



YFA TRAVEL DOCUMENT

Seeing the world with the YFC Discovery Programme

NAME: Louise Frost

CLUB: Ashley YFC

DESTINATION: Germany

TYPE OF TRIP: European Rally

DURATION: 1 week

DATES OF TRAVEL: 2007



DESCRIPTION OF TRIP:

I was lucky enough to be selected as one of five people to represent England in Germany for the European Rally 2007.

After making my way to Gatwick Airport by train, I met the rest of the team. Unfortunately due to the flooding two members of the team could not make it so out of the five there was Jacamina Wakeford from Bedfordshire, Katherine Sealy from Dorset and myself.

The flight to Cologne took 1 hour. We were met there by the German Rally leaders. They took us to the Rally meeting place at an Agricultural college in West Fallen. We were shown to our dorm rooms and then too the bar to meet the other 20 other teams of countries from all over Europe!

On our first day we were asked to dress in our National outfit for the opening ceremony. As England does not have an official one, we had planned what we were going to wear a few weeks in advance, we chose summer dresses. The ceremony was a great way to be introduced to all the countries and was really nice to see all the National outfits.

We then had a tour around the college, they kept pigs, beef and dairy cows. We were unable to see the pigs, but had a tour around the dairy. They had an automatic milking machine, and the cows were kept in all year round.

That evening we made a display, including pictures of our local counties, we then prepared food for the international buffet. We chose the theme and English picnic, so we had each brought different things for this. We had cream cheese and cucumber sandwiches, lots of different cakes and Pimm's and lemonade. Once we had put all our things on display it was time to sample all the food and drink from the other countries, many had brought lots of different flavour shots this was a great way to meet people.

On Monday we went to a city called Munster, we had a tour of the city. Then we had some free time to look around. We left muster to go to a BBQ, at the house of the head of German agriculture. This was a brilliant evening the food was really nice and so was the beer! I think it all tasted so nice because it was all free! Eat and drink all you want! We left the BBQ at 1am and arrived back at the college at 2am, the party carried on until the very early hours.

Tuesday came and we were divided into groups, we then joined in with different kinds of team building games indoors. Later on we went outside in our groups; we circulated to different activities these were almost like ice breaker games. In the afternoon we had the option to join different discussion groups all linked to rural youth Europe. This was interesting to hear different stories from people from all over Europe. In my group there was a Latvian Pumpkin farmer. That evening was the international performances, each country went on stage and did a song, dance or skit this was really good entertainment.

On Wednesday we had the opportunity to choose a group seminar I chose to join the group discussing different forms of communication. This was really interesting as the majority of the people in the room spoke English as a second language. In the afternoon we had some free time to socialise with the other teams.

We left the college early on Thursday, our first stop was at the Claas World Parts Centre this was an excellent tour and was really interesting. Next we went to a local beer factory! (Young Farmers!) This was good and we had buffet and beer after. The last tour of the day was to a dairy called Ravensberger. Here they packaged milk, made cheese, yoghurt and ice cream, and after the tour we had samples of the ice cream! We then travelled to the town of Hallen West Fallen, here myself and a girl from the Welsh team met with our host family for that night and the next day. The host family lived on a farm they kept 1,000 pigs and only 40 dairy cows. They were very welcoming and took us out for a meal then back to the farm, we were both in need of an early night!!

The next day the family made us a traditional German breakfast. We were then taken to 3 different towns, we had chance to do some shopping and see some local sights.

That evening we went back to the college for a BBQ, a chance to thank the host families and to say goodbye.

On Friday we did some communication games, and some more team building exercises. On Friday evening teams dressed in their National dress again and we all attended the fare well dinner. We were wined and dined, and it was an excellent display of German hospitality. The Chairman of Rural Youth Europe spoke, and then we had a guest speaker from a local Farming Organisation. We then had the presentations and the official closing of the rally, this was all covered by local television stations.

The food was lovely and the atmosphere brilliant. It was then time to say goodbye and to thank our German hosts.

We packed our things, and got onto the coach at 5am for a 2 hour bus journey. We then had to get the train to Cologne. We were lucky as one of the German Rally leaders escorted us to Cologne, and then he was kind enough to give us a tour of the city. We visited the Cathedral this was spectacular after climbing 400 steps to the top for an amazing view!

We then made our way back to the airport for a 1-hour flight back to Gatwick. We arrived home exhausted after an action packed week.

I would like to thank Young Farmers for their support with the organising of this trip and the preparation for the interview. I had an excellent time on the Rally and felt privileged to be on the team. The Germans had been wonderful hosts, and I had the opportunity to make friends and learn about different countries all over Europe. I would highly recommend travelling with Young Farmers because it is a great way to travel and to make new friends.

Louise Frost