



NEWSLETTER

October 2025

European IFYE Alumni



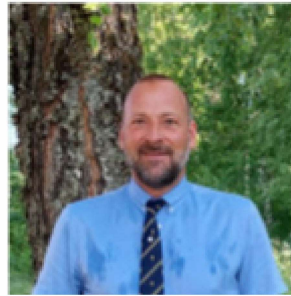
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Greetings from the President

Dear IFYE Family and friends,

This is my first greetings and message as your new President. Where does one start after being elected as the New President of IFYE Europe, it's both an honour and pleasure to lead, develop, promote and hopefully expand the IFYE programme throughout Europe and lets have fun too. .



I went on IFYE exchange back in 1995 to Australia, visiting Western Australia for 3 months and Tasmania for 4 months, I then travelled back home to the UK by ship from New Zealand which took a month over Christmas and the New Year – a kind of working cruise.

So here I am 30 years later now as President IFYE. I am married to Adrian, I'm a part-time farmer and have suckler / beef cows and sheep, I work in the Agricultural food sector as Regional Manager within NI for Noble Foods (the largest egg producer company in the UK) supplying eggs to all major supermarkets.

My free time goes to supporting Ulster Rugby and of course travelling (plus a lot of holidays).



Back in August we celebrated a great week of fun and laughter (Not to mention a special birthday too..) in the Lake District, North-West of England. I also want to take the opportunity to say a big thank you to the England IFYEs (and the others) as well as the local YFC members (for keeping us rehydrated!!) for a splendid conference, we enjoyed it so so much.



Changes in the board, I would like to thank Andi and Christine for their work as members of the board over the past few years. We welcome Jenna from Finland as the new secretary and Kadri from Estonia as the new 2nd Vice President, I look forward to working with you all over the coming months, it's easy to be President when you have so competent young board members as I have.



At this years IFYE conference representatives from all the countries present met on a few occasions and it was decided to set up a new working group to discuss developing the IFYE programme throughout Europe. The aim is to share ideas, discuss issues and problems with some countries to see if we can help / support with our huge knowledge and experience of the IFYE Programme – thanks to Tone from Norway for making this happen.

More recently I had the chance to meet the new IFYE Secretary of Slovenia while she was on IFYE to Northern Ireland, we had a great discussion about them joining IFYE – we hope to see representatives in Estonia next year.

As we look forward to the Autumn season and celebrate the great summer we had and I / we in the UK look forward to the UK YFA reunion at the end of October in my hometown Omagh, Co Tyrone. I hear there are a few Europeans, American and even as far away as Australian attending the UK Reunion, which is fantastic and will be a weekend to remember.

We look forward to the next IFYE Reunion planned for Estonia in 1- 8 August 2026, all I can say is - the message taken away for the promotional evening in England was “DON'T GO”...

All the best

Sam Hawkes

President of European IFYE Alumni Association

IFYE from Northern Ireland to Australia 1995

IFYE Conference Report 2025 - England

Written by Kate Lyons from England, IFYE to Northern Ireland 2010

The IFYE European Conference kicked off in style at The Castle Head Study Centre in Grange over Sands, Cumbria, at the beginning of August with ninety-five participants from fifteen countries in attendance! All IFYE's were greeted with a lovely goody bag that included a thermal Travel Mug. This was followed by an amazing reunion with new and old friends, and the incredible IFYE Spirit was everywhere you looked. We had Lowick YFC run the Bar in the evenings.



On Sunday the fun began the welcome service in the Chapel including a talk from Leoni Purdy R.A.B.I (R.A.B.I is a charity supporting the farming community in England & Wales) and we had a collection for the charity that was followed by all the group photos. In the afternoon visits to Sizergh Castle, Holker Hall and Levens Hall were in available. All stunning historic houses and gardens, with beautiful weather too. The activity for the evening was the Team Challenge it was making red bunting which everyone really enjoyed and was then used to decorate the Sports Hall, which we used for social events.



On the Monday coach trips options were to a prize-winning Dairy Farm (Beckside Farm, Whicham) followed by a visit to the town of Ulverston, or a trip to the Lakes Aquarium and The World of Beatrix Potter and then a cruise on Windermere, starting from Bowness-on-Windermere. Alternatively, a few members stayed at Castle Head to do needle felting and made Herwick Sheep. The evening was spent attending country meetings and Bingo Night.

On Tuesday there were three more trip options. Firstly, to a Sheep Farm (Low Beckside Farm, Mungrisedale) and J36 Auction Mart at Kendal. This group were hosted by Hector Meanwell, the NFYFC Young Farmer of the Year 2024 and Low Beckside Farm was formerly Newton Rigg Agricultural College Sheep Farm, but on the closure of the agricultural college it was bought by the Ernest Cook Trust. In the afternoon, the members were hosted by North West Auctions (NWA) at J36 Auction Mart.

The second group visited two beautiful Lakeland villages of Coniston and Hawkshead. They also visited the Ruskin Museum in Coniston.



The final group spent the day walking and wild swimming in the Lake District and completed part of the long-distance path called the Cumbrian Way. The walking guides were Ben and Becky, from the local YFC.



Albie from Farmers Weekly attended the conference in the afternoon and evening, interviewing several IFYE members from various countries. A report about the activities of IFYE and YFA was subsequently published in the 15 August 2025 edition. In the evening it was time to put our dancing shoes and fancy-dress outfits on with the theme being Wear Something Red everyone had a wonderful time, there were many different outfits even including a Post-box. We danced to music by Liz Harrison, the organist from the Tower Ballroom at Blackpool.

On Wednesday it was Show-time. We were all guests of Cartmel Agricultural Society at the annual Cartmel Show. A traditional agricultural show, Cattle, Sheep, Horses, Dogs, Rabbits, Handicrafts, Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling and vintage tractors. The main attraction was a Sheep Race, one of the sheep was called "IFYE." Everyone had a wonderful day exploring the showground at Cartmel Racecourse. After an enjoyable day at the show, it was back to Castle Head for Fish and Chips served at the Village Fryer van in the Car Park and that was followed by Home-made Ice Cream served by Wraysholme Tower Creamery from a converted cattle trailer.



In evening we had Country meetings and Estonia did their presentation inviting everyone to join them next summer for the 66th IFYE European Conference.

The final full day of the Conference it was time for the General Assembly and Tombola in the Chapel at Castle Head. In the afternoon everyone had free time and used the opportunity to either walk into Grange over Sands and explore the local area, do some packing, or have a quick nap. Before we knew it, it was time to head back into the Chapel for the Flag Ceremony with England team handing the IFYE flag over to Estonian members ahead of next year's Conference. Then time to get in our finest attire and head to the coaches to get to Olde Mill in Bardsea for a Pimm's reception in memory of Robin and Martin who are sadly no longer with us, followed by a delicious farewell dinner. Everyone danced, chatted, and had a blast until late in the evening.





It's always tough to say goodbye, but the excitement of seeing each other again makes it all worth it. One thing is for sure: it's not "goodbye" but "see you soon!"

After almost eight years in the planning and a third attempt at hosting the IFYE European Conference in England, we have done it!!

Laura and Nicole's Epic IFYE Adventure -

Part 2

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



California, Utah, and Barbecue in Texas

Two more overnight train rides brought us to Berkeley, California, to stay with our friend Lyn Scott. Lyn hosted us with beautiful meals eaten al fresco, a tour of Berkeley and San

Francisco (including the redwoods at Muir Woods), a yoga class, and even a night out to see the Barbie movie at the Castro Theatre. We tried chicken feet during Chinese food in Oakland! Fellow IFYEs Art and Joanne joined us for an IFYE breakfast at Lyn's house too.



Next, we drove from Las Vegas to Utah to stay with Mary Hansen, who connected with us through Jennifer. Her stunning home, set on top of a hill down a long gravel road, gave us gorgeous sunsets and wonderful hospitality. Mary cooked for us, took us to a 4,000-cow dairy farm, local historical sites, and even arranged a roping lesson from a cowboy neighbour! On our way back to Las Vegas, we visited a Mormon temple that was open to the public—a rare opportunity.



In Austin, Texas, we stayed with Lana Weber, her husband Alex, and their three pit bulls. Lana offered to host us through the IFYE Facebook group. The food in Austin was unbelievable—barbecue, Tex-Mex, tacos, pizza, ice cream, and cocktails galore! Lana also took us to a wildlife rescue sanctuary, a historic town market, the Texas State Capitol, and the oldest beer garden in the USA. We even tried to understand American football!



Tennessee and Farewell

After stops in New Orleans and Nashville, we had our final IFYE visit together in Crossville, Tennessee, with Linda and Don Eppelheimer. Their peaceful home surrounded by nature made it the perfect place to rest after three months of nonstop travel. We enjoyed watching birds, hiking, attending a church Thanksgiving potluck, and having slow days. I played Linda's piano while Nicole learned to crochet. We also visited Dollywood and the Smoky Mountains National Park.

From there, we flew to our final stop together—Orlando, Florida. Nicole's bag didn't arrive, so our first day was spent shopping for essentials. After visiting universal studios, Kennedy space centre and swimming with manatees, we said our goodbyes. Nicole eventually reunited with her bag in Cornwall!

Final Stop – Family Time in Colorado

I continued on to Colorado for my final IFYE stay with Kenny and Faith Kroschel and their family in Longmont. I stayed with Kenny's mum, Nanna, who was the kindest lady. I spent two weeks there, soaking up the family time I'd been missing. Faith took me to her 4H office for a day, and I spent time with their boys, Calton and Teigan—baking, Christmas tree hunting, and watching festive films.

I also attended the 4H winter social, helped decorate their winter parade float, and rode in the cab with Kenny during the freezing evening parade. IFYE Laura Schick took me to Boulder to tour the Celestial Seasonings tea factory, while IFYE Kellie Martindale brought me to an immersive art experience in Denver and introduced me to her family for board games and a college football game.

Gratitude and Reflections

The experiences we had with our IFYE hosts are ones we could never have had as ordinary tourists. These were money-can't-buy opportunities to experience daily life in different parts of the world and to connect deeply with people from other cultures.

The IFYE motto, "**Once an IFYE, always an IFYE**," truly came to life during this trip. We are so grateful to all our incredible hosts, and we want to thank them again. We look forward to welcoming them to our homes in return someday!

European IFYE map from IFYE Swiss

If you are interested to participate in an IFYE-like couch surfing, you are welcome to fill in this form to be shown on a map with all the possible places for other IFYEs to see.

Enter Only the zip code, city and your first name will be displayed on the map, not your personal data (see remarks "not public").

This information will be given to the traveller who asks for the information directly from the administrators (currently the IFYE-Swiss board).

If you would like to change the current information about you, check the link in the confirmation e-mail that you have got after filling in the form (check the spam). If you have any further questions or remarks about this project, write an e-mail to maps@ifye.ch



IFYE Local Guide / Couch surfer Map



Register as Guide / Host



Invitation to IFYE Swiss Winter Weekend

From Christine Bieri from Switzerland, IFYE to Finland 2006

IFYE Switzerland will host an other winter weekend in January 2026. This three day weekend is also open to IFYEs from abroad. We would warmly welcome visitors from all over Europe.



**IFYE SWISS
WINTER WEEKEND**

9.-11. January 2026 ON KLEWENALP
IN CENTRAL SWITZERLAND

SIGN UP UNTIL:
30. DECEMBER 2025

CONTACT:
Family Bieri
schneeplausch@ifye.ch

More Info at
ifye.ch/events



- FRIENDS, FUN AND FONDUE IN THE MOUNTAINS -

Deadline next issue: 30th November 2025

European IFYE Alumni Association

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IFYE Europe Newsletter - October 2025

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