

# Young Farmers Ambassadors

## Scottish Region

Newsletter  
October 2016

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### How to contact us:

Chairman: Andrew Baird  
[andrewbaird87@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:andrewbaird87@hotmail.co.uk)  
07850 164186

Secretary: Mary Turner  
[yfa-sec-scottish-region@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:yfa-sec-scottish-region@hotmail.co.uk)  
07817 166637

Treasurer & Newsletter Editor: Mary Turner  
[mary.turner2@btinternet.com](mailto:mary.turner2@btinternet.com)  
07817 166637

On Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/yfa.region](https://www.facebook.com/yfa.region)



Hope everyone had a great summer. We had the annual Exchangees Away Day in June when we welcomed 13 exchangees from across the world and took them for a day trip to the Kelpies, Falkirk Wheel and the Riverside Museum in Glasgow. We then dropped them off at the Newhouse Hotel in Lanarkshire to be met by members of Lanarkshire District YFC who were hosting them for the first part of their exchange. Thanks to Mary for driving the minibus and making the sandwiches and to David Paterson for coming along and helping transport some of the suitcases in his car and bringing some more food. It was a great chance to meet the exchangees.

The annual Highland Show Drinks Reception was another great success with past and present members catching up on the night, which is now our main event in the YFA calendar.

Another event we had was the bike ride, which was aimed as a fun day out and not a sponsored event, hoping to attract more people. However, there were only 3 of us Mary, Chrissie and me! Thank you to Chrissie who made the trip all the way from the Isle of Islay.

Hope to see some of you at the UK YFA Reunion in Cookstown, Northern Ireland at the end of the month - it's sure to be a great weekend!

### Chairman's Blog – Andrew Baird

#### Away day 2016



Not exactly a warm summer day, however, on Wednesday 15 June, Andrew and I picked up the Minibus and headed for Edinburgh to pick up the 13 Incoming Exchangees. This

year's group came from Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Colorado USA and much nearer to home England, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales. It was more than a tight squeeze to get everyone and their luggage packed into the bus, so thankfully David Paterson was on hand with his car to transport some of the luggage. The programme for the day was exactly what we did last year - the Kelpies at the Helix, Falkirk Wheel and then to the Riverside Museum in Glasgow. The magnificent horses are quite a sight no matter how often you see them.



Picnic time at the Falkirk Wheel, and we really appreciated David serving us his home made pancakes! It was a good opportunity to get to know our guests and enjoy the feat of engineering that is the Falkirk Wheel!



Finally a visit to the Riverside Museum, which included a tour of the Glenlee sailing ship, built in Port Glasgow in 1896



We had a great day out, hope more of you can join us next year! Thanks go to the International Trust for sponsoring the Minibus. Mary



## YFA Drinks Reception 24 June

Over 80 people popped into the Drinks Reception, and that included 21 of the Anniversary Guest from 10 to 50 years since they did their exchange. **Report by Kirsty Craig (nee Barr) USA 1991**



I was quite sure there had been an error when I received an invitation to attend the Young Farmers' Ambassadors Reception during Highland Show week earlier this year. After some quick maths, however, I realised it was true, 25 years had indeed passed since I set off to USA on a 6 month 4H Exchange, I could have sworn it was only 10 years!!





Nonetheless, I was keen to attend the reception which was held at the Young Farmers' Centre, a venue which also holds some great memories from my YF days. I had been planning to attend the YFA reception in previous years, however, there seems to always be too much on, so my 25th anniversary was the extra motivation I needed!



It did not take guests long to break the ice and within minutes conversations were breaking out in every corner of the room. Guests received a warm welcome from Andrew, Chairman of the YFA and then it was over to the guests to rekindle old friendships and make new. I thoroughly enjoyed catching up with my fellow exchangees and also getting to know others who had gone out before or after me.



In short, it felt like stepping back to YF and YFA days ...I can't think of a better compliment for the night!!





Many thanks to the YFA team for organising a great evening...I certainly don't intend to wait another 25 years before I return. **Kirsty**

Many thanks again for the generous sponsorship of both **Aldi & IFYE Scotland 2015**



**Jenny Arbuckle (nee Orr)**  
**Exchangee to Australia 1970**

In August 2015, the six P & O sponsored Exchangees from the UK to Australia in 1970 held a reunion with their partners in York. We meet up now and again, but given that two of the couples live in Australia, get-togethers are very special occasions. Elaine Wilson on the far right from Lincolnshire met her husband Richard Fowler when she was in Western Australia and now lives there. Next to Elaine is Jenny (nee Jones) and Bill Cameron both from England who live in Sydney. The others still live in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Over the three days there was a great deal of reminiscing going on with much laughter and so many happy memories!



**Jenny & John Arbuckle** are sitting second from the left



**58<sup>th</sup> European IFYE Conference**

## Jõulumäe, Pärnumaa, Estonia

Nine Scots, namely Meg Findlay, Paul Fraser, Neil Brims, David Stevenson (Steedsy), Nan McLachlan, Alan Duncan, Alison Spencer, Robin Blair & Mary Turner attended this year's Conference, and we were definitely not disappointed. Here's the feedback from us –

**Meg** – what a fantastic Conference, run by a very small team. Now, we know about that in Scotland, but we'd done it before; this was the very first Estonian Conference and Reelika and her team seemed so cool and totally in control!



One of the highlights for me was the Host Village Day and mine was to the Lahkma Village, when we learned how the community work together. We had the opportunity to learn about felting and making lovely brooches, but for me it was amazing to have the opportunity to experience and play different instruments. Listening to our hosts play those lovely instruments was so inspiring! Then in the evening we had Robin "looping the loop" on the giant swing, determined to make it right round – he almost did, but it showed everyone what energy he had!

**Paul** – my highlight of the week was the visit to Lanksaare Farm near the Latvian border. We got a tour of the farm on a sledge which they were still building when we arrived on the farm! The local press were also present so we were featured on the front page of the local newspaper. We were treated to delicious food and drink all afternoon, and we were free to wander around the farm buildings which were built in the time of the Russian rule. I also enjoyed the Host Village Day to the Soometsa Village, where we biked round the village which covered quite a large area. We were treated to snacks and juice at every stop



At one of the houses they kept snakes which we were allowed to handle!





**Neil** – I really enjoyed catching up with friends and making new ones. Learning about the history of the country was really interesting, especially about the Russian occupation; I can't believe how much the Russians affected the country. A great week!



**Steedsy** – to visit a country completely new, diverse and different; the people were so friendly and proud and so happy that we had travelled to their country. One of the best Conferences I've been to.



**Nan** – the best trip being dragged behind a John Deere tractor on a home-made grass sledge over wild flower meadows, and forest tracks to find a herd of wild horses which had been introduced 5 years ago. The original wild horse of Estonia had been eaten during the years of

occupation when food was so scarce. There were many tales of hardship when farmers were sent to Siberia, families being separated and some never returning. A very thought provoking Conference



**Alan** – my Estonian Experience – nice friendly people; culture, education and technology to a very high standard. Another step on my road on experience of life and travel

**Alison** - the Estonians could not have made us feel more welcome. They certainly love their gin and cake!! My hubby Keith is still talking about the sleigh ride out into the wilderness to see the wild horses. I say sleigh ride, but it really was planks of wood stapled together on rails, which, of course, came off as they went over stones! I especially loved the Host Village Day when we went in small groups up to 12, to different villages. The village house I went to was an old Tsar's hunting lodge where after lunch the villagers played their Balalaikas and sang to us, before teaching us how to felt brooches. Every child in the village learns music and the house was full of instruments all made by the villagers. The Mind Games on Sunday afternoon were an excellent way of getting participants from different countries co-operating to solve such life-saving problems as how to fry an egg over a wire griddle or make a device using a stone, spoon and drill to set an alarm off!!



The evening programmes were also great fun full of Estonian dancing and singing. As IFYE Conferences go, this was one of the best helped by great weather and company.





**Robin** – it's been so long since I was last at a conference, apart from last year, that I had forgotten just how much fun it was and that I could still keep up with the young ones! It just goes to show age means nothing, you go and you have FUN! The Estonian's treated us to an excellent week, looking forward to next year in Switzerland!!



**Mary** – there were many highlights during the week one of them being the Host Village Day and that was the biking group. Paul has already described part of that day; we also visited an older couple who still farm, milking 10 cows by hand and as children they had been sent to Siberia; the implements were all old Soviet machines. The mayor turned up to deliver some fish for us, and the couple were delighted as it was the first time they had met him!



We picked wild blueberries to eat later on with the cake, and enjoyed delicious food, after which our guide played guitar and sang some lovely Estonian songs. The villagers were so delighted that we had visited them.

Another highlight was the visit to the Island of Kihnu – we went as foot passengers on the ferry, and what a lovely experience that was. Our guide was native to the island, and we were taken around on the back of two small Lorries, visiting the lighthouse, museum, church and local crafts! The island is 4.3 miles by 2.1 miles and with a population of around 600 most derive their income from fishing and tourism. The women sew and knit many traditional clothes and they also play accordion and dance. In winter time, when the sea is frozen, it is then possible to drive across the sea to the island!!



So for the men, it was easy to see which of the ladies were married, they wore aprons!

Of course, in the evening, there was plenty going on from the international buffet, when each country brought along food and drink, learning Estonian dances, singing and always fun in the bar. There were around 150 people attending the week, and as you will have read, it was a wonderful week of hospitality, friendship and fun and of course, for us, it was great not to be in charge!



## Zoë Wilson – Exchange to New Zealand 2016



Here is a summary of Zoë's trip –

I left Glasgow on 11 June and after 30 hours of travelling I had arrived into Auckland. I expected to be absolutely shattered at this point, but I think the buzz of everything really kept me going. On arrival, I quickly came to realise that there wasn't actually anyone there to meet me, and on getting a local sim card, and setting up my phone, I made contact with the person who was supposed to pick me up - he said quite calmly, was I meant to pick you up?! This was really a great introduction to New Zealand, and to be honest, I was soon to realise that this sort of attitude is exactly how many of the people live their lives!

I first stayed in Whangarei, which is in Northland, about four hours north of Auckland, and by the time I got to my first host that day, it was 11pm. At that point, I had been on the go for 40 hours, so I was done in. My hosts were Jake & Alana Thomson and their two small kids. Next day at 9am, and the temperature was 14 degrees. I found this to be pretty pleasant, like a really decent summer's morning, but the family were wrapped up from head to toe anytime they went outside, and always had the fire on, something I couldn't really get my head round! Jake is a farm manager on a dairy farm, and is what is known as a contract milker, meaning he owns nothing on the farm, but is paid a set wage for the job he does, and gets to live on the farm free of charge. He had a herd of 450 cows, which took around two hours to milk, in a rotary parlour. I did a few milkings here, and have to say it took me some time to adjust to the rotary, and could often be seen running around the parlour trying to get the cups onto cows' teats!

It took me quite a long time to actually adjust to the terminology used in New Zealand. For example, the parlour is known simply as the cow shed, and fields are always referred to as paddocks, so there were a few occasions when people didn't really know what I was talking about.

My next stay was with Grant Shaw & family in Whangarei, and Grant owns a company with his parents, called Northland Farm Services, and pretty much does everything and anything on farms, from fixing water pumps to sorting out technical faults in milking parlours. He bases himself in Dargaville, about 40 minutes away from Whangarei, which to us might seem like a big journey to have to make to work, but in New Zealand that's actually a really short distance to go! The first day with him was spent fixing two water pumps, which took around 6 hours. Although I couldn't do much to help, I wasn't really all that bothered because of how lovely the view was! In the evening, Grant invited his local young farmers club, of which he is current chairman, to come over for a casual meeting, which then became a barbecue and hot tub party. I'm sure you can all imagine what that was like!

After that, it was on to Te Awamutu, in the Waikato/Bay of Plenty region, about 15 minutes away from the city of Hamilton. My host was Rachael Phillips, who is a share milker at her parents farm with a view to taking it over. On my first day there, Rachael took me to the Fieldays, based in Hamilton, which is very much like the Highland Show, but has no livestock and runs for two days. In New Zealand,

most dairy farmers have spring and winter calving, meaning that they are only milking for around eight months of the year. Rachael, however, does just one calving a year, in the spring, meaning her 500-strong herd of cows will start to calf around the same time. Being a share milker, means that each year she acquires more of the farm and the herd and also earns a percentage of whatever the milk price is. In good times, this works well, but when the price is down, it isn't always that great. Each year, Rachael purchases more and more of the farm and herd, and will eventually own everything, while her parents can retire with the money she pays in. What I found really great about New Zealand was the grazing system, the cows are out at the grass 24/7, meaning that it's really uncommon to see many buildings round the farms.

I next moved to Opunake, in Taranaki, which is around 40 minutes away from the city of New Plymouth. I stayed with Erin Huckstep and her boyfriend on her parents' farm. They had recently built a house which was like something from Grand Designs, while she lived in a small cottage at the farm. Erin, like many other farm children, had been to boarding school. This is quite a common thing to do for farmers in New Zealand, because many of them move from place to place every four years or so. We visited several places of interest including the Te Rewa bridge, near New Plymouth, which frames Mount Taranaki.



I then took a four hour bus down the Wellington, the capital city where I spent a week exploring this vibrant, interesting city. I flew from Wellington to Christchurch, and from there was taken to Culverden, in North Canterbury, again, about another four hour drive. This took me to a farm known as Island Hills, well into the mountains, where my host Billy Dowle lives and works. Billy runs a beef and sheep station, however the animals are located another four hours away from the house! Next day we then headed there with his 7 working dogs, which were all individually trained for different purposes. We spent two hours trying to round the cattle down from one of the hills, using each of the dogs. When you look at the hills, you can understand why the dogs are needed, as you would never get a bike up there.



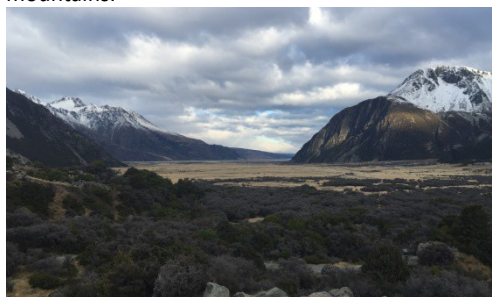


After spending the week with the same sort of routine each day, I moved down to Timaru, South Canterbury, for Grand Finals week, which was very similar to SAYFC competitions weekend. After that, I had a day in Milton near Dunedin, scanning & marking sheep



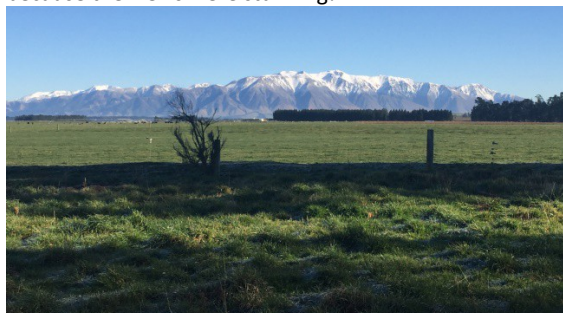
Then off to Gore to stay with the Henderson family. Their daughter Bridget took me to many places of interest including Bluff the most southerly point on the South Island and Queenstown which is more like the Alps.

Next stop was South Timaru where I stayed with Emma Coutts, who lived and worked on a deer farm as the farm manager. I spent the first day travelling with her to Mount Cook, one of New Zealand's most iconic and beautiful mountains.



The next day, I began my first of what would be many days, going to work with Emma. Being on a deer farm was a completely new experience for me, and quite daunting at times, but I really enjoyed every minute of it, and being allowed to work there every day.

After that, I had one last place to go, and travelled back up to Hororata, which is about an hour west of Christchurch. Here, I stayed with a man called Tom, who works on a huge dairy set up, which I was not allowed to go to due to health and safety regulations. However every morning I would wake up and immediately go and stand at the back door because the views were stunning!



## Bike Ride 14 August

We decided to go ahead with the bike ride just for fun, hoping that it would appeal to more people, but that didn't seem to work. Elaine Meikle came to see us off - Andrew Baird, Mary Turner and Chrissie Angus who came all the way from Isle of Islay to join in the fun.



Here are some comments from Chrissie – when the YFA bike run was mentioned I said I would like to join in. It sounded a great idea at the time, but as time was drawing closer I thought that I would need a bit of encouragement so I got myself sorted with a sponsor sheet for the Beatson Cancer Centre Scotland and that was just what I needed! The thought of the cycle was definitely worse than the actual cycle ride. I arrived at the Falkirk Wheel to collect my bike for the day still wondering what I had let myself in for, considering I am not being a cyclist! We biked along the side of the canal, a very pleasant route to Kilsyth, and there we stopped to have our picnic. Before we knew it we were back at the Falkirk Wheel, having done 32 miles, and had a fantastic day! Would certainly recommend it – it was a great way to spend a Sunday, and I raised £900 for a very good charity! **Chrissie**





## Dates for your Diary

**UK YFA Reunion Weekend** being held in Cookstown, Northern Ireland from 28 – 30 October, 2016 – it's a sell out! Looking forward to seeing a good turnout from Scotland and, of course, to a fantastic weekend!

**YFA AGM 2017** - we have a change of date and venue for this event - it will be held at Perth Racecourse on Saturday 24 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 years exchangees, commencing 9.00 am. We hope this change will encourage more people to attend the event. More to follow.



## **Future IFYE Conferences**

### Calling all Exchangees between 2014 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 three years following their first exchange trip, eg an IFYE in 2016 could receive the contribution in 2017, 2018 or 2019
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 2014 or after, now's your chance for a discount and we all love a bargain, you won't regret it!**

**So if our highlights from Estonia appeal to you why not come to Switzerland in 2017 - from 15 – 22 July**, in the village of Vaumarcus overlooking the lake of Neuchâtel. The website is now up for the event, although the cost is not. As the weeks go past more details will be available. As usual, we will be organising a group payment early in the New Year – 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 in Greenmount College from 21 – 28 July - this will be the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, so it is sure to be a week NOT TO BE MISSED

2018 – World Conference, early September, an Alaskan Cruise

2019 – Norway

2020 – England



## **Drinks Reception 2017**

Will be held on Friday 23 June - note it in your diary now, as it's an evening not to be missed - more to follow



To the following:

Claire Aitken (Rally 2010) married Stuart Dickson back in Dec 2014; Lynsey Paterson (Rally 2011) married Kevin Robison (Rally 2009); Kimberley Webster (Rally 2015) engaged to William Mackie; Elizabeth & Russell Allison (Wales 2006) a daughter Beth; Penny (CEO of SAYFC) & Jim Montgomerie a daughter Esmay

On a very sad note, the sudden passing of **Martyn Quayle** from the Isle of Man came as a huge shock to all who knew him, especially as we had been with him in Estonia, just a few short weeks before.



Martyn was a very well-known face at all UK YFA Reunion weekends, and also had attended 3 of the European IFYE Conferences to have been held in Scotland and most of the others in the past 24 years. He was also a past European IFYE Chairman, and really was a great character at all the events he attended; he will be sorely missed.

## **Don't forget your £10 Membership Subscription**

**The vast majority have set up a Standing Order, which really helps to keep YFA in business. We do provide generous donations to the outgoing Exchangees, and without the support of our members, we would not be in a position to continue the level of donation. This year our only fund raiser is the Grand Raffle, so more and more we do depend on membership payments. So if you are still to pay, please do so now. You can pay by Standing Order, online or cheque**