the Young Farmers Ambassadors Scottish Region was to be held on Friday 11th March 2011, at The West Port Hotel Linlithgow. There was an excellent turn out of outgoing 2010 and 2011 exchangees. The outgoing 2010 members gave excellent slide shows raising the excitement level of the lucky young farmers about to undertake their trip of a lifetime this summer.

The slide shows were so fab that the time flew past quickly: it was very late so a decision was taken to postpone the AGM to a later date – the lack of members in attendance also contributed to this decision.

So, an Extraordinary Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 13th May again in the West Port Hotel. Prior to the EGM a poll YFA members was taken to find out if there was still enthusiasm for the continuation of YFA. Yeah.....we can confirm there is support, but the distance involved in traveling to YFA events was the major factor in the low turnout of members at events.

Read on to page 4 to hear about the new proposal for YFA and how one member's enthusiasm and get up and go attitude has spear-headed the revolution!

The new YFA Committee

Chairman: Richard 'Dickie' Wilson
(Euro Rally 2006)

Vice Chairman & Newsletter Editor:
David 'Steedsy' Stevenson' (Canada 1991)

Secretary: Marion MacPherson
(Sweden 1981)

Treasurer: Mary Turner (Switzerland 1977)

Committee: Ex Officio: Andy Mair (Euro Rally 2001), Marianne Sheed (Australia 2005), Gavin Redpath (YFA Award 1998), Alison Taylor (Canada 2007), Linda Sloan (Ireland 2007 & Canada 2009), Laura Fleming (Wales 2007 & Australia 2009), June Forsyth (Switzerland 2005), Karen Stewart (USA 2009), Thomas Cameron (USA 2010) Sally Young (Canada 1990)

Scottish outgoing Exchangees 2011

Heather McAllister	YFA Award
Margaret McGarva	Wales
Hannah Burns	Ulster
Andrew Baird	Ulster
Sheena Aitken	Eire
Paul Fraser	Finland
Miriam Doe	US Montana
Gillian Stewart	US Montana
Allan Grant	European
Linda Sloan	Rally
Karen Stewart	
Lyndsey Paterson	
Alexander Marshall	

**Thanks go to the 2010 exchangees
for their excellent slide shows:**

Euro Rally	Gillian Stewart & Alistair Hutton
Ulster	Neil Ritchie
Wales	Andrew Baird & Gail Robertson
England	Elizabeth Mackie
Eire	Elizabeth Stewart
Canada	Ruth Thomson
Australia	Libby Templeton
Switzerland	Hugh Wallace
USA (Montana)	Sheena Aitken
USA (Colorado)	Thomas Cameron

We look forward to seeing slides from those who could not make it, next year!

**YFA HOST
'INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGEES'**

Wednesday 15th June

'A day out to remember'

Visit A. Bartlett & Sons, Airdrie &
Summerlee Museum of Industrial Life

You are welcome to join us!

Contact Dickie 07740 823818
or Alison Taylor 07967 351622
(names in advance required for Bartlett's)

**Here's a report of a trip not yet
available on the SAYFC
exchange programme, yet!**

Vietnam Experiences

You know you are not in Europe when you can get a 12 hour train journey for £5, a 3 star hotel with private facilities for £7 and a delicious meal with a few beers for £3 – this is what was awaiting me in Vietnam!

I arrived in Ho Chi Minh City or more commonly known as Saigon, on 1st March via KL in Malaysia – more than 15 hours in the air, I had finally made it to Vietnam, a country with a population of 89 million. Did I know what an adventure this would be when I decided to make this trip, after all Vietnam was more famous for its wars than as a major tourist destination! I had the address of a Norwegian friend who is currently working there, so I gave this to the taxi driver. Like all Vietnamese, he had music blaring from the radio and maybe this is to help dull the sound of the non stop noise of the crazy traffic. First impressions – organised chaos, thousands of mopeds and motorbikes, some with two adults and three children. It is now compulsory for everyone over 13 years of age to wear a helmet, however, most of

these were more like fashion accessories, sporting Mickey Mouse and James Bond. Underneath the helmet most girls would also have some form of hat and then the majority also wore colourful masks, gloves, socks (underneath their flip flops) all to stop the sun getting to them! I quickly noticed that everyone had a mobile phone and many were texting whilst riding their mopeds/driving cars! When there wasn't any room on the road, the motorbikes would ride on the pavement, tooting the horn at any pedestrian in their way! There is also no load too large to go by motorbike from mattresses, live pigs and chickens to boxes ten deep. Always a challenge to cross the road – just walk out and keep a steady pace and the traffic will go round you.



Kjersti, my Norwegian friend, has been living there for the past 3 years – has a luxurious serviced apartment in the central business district. She works for a Norwegian Pharmaceutical company who specialise in aquaculture and they are in the process of getting sign-off for a new fish vaccine. She was a great host and really got me into the local way of life. Now for some of the highlights:

Daylong trip to a fish farm in the Mekong Delta, four hours away, organised by Kjersti – car and driver, plus 2 of her team and another two Norwegians. There I met Miss Phuong, one of Kjersti's team and quickly got invited to her wedding taking place 10 days later in the town of Dalat, more on that later. I saw

coffee beans and rice being dried on top of sheets on the roads – yes where better to get the heat of the day and it didn't seem to bother the car drivers! Vietnam is one of the top Coffee and Rice producers in the world.

Two day trip including overnight stay at a family home on the Mekong Delta, visiting many places by boat and bus. This really is a river where a lot of commerce is done, barges with rice, floating markets with all sorts of vegetables and fruits. The highlight was the home stay – I was the only one on the mini bus taking this option and after the days sight seeing, I was ushered into a long boat heading for the house on stilts some way down the Mekong River. I suddenly realised that the engine was making a strange noise, like it was about to run out of diesel. Yes, and I was right – fortunately we were near the other side of the river and drifted close to the edge, where the captain was able to tie a rope to a tree, whilst he phoned a friend to tow us away! Twenty minutes later, we were being rescued and towed further down the river, before eventually reaching my home stay! There were 2 Swiss guys staying there too, and we had to help a little in the kitchen. We had Elephant Ear Fish, rice, lot's of vegetables, chillies, pork and bananas to finish. All washed down with the local beer....BaBaBa which is 333, it was a fun evening. I should have mentioned that the cat was sitting on the worktop in the kitchen, still all the food was cooked and we survived!

Dalat in the cooler highlands showed a different side to the big cities. A day on a motorbike with Mr Lee, recommended by Kjersti – he is part of the Easy Rider group who do motorbike tours. I had an eight hour tour of the surrounding area visiting many interesting places. From waterfalls, flower and mushroom farms, pagodas to the K'ho Minority village, Mr Lee really gave a very good tour and his English was better than most. This was just the first of many motor bike taxi trips and it was one of the easiest ways to get around. Kjersti and her six work colleagues arrived on the Sunday afternoon, ahead of Miss Phuong's wedding on the Monday morning. Dining at an outdoor fish restaurant that evening, tasting some very unusual dishes washed down with countless bottles of Dalat Wine. The last dish put on the table was about 8 inches long, dark

meat with lots of small bones. One of her colleagues said it was meat from a small deer.....both Kjersti and I were sceptical about that! Anyway we tried some of the meat, which was definitely edible but quite unusual...then we were shown a live version of what we were eating. Yes, it was rat.....fatter than the normal rat, but it was definitely rat.....much to the amusement of the Vietnamese, they love playing tricks on people! Next day Kjersti and I took a taxi to Miss Phuong's parents flower farm, on the outskirts of the town – only close family had been invited there for the main ceremony, however, I think because she is employed by a western company, we were looked upon as being prized guests! There were around 25 people there, with Miss Phuong dressed in a traditional costume – white trousers with a red tunic on top and red hat, she looked stunning. Tradition dictates that it is the eldest sibling of the bride's father who kind of gives her away, so her aunt walked her down the corridor in the house into the room with the Buddha....the groom waiting in his white suit. The ladies were dressed in their finery, however, most of the men looked like they had taken their suit out of the wardrobe that hadn't been worn for 10 years – when they smiled, most had no teeth! They exchanged rings, and very little was spoken. Photographer taking lots of photos, then the guests gave their presents, which was mainly gold chains, rings and bracelets – gold is seen as a sign of wealth. Next we were ushered off in taxis to the main reception, where there were 200 guests! No table plan, all sat down and the bridal party marched in with loud karaoke music

and disco dancers on the stage! No speeches whatsoever and whilst we started on the food, the bride changed into a traditional white brides dress. There were five courses with kind of nibble food –seafood, rice, soup etc. and lots of beer. The bridal party went round every table to get photos taken with all the guests, whilst the karaoke got into full swing! Next thing, Kjersti tells me that she has to make a speech and sing a song.....and so, our whole table are on the stage! Kjersti was wearing a traditional Vietnamese outfit, whilst I was wearing my best cropped trousers and tshirt! It was now only 1.30pm, however, that appeared to be the end of the event and the guests just suddenly left from their tables and the place was empty within 10 minutes!

Hoi An, a Unesco World Heritage sitewith more than 800 historical buildings. Hanoi with it's bustling Old Quarter and many reminders of the French colonial period. Halong Bay with it's unusual rocks and caves. Also visiting the many pagodas which gave an insight into Buddhism.

Travelling by train – took two overnight train journeys, the first one travelling cattle class with the masses – hard wooden seat, I was the only westerner in the carriage, however, people were kind enough to let me know when the train was going to be waiting 10 minutes at a station. This was always a good opportunity to stretch the legs and buy some snacks. The Vietnamese eat all the time – something with rice or noodles, their stable diet. You finish your food and then open the window and throw out the rubbish! The next journey was a first class sleeper, a bottom bunk in a

compartment for four –quite a different experience! Riding a bike in the smaller towns and negotiating your way around the traffic.

Experiencing life on the streets and markets - although Vietnam is a one party communist state, it has a capitalist economy. No hand-outs here, if you are not working, there will be no money coming in. This makes them very enterprising, if you are not an employee, you will have your own little business. That may be a tea/coffee stall just on the pavement or making and selling snacks just outside your house. Then again, it could also be cutting hair, no need to have premises just a chair on the pavement and off you go! There was a huge supply of fresh vegetables, fruit, fish and meat in the markets, all neatly displayed. Live chickens being weighed in a plastic bag, ready to take home for the pot! I did however, see dogs displayed – yes whole ones, skinned and partly cooked ready to take away – head and tail included! Eating out – lots of seafood, rice, noodles, vegetables, flavoured with herbs. Lovely fresh mangos, papaya, pineapple and bananas were a treat any time of the day. The many local beers for under 50p a bottle, were very drinkable.

Interacting with the locals and wondering how they survive on an average \$1,000 per year. Meeting like minded people from all over the world, sampling this very different culture. Yes my three week trip to Vietnam was certainly a very memorable and fun experience.

Mary Turner, Switzerland 1977

YFA Scotland invite members to a drinks reception at the Highland Show on Friday 24th June at 6.30pm in the Young Farmers Centre.

Anniversary of Exchange Trip 'Roll of Honour'

- 1951 Kathleen Stewart (Scott), Sandy Stewart, Archie Fleming, Rosemary Arbuckle (Stewart), Arthur Young
(60-yrs)
- 1961 Isabel McClung, John Caldwell, Mary Beck (Bryson), Mary Paterson (Campbell), J David Birkbeck, Marjory
(50-yrs) Bennet (Stewart), Alasdair Wyllie
- 1971 Alison Owens (Robertson), James Cowie, Joy Kearns(Bennie), John Arbuckle, Charlotte Thomson (Jackson),
(40-yrs) Elizabeth Bruges, John Hodge, Robert Semple, John Rendall, Jane Henderson, Anne Hogg (Mitchell), Martin Cessford
- 1986 Marion Scott, Caroline Robertson (MacColl), Isabel Cullen, Christine Brown (Bilsland), Margaret MacKenzie
(25-yrs) (Logan), Dora Robertson (Johnson), Elizabeth Campbell (Gemmell), Thelma Ross (Brown), Tom Allan, Elizabeth Hutton (Mowat), Mary Hamilton (Dunn), Fiona Cumming (Smith), Elizabeth Paul (Speirs), Colin Mair, Ian Brunton, James Wilkinson, Mrs Carole Brunton, Judith Stewart (Maxwell), Alison Webster (Milne), Elspeth Mair (Stevenson), Alex Torrance, Alice Thomson (Jolly), James Arnott



Matches



Carolyn Taylor (Tasmania 2005)
Engaged to Robert Watson

Amy McNee (Euro Rally 2004)
Engaged to Alex Henderson

Catriona Gray (Euro Rally 1999)
Engaged to Mathew Smith (Norway 1990)

Young Farmers Ambassadors (UK) Annual Reunion

The UK Young Farmers Ambassador's (YFA) organisation encompasses groups in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland & England. It was founded in 1955 when a group of young farmers who had been on exchange trips to the USA decided to hold a reunion in London: to exchange stories; their experiences and; to re-establish the friendships that they had made. The weekend was such a success that it became an established event, and has been organised by the four countries in rota (and once the Isle of Man) every since – with the exception of 1960 and 1967 when it was not held due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease on farms.

Scottish YFA organised the 2010 reunion, it was held from the 29th October – 1st November at Aviemore, 248 people attended (the children of members are welcome too). The weekend commenced with a fancy dress party 'Your interpretation of the Scottish Highlands', there were lots of ginger wigs, sheep and tartan outfits, including kilts worn shorter than the customary knee length!

On Saturday there were options for morning and afternoon visits, including: a visit to a prize winning fold (herd) of Highland Cattle; a trip to the ski centre and funicular railway at the Cairngorm Mountain; the working, outdoors, 'Museum of Highland Life'; and a whisky distillery (no trip to the Highlands would be complete without that!). Everyone got together for lunch and travelled thereafter by steam train, back to Aviemore and onto the afternoon trips, or back to the hotel to use the leisure facilities, visit the bar or catch up on sleep.

On Saturday evening a Highland Banquet was the highlight, it included a tribute to Robbie Burns: a recitation of 'To a Haggis' followed by haggis, neeps & tatties and to everyone's surprise not just one but a full band pipe band marched into the room. After the delicious roast beef meal, a fabulous eight-piece band played and we danced into the night.

On Sunday morning a religious service, country meetings and the AGM were held. In the afternoon members had free time to go to local attractions or to visit the Highland Wildlife Park. In the evening we were entertained by band of fiddlers.

The reunion ended on Monday morning. We woke to the first white frost of the year; autumn coloured leaves and; mist, which gave way to beautiful bright blue skies: for the reunion organisers and the tourist industry it was a great final advert to entice the participants to make a return visit to the Scottish Highlands in the not too distant future.

THIS YEAR THE ANNUAL REUNION IS IN WALES

DON'T FORGET - £10 MEMBERSHIP

The fee goes towards grants for Young Farmers undertaking exchange trips.

Sort Code 83-44-00

Account No. 00608534

Account Name: Young Farmers Ambassadors Association (Scottish Region)

Set your standing order, pay online or by cheque to:
Mary Turner, Coalbog Bungalow, Bridge of Weir PA11 3RG.

UK YFA REUNION 2011

28th - 31st of October

St David's Park Hotel, Ewloe, North Wales.

See www.ifye.co.uk or Huw Williams dfw@aber.ac.uk

What is IFYE?

European International Farm Youth Exchange Alumni Association

All SAYFC exchangees of all ages are eligible to join the European equivalent of Young Farmers Ambassadors (YFA).

Once a year IFYE hold a reunion, hosted by a different country every year, in July or August. During the week there are visits to local tourist attractions and businesses; barbecues; local entertainment; group team work etc etc and culminates with a formal farewell dinner dance. Approximately 150 – 200 people from all over Europe attend, their ages span from 20 upwards there is no age limit.

This year the conference is in Finland from the 23 July – 30 July. Once you take the plunge you will not look back, and want to attend every year – which you can! The application form and full itinerary for this year's conference can be viewed at www.ifye.co.uk and www.ifye.org

If you would like any further information about IFYE contact Sally Young on 07876781600 or youngsm@angus.gov.uk.

Future conferences

Sweden 2012

Wales 2013

Germany 2014

Scotland 2015

Gavin's done it.....at the Stair Arms Hotel, Pathhead

Committee member Gavin Redpath (YFA Award 1998) knew that there were many ex YFA members in the Borders and East & Mid Lothian areas that would love to reminisce with like-minded people about their YF exchange trip, so he did something about it!

Gavin contacted members and non members and arranged a get together at the Stair Arms Hotel earlier in the year - 26 past exchangees attended. The evening included games, a novelty raffle, a few exchange stories and slides. It was a great success, principally because it was a local event – people traveled no further than 45 minutes to attend. Everyone's wondering when he'll do it again!

The new committee has under-taken to arrange similar events throughout Scotland - watch out for your invite!

Get your newsletter by email – register at:
yfa-sec-scottish-region@hotmail.co.uk