



# NEWSLETTER

July 2025

European IFYE Alumni



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## Greetings from the President

**Hey everyone, sending you a big Austrian "Servus" to kick things off!**

The pizza oven's been fired up and some seriously tasty pizzas have been cooked up in my backyard – but I'll get to that in a bit...





Once again, it's shaping up to be a special summer for IFYE. We're all looking forward to the annual conference, and many of us are in the middle of last-minute prep. Travel plans are set or almost done, music requests are coming in, and people are figuring out who's traveling with whom, where to meet, and how to spend those first few exciting hours together. It's something we look forward to every year, and I'm just as excited as you are. My conference fee is paid, flights are booked, and now I'm just planning that last stretch – getting to the train station in Grange-over-Sands



Meanwhile, the organizing team has been hard at work for months getting everything ready – massive thanks to our friends in England for all the time and effort they've put in. It's not something we take for granted, so thank you! The board and I are also getting things ready for our meetings and the AGM. The Executive Committee Report is done and ready to send out, and the agendas for both the Contact Member Meeting and the AGM are prepared. We'll update anything that needs it once we're at the conference. As always, things can pop up unexpectedly, so staying in touch and sharing documents is important.

Looks like we'll only have one newcomer at the conference this year, which brings up the question – who's going to sell the raffle tickets? We'll definitely need some help, so if five to ten of you are up for it, we'd love to have some volunteers. Creative ideas welcome too! Every conference has its own unique challenges, and I'm sure we'll get through them together, like always.

On a more serious note – while we're looking forward to the conference, it's hard to ignore all the conflict and violence going on in the world right now. Recent news has been heartbreaking. One story that hit especially close to home was a tragic attack in my hometown of Graz, where innocent children lost their lives. I truly wish for peace for everyone on this planet – that everyone can live in harmony with the people they love, without fear or threats. I know the word "peace" gets thrown around a lot, but I believe we can all show what it really means to live together peacefully.

On August 2nd, people from all over the world – with different views and backgrounds – will come together again at our conference, to celebrate without borders. That alone sends a powerful message. If we can show this kind of community and understanding in our small group, maybe it can ripple out and help make the world just a little more peaceful and safer.

Peace is a process. It starts with each of us, in our hearts. It takes effort, open minds, less judgment, and owning our actions. That's my personal take on it.



Summer is in full swing, and Central Europe is going through a heatwave. Everyone's trying to cool down – lakes, pools, whatever works – and enjoying time with friends. Friends mean a lot to me, and we've already had a few great parties this summer. For the summer solstice, hosted a pizza night and made 41 pizzas – based on the feedback, it was a hit!

This year marks my sixth as President of the European IFYE Alumni – a role in what I believe is the best organization in the world. I joined the European board back in 2015 in Scotland as First Vice President, and from the start, I focused on supporting and highlighting our newcomers. Since then, we've made a lot of positive changes and improvements. Sure, not every idea was loved by everyone, and there was some pushback now and then, but I really believe we've achieved a lot.

When I became President in 2019, I imagined things a bit differently – then COVID hit and changed everything. But we pushed through, and I think we've come out stronger as an organization. We had to create new rules that didn't exist before. When we finally had our first post-COVID conference in 2022, it meant a lot. I also tried introducing some new ideas and updating a few outdated traditions – not all of which were popular – but change is part of growth.

In 2023, we had the honor of hosting the 12th World Conference in Austria. It was a huge challenge, but thanks to an amazing team, we made it a big success. Together with the European board, we've renewed and improved a lot of things over the past years.

There's one big project I won't be able to finish as President, but I've started the process – updating the Blue Booklet. That task will fall to the next President, and I'm confident the new team will carry it forward and do a great job.

It's been 10 amazing years being involved, and it's always been both a joy and an honor.



I'm looking forward to seeing many of you again this August at the conference!

Until then, enjoy the summer and stay healthy.

Much love,  
**Andreas**

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## **Are you ready for the conference?**

### **News from the England organisation team**

We are counting down the days now until we will welcome many of you for the 65th IFYE European Conference at the Castle Head Field Studies Centre in Grange-Over-Sand Cumbria.

We are looking forward to a week of great excursions in the Lake District, Cumbria, have fun with our activities, catch up with old friends and make many new ones.

Bring a good mood and good weather (!!!) and - to all those who have not yet told us their arrival time - write us an e-mail to [IFYE2025@yahoo.com](mailto:IFYE2025@yahoo.com)

See you soon, we look forward to seeing you!

Greetings from the 2025 organizing team and all England IFYEs



## Fun in the Highlands of Scotland

*written by Mary Turner from Scotland, IFYE to Switzerland 1977*



A new event on the IFYE calendar here in Scotland, was held at Kincaig Community Hall, near Aviemore in the heart of the Highlands on 12/13 April. It was a fun event to attract the newer people to come along and learn more about our organisation and what opportunities it offers. It was also an opportunity for last year's exchange group to give their presentations and to meet some of those going away this year.



Over the Saturday, 23 people joined us and eight of them enjoyed a Quad Bike Trek whilst others had a walk in the lovely surrounding area. The weather and the scenery were stunning on this brilliant spring day. We had outstanding exchange presentations from those who were in Canada, Tasmania, and Ireland as well as the European Rally to Estonia. After the meal, we had some fun games, lots of chat, and several of us camped overnight in the hall! We plan to have a similar event next spring, so get in touch and come and join us!





## Laura and Nicole's Epic IFYE Adventure

### Part 1

*written by Laura Flower from England, IFYE to Northern Ireland 2014 & European Rally Austria 2015*

When I decided to take a career break and go travelling in 2023, Nicole Doidge jumped at the opportunity to join me. Once we were two IFYEs, we knew the perfect trip would involve using our worldwide IFYE family to experience authentic rural life in as many places as possible.

#### Starting the Journey – Europe

Our journey began in August 2023. Before meeting up with Nicole, I travelled through Switzerland by train, where I was hosted by Franz Hengartner in Zurich, and Lukas Helfenstein took me sailing on Lake Geneva. I then stayed with Simone Hutter in Zell am See before meeting up with Kelly Renals and Nicole in Salzburg. We travelled together to Graz, and then on to the World IFYE Conference in Velden, where we reunited with old friends and made many new ones.



#### Exploring Canada

After the conference, Nicole and I travelled to Slovenia, Venice, and Lisbon before flying to Canada. We explored Montreal and Quebec City as tourists. Our IFYE connections in Canada came through Steedsy (a Scottish IFYE), who did his exchange there. He connected us with his friend Carolyn Doris in Peterborough, near Toronto. Carolyn then introduced us to her friend Anne Bromley, who lives in a very rural area north of Ottawa.

We had never met Anne before, yet she offered us her sister-in-law's condo in Ottawa *before* we even reached her farm! The hospitality was incredible—both Carolyn and Anne cooked for us, showed us around, and made us feel so welcome. Anne even invited us to her grandson's christening party and let us stay at their lake house! Whilst at Carolyn's another IFYE, Julie Milne took us to a demolition derby at a local show ground too. We also did day trips to Toronto, Niagara Falls, Toronto zoo and went horseback riding.





### **USA East Coast – Grapes, Crabs, and Choirs**

After city stops in Boston, New York, and Washington D.C., we stayed with IFYE host Jennifer Schmitt in Maryland. Jennifer, who did her exchange in Africa, responded to our post on the USA IFYE Facebook group. We were once again welcomed into a stranger's home with open arms!

While staying with Jennifer, we harvested grapes in their vineyard, rode the maize harvester, and enjoyed authentic Maryland crab. I even tried something called pretzel salad—it was like a trifle!

Next stop was just outside Chicago, we visited Carolyn Brummel, her husband Scott, and her mum Beth. We helped out at Carolyn's pumpkin wagon farm shop, attended a choir concert with the family, and enjoyed cocktails afterward.



### **Montana Adventures – Shooting, Sightseeing, and National Parks**

We then endured a 26-hour train journey to Montana to stay with our friend Anna Parker. Though we only crossed paths with Anna for one day before she flew to Northern Ireland, her parents kept us company. Anna's dad gave us a shooting lesson, and her mum let us help harvest vegetables from the greenhouse. Another IFYE, Matti Osterman, took us sightseeing in Great Falls and to an ice hockey game. We also visited the breathtaking Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, where we saw a bear, a wolf, elk, and buffalo.

To be continued ....



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## In Memory of...



### **Sven-Olof Andersson**

*IFYE from Sweden to USA, 1990*

Our dear friend passed away 22nd March 2025. He was born 27th April 1968. The spirit of 4H and IFYE was very important in his life. He will be missed.

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Deadline next issue: 30th September 2025

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European IFYE Alumni Association

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