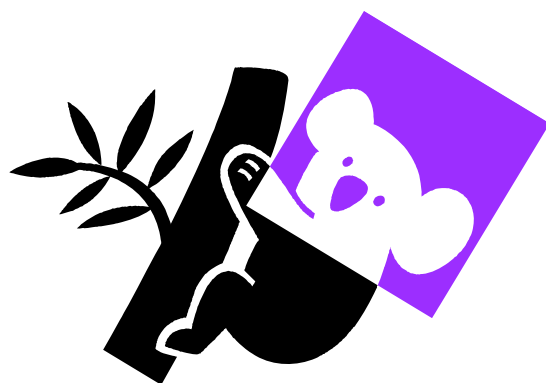


The Gumtree Gazette



**The Magazine of D9700 Outbound Rotary Youth
Exchange Students 2017**

Second Edition – Sept 2017

BY

**Anthony Taylor
Nelly Shephard
Kendra Duncan
Jack Hooper**



Anthony Taylor

*Sponsored by the Rotary
Club of Blayney
Now living in Finland*

Once again 4 months have passed since my last report. Within this time, I have done so much. Like going on my Eurotour, traveling around Finland, gone boating around Kotka and much more. It's been summer time here, so I've been up about exploring my town Kotka and different towns nearby.

The Month of May



The month of May was a pretty interesting month. It was pretty jam packed of all different things, mainly school. May is pretty much the start of the Finish summer which means that everyone starts to do things outside. All the summer sports start up, like soccer and golf.

Early May I went for a walk with my oldie Morgan around a river and came across a cottage that was originally built by Russians to come fishing in the summer time. After this I took Morgan to the golf range to try and teach her how to play golf. This didn't really work but it was great fun

anyways.

A few days later I met up with my oldie Morgan again and went with rotary to get a tour of a paper factory that has just invented a cup that is 100 percent recyclable and can hold liquor. Sadly, I was not allowed to take photos of the facilities.



On the 5th of May I went and watched one of my friend's soccer games. Sadly, they did lose 3-1.

I went on a walk at a local park with 2 of my Finnish friends and play on the gym equipment and just chilled all day and enjoyed each other's company. Later on, that day we went and played volleyball and watch a competition.

School was fun because I was just doing sport, art and music all the time. It was something I could do and was quite good at it. I taught the art class how to do aboriginal painting and taught the PE class how to play AFL. It



was quite funny watching them try to play it. On the 22nd of May, I changed host families from my first to my second. I was happy when I moved because I did not gain any extra bags. On the 27th and 28th I attended a band camp at Hamina to practice my bass drum playing and marching for Meripaiva. It was really fun and differently something I will remember.

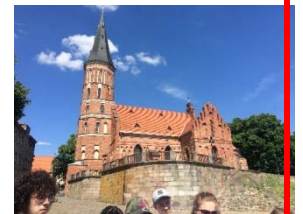
The Month of June



June was a very fun and exciting month. The reason being is because my Eurotour happened in this month. It was amazing spending 2 weeks in Western Europe with all my exchange friends. We went to Tallinn (Estonia), Jurmala and Riga (Latvia), Kaunas (Lithuania), Warsaw (Poland), Krakow (Poland), Ostrava (Czech Republic), Vienna (Austria), Prague (Czech Republic) and Berlin (Germany).



We took a boat from Helsinki to Tallinn and they took a bus to the rest of the trips until we got to Berlin where we flew back to Helsinki. When we flew back to Finland my luggage managed to get sent to France and took 1 week to get back to me. Most of the time was spent in a bus going between countries and/or getting tours around the city. We also got to have free time in every country/city except for Tallinn. In the free time, I had in the cities, I hired bikes with other exchange students and biked around the cities. I managed to cycle 95kms around Berlin in 1 day. But my favorite city was Prague. It was absolutely breath taking and pretty. Here are some photos of the trip. There will be more at the end of this report.



I have also gone bush walking in local forest, blue berry picking and biking as well. In June, Finland celebrates Mid-Summer. At this time, everyone escapes to their summer cottages near a river or sea. Here they stay up all night drinking

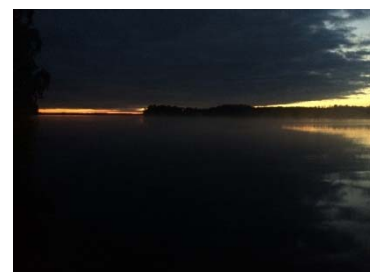


and sitting around a fire plus socializing.

I traveled to the town of Imatra where I visited one of my oldies and went sightseeing around there. I also cooked Cob Loaf for them as a thank you gift for hosting me. Soon after this I traveled to Lappeenranta to see 3 of my oldies, went to one of my oldies Farwell party. Also,



went and watched the new transformers. After this I headed up more north to see another oldie before they left. Here I went explore Mikkili and made lamingtons with my Italian oldie.



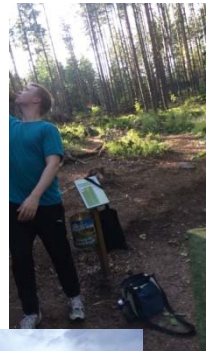
The Month of

July

The Month of July was for sure a month to remember. It was also a sad month because all my oldies started to leave back to their home country. Within this month, I went Frisbee golfing with my host brother Otto where he gave me a flogging.



2 days after his I went to Helsinki to see off one of my oldies at the airport. But we first had to go to the theme park in Helsinki. This was great fun. But at this time, I also met one of my grand oldies that was in Finland in the years of 2014-15. She joined us at the theme park. After this we went to Helsinki center and had dinner plus a few photos with some Finnish police. A few days after this, my host brother decided that



he wanted to move back to Kotka from Jyvaskyla. So, I decide to go up there and help move, but also go exploring the lovely city.

On the 10th of July, 2 massive cruise ships turned up at Kotka bringing 10,000 people to Kotka. This was great fun because the town

had free tours around the town in little buses.

Over the past months, I have been practicing in a marching band to play at an open ceremony for Meripaiva (Festival by The Sea). Here I played bass drum. There were about 40,000 people watching the parade.



Meripaiva was a great event that happened between the 12th and the 16th. Here there was music, tall ships, international market and lots of drinking. It was estimated that a total of 400,000 people came to Kotka over these 4 days. I also met up with some Australian Exchange Students that were staying in Denmark but came to Finland with a tall ship from Denmark. They also gave me a tour of the Danish Ship.



Since summer was here, my 3rd host dad decided to take me and his wife boating for a day around Kotka and the nearby islands. Also, went to an island and had pizza for lunch which was great. The following day, my host mums brother decided to take me out to sea in his boat which was great. We stop at an island and created a fire to cook our sausages for lunch. My host mum also came and Oscar our dog.

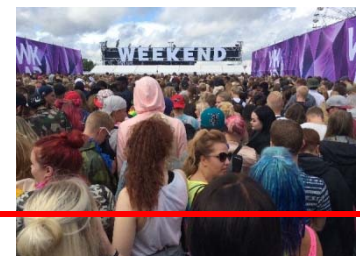
I went blueberry picking with my host dad in a forest that was bout a 20-minute drive away from where we live. It was very nice and peaceful. It was great because the sun was out and it was about 22 degrees.



The Month of August

The Month of August was pretty jam packed full of adventures and moments to remember.

I started the month doing the usually things, like walks in the forest and bike riding and what not. But a few days into august, I head down to Helsinki for a WKND festival. Here I met up with majority of the Australian exchange students and



some of my Finnish friends. The WKND festival was a 2-day electronic music festival. It was absolutely amazing and had artists from all around the world including Australia. Australia's artist was Pendulum Live.



On Sunday, the 6th of August, all my newbies started to turn up at Helsinki airport. I went to Helsinki airport to greet them all and help rotary keep them in line while they were waiting for their buses to Karkku (language camp).

A few days later I went to the movies with my Finnish friends to go watch Baby Driver. After this we walked around

Kotka at 1am. Where we just talked, and made fun about all different things.



About a week later I help my counsellor build a wall at his new house to keep the snow from getting on hi ATV and wood that he had stored for winter. After a hard day's work, he took me boating and took me to an island and went exploring around it.

On the 11th of August, it was a very nice day so my host mum decided to take me for a drive to show me where she grew up as a child and where her school was and all that.



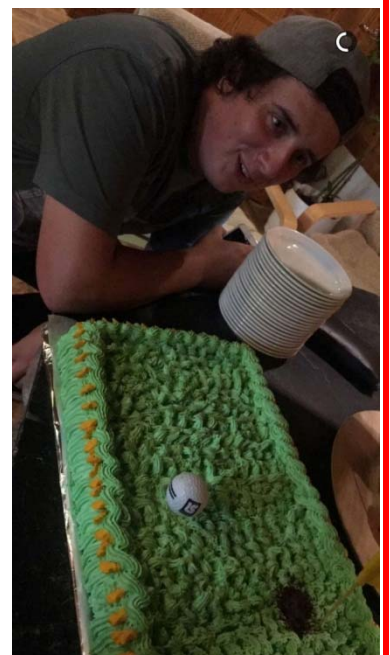
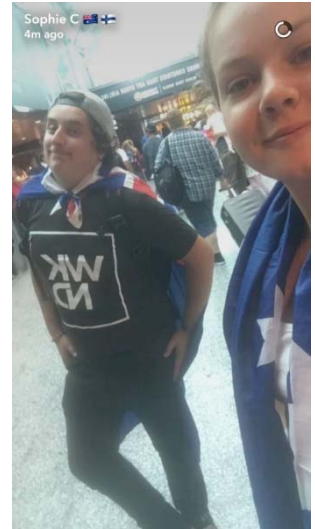
The following day I headed to Lappeenranta to go meet up with a rotex for the day and cook them some Australian food. I cooked them a Cob Loaf, Sausage Rolls and Pavlova. All the results were spectacularly and they loved it.

At this point I have just started school again and my days are starting to get full. Which is a nice change. On the 14th I met one of my newbies that is staying here in Kotka. Her name is Emma and is from Spain. I help her with picking her school subjects and started to show her around the school plus Kotka itself.

Well on the 15th of August, it was my birthday and I woke up to my host parents singing happy birthday and carrying breakfast into my room for me to eat. Sadly, I still had to go to school but it wasn't that bad. A couple of days later I had my birthday party at a local restaurant and had dinner and cake. After that we all went for a walk and then came back, went to sauna and then went sea swimming. It was cold.

1 week later my host mum had her birthday and her party. This got very interesting because it was a 50th. So, there was a lot of speeches, eating and drinking. Later on, the night there was drunk karaoke which made the night funny and interesting.

A few days ago, I went to play golf with my counsellor and a few other Rotarians. It was a very so game and took us 6hrs to finish 18 holes.



Kendra Duncan

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Orange

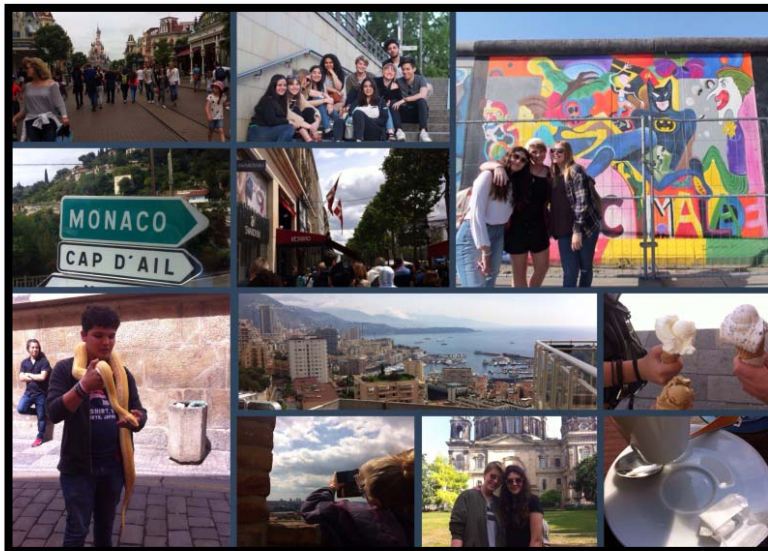
Now living in Denmark

Ra in Denmark

Months in Denmark: 7

Eurotour. Where do I start? It's hard to believe we were just a bunch of teenagers on a bus taking around Europe. Eurotour was a journey. It was figuring out how far you could walk in a day around a big city. It was finding who you could stand to be around for eighteen days straight. It was all the corners of the Earth coming together to laugh and to cry and to sing Bruno Mars songs together until we fell asleep to the rock of the bus. Brazil, Mexico, Columbia, Paraguay, Australia, New Zealand—you name it. Eurotour was a journey I will never forget. Our bus definitely wasn't the best. Our bus driver almost wedged the bus under a bridge. The bus broke down at a toilet stop in the middle of the Czech Republic for four hours. Our tour guide acted like a ten year old sometimes. Someone lost their phone at a shopping centre. We stopped at the top of Monaco for five minutes to get pictures then left again. Someone who was late to the bus had to catch a taxi back to the hotel in Vienna. Sunburn in Italy. Pizza on the water in Venice. Thrift shopping in Paris. Vegan festival in Berlin. Honestly, ours was the best bus in the end.





Exchange is bittersweet like that- but it's worth it.
Kendra Duncan, YEP 29221

Exchange student life is something else. The friends you make on such trips as Eurotour come and go so quickly yet they made an impact on your life bigger than some of the people you've been around all your life. You don't sign up for a year abroad. You sign up for a big family.

Eventually you have to let your new family go, and you aren't quite sure you will ever get the chance to go to cheap kebab place with them again.



Nellie Shephard

*Sponsored by the Rotary
Club of Wagga Wagga
Sunrise
Now living in Sweden*

The past 4 months have been crazy busy, chock-full of so many trips and activities. But obviously what you want to hear about is The Euro Tour, so let's start there!

We started in Malmö down the south of Sweden, 35 students and 6 adults all packed into one bus. We drove across the bridge into Denmark and to a ferry that would take us to Rostock in Germany, where we would then make our way to Berlin. The hotel had a lovely view of the city and I spent most of the time perched very dangerously in the window. In Berlin our bus took us along Unter den Linden Boulevard and we passed several famous buildings such as the Staatsoper and the Berliner Dom. We also had a look at the remaining parts of "Die Mauer", the wall that divided the city during the Cold War, the artwork was amazing and everyone took plenty of photos.

Then we continued on to Cracow, Poland, which was absolutely beautiful, all the houses and the streets and the flowers and our hotel was especially beautiful. And that night we had a traditional Jewish dinner, with live music. The band was incredible and almost everyone bought an album, one of their songs even became our EuroTour anthem. We explored Cracow on foot, visiting the alleys where "Schindler's List" was filmed, and after lunch we visited Auschwitz. Auschwitz is something I will never forget, for as long as I live. In every room it was eerily silent and there was always something that set your teeth on edge. Eva Korsz, a twin who survived being tested on by Joseph Mengele visits the camp every year and it just so happened that on that particular day, when we were there, she was also. It was an incredible, awful experience.

Next we spent a day in Bratislava, Slovakia, which was also very beautiful. A quaint little city with plenty of streets and unique shops, and we had all made it our mission to get ice-cream in every town, as it was pleasantly hot the whole trip. We walked to a large and impressive palace and learned the legend of the dragon who was slain by a common man, after who the town is named.

Then we hopped on over to Zell Am See, to our resort which was beautifully situated between lake Zeller, one of the cleanest lakes in Europe, and the mountains where Schmitenhöhe is the highest peak (2000m). We were all extremely excited to hike up the alps and we all agreed it was one of the best experiences. Although it wasn't lovely and sunny, it wasn't totally miserable, only raining a little. But after our hike we made our way

back to the lake to have a swim. It was very clear, a lovely turquoise that let you see all the way to the bottom and it tasted very fresh. The only thing is, it was glacial run off, which means it was freezing! The second you stood in it your ankles numbed and froze, but we had to get a photo, so the group of us ran out, all screaming at the poor girl on land to "Take the bloody picture!!" That night everyone was sore and tired and I became the group's personal masseur.

As we went on to Italy we took a turn and passed through Ljubljana, Slovenia, for lunch. It was small and relaxed and lovely and warm as we ate pizza and ice cream.

Then we crossed over to Italy, the surroundings changed and the north Italian plain welcomed us. We arrived at our hotel in Lido de Jesolo, which sat only 5 minutes away from the beach. And Oh! My! God! That beach! It had the softest sand I've ever felt and the night was warm and the water pleasant and it was a great bonding experience for all of us. And close to Lido de Jesolo, just a short boat ride away is the sinking city of Venice. Unfortunately, Venice doesn't like people using a guide that isn't one of their own so we had to pretend that we were simply an unlikely group of friends (which we were) all deciding to meet back at the same place. Our tour guide allowed us to walk around in groups and advised us to make our way to the Palazzo Ducale with the famous Bridge of Sighs and the Basilica di San Marco. And lastly we all went on a gondola ride, of course! It was breathtakingly beautiful and the perfect day for visiting Venice. Heading back to our hotel for the night we got ready to leave for France the next day.

We had to stop at Chambéry, France before making our way to Paris. Conveniently there was a pool and we all agreed this was the best hotel. We were sad to only spend one night there. Leaving early the next day, we continued our journey until we reached Paris late in the afternoon. Then it was a quick freshen up before we were traipsing through the streets to our French dinner. A small, but delightful hole-in-the-wall restaurant was where we had our meal and we were entertained by a live pianist. Though perhaps, he was entertained by us, as we all got up and had a sing along. The next day we finally got to explore Paris. We all tried to get to as many places as we could, the Eiffel Tower, the Champs-Élysées and the Notre Dame. It was wonderfully warm, which I loved but it was a relief to get into the cool of the book store Shakespeare and Co. which has been a bit of a dream of mine to visit. So that's one thing of the bucket list! Another delicious French meal, a walk past the Moulin Rouge and then an early night and our very exciting day came to a close.

Nearing the end of our trip we passed through Brussels, Belgium, on our way to Germany again. It was only a few hours that we had but we all managed to get plenty of chocolate with enough time to spare for lunch. We ate Belgium's speciality of fries and mussels and it was delicious. We also took a quick stop at the statue of the Manneken Pis, and let me just say that some of the chocolate figurines you could buy of him were the same size.

Lastly we stopped through Essen, Germany on our way back to Sweden and we threw a party. We all showed our countries 'talents', us Aussies decided to simply show we were the toughest of all the countries by eating Vegemite and then making other people eat it too. There was singing, showing of films and signing of flags, a few heartfelt speeches and tearful goodbyes.

Then when we were all safely in Malmö again, the watergates really opened and the sobbing started. Some of us would never see each other again and these people were all so important to us, it took a long time for us to let everyone go.

Then when I got back to Nyköping, I had changed families, and my new family is very good, a brother, a sister, a mum and a dad, and we all get along well.

And about a month later, after the holidays had finished and the lovely warm weather had

started to disappear, no more picnics, summer houses or swimming in the ocean, I had another trip! This one was just a little bit up north to Åre, where we got to meet the new exchange students from the Northern hemisphere and spend a weekend hiking, axe throwing and paddling. The lake on which we paddled was incredibly beautiful, even when I was soaked through, and the view we were greeted by made the hiking totally worth it. And on our last day they took us to the main mountain in Åre, and it was freezing on the way up but I did it, through all the pain from hiking the 3 days previously, and the view was astounding.

Everything has been going well at school, everyone is excited as we prepare for the Autumn Concert, which my class is writing all by ourselves. I am having a wonderful time, even if I only have 4 months left in this amazing country.

Not long to go now! Will be seeing you very soon,

Nelly Shephard



Berlin Wall



On a marshy walk



Åre Wild Camp – hiking up mountain the view going up

Austrian Alps

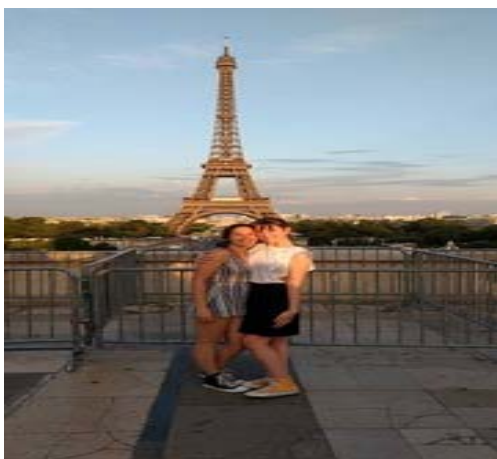


River Zell Am See

Aussie girls



Don't let them deceive you
... it is freezing!!



Eiffel Tower



Le Louvre



Jack Hooper

*Sponsored by the Rotary Club
of Young*

Now living in Taiwan



Editors Note:

*Unfortunately Jack is
AWOL somewhere in
Taiwan and has not
submitted an article.*

*I am sure he is most
apologetic to his
family, fellow students,
D9700 and sponsor
club.*