

Katharina- is enjoying her stay!

Katharina Kleimt reporting
for **Solingen-Klingenpfad**
Rotary Club, Germany

Dateline: - August, 2005

Location: - **Glen Innes**
Rotary Club, Australia

G'Day mate' It's me,
Katharina!

I just wanted to write my report to you, so...

I really enjoy my stay here, I feel very comfortable
with my host family!

Especially that the weather is so great here gives me
every day a good mood!

I didn't feel very homesick yet, even when I miss
me family and friends, what I think is quite normal!

At school everything is fine ,too!

Actually I'm at school right now!

I don't have to do so much here, so that the whole
year will be like holidays for me, which I really like
!:))

Yesterday one of the Rotary members invited me to
go sheep sharing... that was maybe a bit smelly, but
hips of fun, so that I will go tomorrow directly
again!;))

Everybody is really nice and friendly here, and even
when Glen Innes is a very little place I beginn to
love it here!

I like it that everybody knows each others, and that
so many people greet you when you go down the
street! So as you can see there are no worries at
all! Since now I had a wonderful time, and it seems
very much to continue... .when you will hear from
me next month with more news, hope you are well,
many greetings from Glen Innes,

Yours

Katharina

ps: please excuse my mistakes,... I guess there much
be many in here:;)!!

**Christopher- is a bit late!**

Christopher Hohn
reporting for **Bielenfeld**
Rotary Club, Germany

Dateline: - September,
2005

Location: - ?? Rotary Club,
Australia

Dear Mal,

My monthly mail is a bit too late (sorry for that) but
here it is...

In this mail we should write how we are what we
have done in the last month and so on... I'm great!
Being in exchange is connected with so many
wonderful experiences. People you have never met
before are so nice to you, you are independent and
have to choose the you want to go, to decide what's
right and what is wrong. You have signs but no
special way. I love it!

After the fantastic weekend in Yamba I had one
week to go to school before my 4 weeks long spring
holidays could start. In the first week I went up to
the Gold Coast to meet some of the other exchange
students.

It is so much fun to undertake trips with the people
who are from places all over the world. So many
different languages, cultures and certainly persons.
We went surfing almost every day and enjoyed the
warm Australian sun.

I was just 2 days back home when my second trip
started. The following weeks my host parents took
me with them in the snow. Outward bound we flew
to Melbourne stayed there for one night and went
than straight to Mt Hotham. It was a strange feeling.
On one day I was still surfing at 25 degrees and on
the next day I stood on a snowboard at 2 degrees.

Australia is so manifoldy. The following days in the
snow were great. I took my first lessons since a
long time, learned some new trix and also tried skiing
again, which was a lot of fun. Homeward bound
we stayed for one night in Adelaide. There I could
meet a friend from Germany and experience another
for me unknown city.

We flew back on my birthday. I could choose the
dinner for this night, got a cake and some presents
and phoned with my parents. It was a different but
very nice 17th birthday.

After the Gold Coast and the snow, three weeks of my holidays were over but I still had one week to go. In this week I accompanied my host sister to her year twelve school formal in Brisbane, went a few times to the beach and bought my own surf board. A 6'9" second hand board from a local shaper. Genius! That were my lovely holidays. I am so glad that my host parents enabled me such a nice trip and I also could meet some of the exchange students again.

Last week was my first week back in school. I changed some subjects and have now a better timetable with a view to my time back in Germany.

Hence I do extension maths, chemistry, advanced English, PE, modern history and photographie. Additionally, I do a surf life saving class on Monday afternoons and the weekends to be allowed to go surfing with school. Just yesterday I had my last training session at the beach. We had to run to swim and to run 200m. And this all under 8 minutes. I finished the course in 10 minutes. Good that it was not the exam yesterday. Now I have time to go training in the pool...

I changed my family yesterday as well. I can't say so much about them but they seem very nice at first view.

Yours sincerely

Christopher

P.S. Will you come to the meeting in Grafton?



Lara- this trip was different!

Lara Kleimeyer reporting for Muenster Rotary Club, Germany

Dateline: - September, 2005

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Australia

Hello Mal!

My holidays are over now and I just went back to school today. In my holidays I went camping with my host parents and friends of them up at Monto at a National Park. Normally, camping isn't new for me because I went camping every year with my family on an island in Germany, but this trip was different. We stayed at a camping ground about 45

min from Monto and there was just bushland and a lake around it. We stayed there for a whole week. We went fishing, kajaking, bushwalking and one day we drove to Biloela. Every night there was an "outdoor cinema" at the camping ground. We also went bird-feeding and there were a few kangaroos around the caravans. It was a very good week. In the second week of my holidays Peter, a Rotarian, took me up to Brisbane to show me the city and Donations in Kind. That was a very interesting day. On the other days I met Eve from Finland, Sandra from Sweden and Monica from Mexico and I did some stuff for school. On Sunday I moved to my second host family. They have 3 children (8, 12, 13) and they are all very nice.

My little host sister (8) already doesn't went me to leave in January.

At the moment we have APS. That is a sports competition between all the 7 or 8 private colleges at the Gold Coast. I chose Tennis, and we won our first game before the holidays. Next Friday we'll have our second game.

Now we have 9 weeks left before our summer holidays start. I will have the opportunity to go to Sydney and Melbourne for 2 or 3 weeks. I'm really looking forward to that! My host family also wants to hire a houseboat in the first week of our holidays.

Hope, you are well!

Bye, bye,

Lara

Christopher – Has Settled In!



Christopher Hohn reporting for **Bielenfeld** Rotary Club, Germany

Dateline: - October, 2005

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Australia

Hello Mal,

Again is another month over and again the month was full with new experiences. Here my report:

In my last report I was just arrived in my second host family. Now I'm already settled in and look back on a few very nice weeks. My new host family, specially my host brother, is very surf fanatic. Most of the weekends we went at least one time surfing

and it really helped a lot. I get more and more practice on my surfboard. Today I crossed the first time a wave on my short board. Surfing is so much fun...

At school I'm very happy about my new subject choices. I'm learning a lot more in my advanced than in my old standard-English class. Also to take chemistry for business-studies will be usefully for my chemistry class in Germany next year.

I think I did tell you in my last report that I'm doing bronze certificate for surf lifesaving. After three month having classes on Mondays and on weekends we will have our exams next week. On Wednesday we have to do the theory and demonstrate things like EAR and CPR.

Finally on Sunday we have to do rescues and a "run swim run" and are than hopefully holder of a bronze medallion. When I came to Australia my swimming was alright but not good enough for lifesaving. So, the last month I was training 3 times a week in the pool to improve my swimming.

Hopefully I'm now fit enough to do the "run swim run" under 8 minutes.

I'm still enjoying the ocean and the nice weather a lot. I'm so happy about going on exchange by Rotary, being in Australia, being in district 9640. It's great!

I'm looking forward for meeting you and all the other exchange students at the outbound briefing camp in Mt Tamborine next month.

See you there,

Christopher

Jacob – Fresh back from my tour!



Jacob May reporting for **Parkwood Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - October, 2005

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Germany

Hello leute!

I'm fresh back from Germany tour and about to start school again next week, so here is wats been happening. I have just had 2 weeks holidays and they were both as awesome as each other. First



week I spent with Kristie, where she missed her flight, it was an exact repeat of my little disaster earlier in the year, I guess it just runs in the family. But our week was awesome, went to Amsterdam, and I would have to say it was my second favourite so

far, so beautifully set out, another good thing was that u could walk all over the place, its not massive like Berlin or Paris. But there were alot of random people there and the prostitutes behind the glass doors in the red light district, we can just say the first one we saw gave us a bit of a shock hahaha, almost wet my pants with laughter, haha.

Second week was the Germany tour, Matty hooked up with us in Bremen and got straight into the groove of things, we had a funny little group of guys, and some really good times, teaching josh from Taiwan a few things about the life of an exchange student.

We had three nights in Berlin, it was my third time in Berlin and every time I see something new that I like, its an awesome city. Also went to a place called the 'Car city', it was all the companies from VW, so like Audi, Lamborghini, seat, Bentley and a few others. It was awesome it reminded me of the telly tubbys land, alot of really random and interesting buildings and special effects.

So I'm on the home straight of my year, sometimes I think I could just come home now, to my friends and family, but other times I think no way, my life here is amazing and awesome, but it will fly so cant waste any more time sitting on this computer.

I miss u all cant wait untill we meet again

Lots of love

Jacob

Jacob – Only two months left!



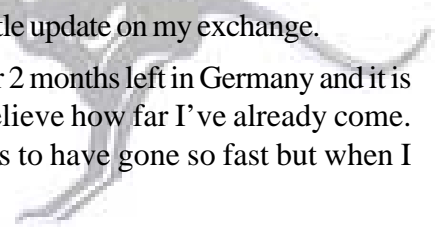
Jacob May reporting for **Parkwood Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - November, 2006

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Germany

Hallo leute, a little update on my exchange.

I have just under 2 months left in Germany and it is quite hard to believe how far I've already come. This year seems to have gone so fast but when I



really think about all that I have done, it has been a long and busy year.

I am living with my third family now, the Groppes. They are ok, then only bad point is the live out of my town Esens, where I go to school and have all my friends and former host families, this makes everything just that little bit complicated. But a friend of mine said I could live with her, so I am trying to change families at the moment.

The winter is settling in, it was 5 degrees today, so I'm feeling the cold again. It also means darkness at 5 o'clock, that is something I won't miss when I'm back in Australia.

I am writing the German tests with my classes now, so that is great, I am speaking fairly fluently, but writing is a whole different story. The grammar is so complicated.

I have a great group of friends and I really feel apart of the community. My town is really small, which is hard in some ways, but great in the fact that everyone is so nice. I love my town, that's why I want to move back so badly.

I have 4 weeks left of school then I experience a German Christmas, the Germans are really into Christmas, soon the Christmas markets start, so in most cities there are markets with decorations, food and presents. Apparently it's pretty amazing, we will see.

Next weekend I'm going hunting with Rotary, so that should be interesting. Apart from that I have nothing planned in the way of big trips, I just want to spend all my time catching up with the exchange students and of course hanging out with my German friends.

So I'm really happy, no complaints from me, this program is flawless, I just hope that they don't become too strict on travelling, it seems to be the case and I think that would be a real shame if we weren't allowed to travel out of the district or country.

So all the best liebe Grüße



Lara – I forgot to write!



Lara Kleimeyer reporting for **Muenster Rotary Club, Germany**

Dateline: - November, 2005

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Australia

Hello Mal.

Sorry, I forgot to write you the monthly mail for November. Here is my report for November =)

November: At the beginning of November we had our Inbound weekend in Grafton. Sandra from Sweden, Franz from Austria, Reese from Canada and I caught the Bus down to Grafton together where we got picked up. We got to know our host families and Buffy and I stayed with a family whose daughter is going to Germany (Frankfurt) in January. The next day we went to the markets and decorated the truck for the Jacaranda Festival Parade. There was a special truck for all the Exchange students. We started the Parade and it was really great. But after some time it started to rain and we had to cancel the parade. We went back to the place where the markets were, all wet and cold, and we had dinner and after that we did bush dancing. It was really good and we all had a lot of fun. We got picked up from our host families and the next day we did water activities. It was great to see everyone again and I love spending time with all the other exchange students. We also had our last APS Tennis match in November and our group (open A) won the premier ship.

I had my Rotary Presentation on the 14th November and it went really well. I had a Power Point Presentation with lots of pictures and they all liked it. We had our Celebration Evening (or awards night) the next day and I got an Academic Endeavour award. At the end of the week we had the Year 12 Graduation. It was a bit sad because I have some really good friends in year 12 at my school and I won't see them at school anymore.

I also visited a friend of mine from Germany in Brisbane. It was really good to see her on the other side of the world.



Christopher – It's a bit late!

Christopher Hohn
reporting for **Bielenfeld**
Rotary Club, Germany

Dateline: - December, 2005

Location: - ?? Rotary Club,
Australia

Dear Mal,

Again it is time for the monthly report. I am sorry for its delay but here it is:

Again I can look back on a wonderful month with many new experiences. In December there was the in - and outbound meeting in Mt Tambourine, the start of the big summer holidays, Christmas and finally New Years Eve.

It was a restless but very nice month.

Once again the Rotary meeting was highly successful. I think all of us enjoyed the mix between learning and having fun a lot. I am glad to see the next meeting coming soon.

A friend from Germany visited me in the first week of my holidays. He was on his journey back from his half-yearly exchange in Auckland. I was very pleased that my host parents allowed him to stay even over Christmas. Together we had a strange but very nice Christmas here in the heat of Australia. My first host family invited us for dinner on Christmas Eve. With my present host family we celebrated on Christmas day than. We didn't only get nice presents; we also learned once more something about Australian traditions. We celebrated the same feast but on quiet different way to ours in Germany.

One week later we had the next highlight. Together we caught a bus from Ballina and after 12 hours on the bus we arrived in Sydney. There we did the normal sight seeing like walking on the harbour bridge and having a look at the Opera House. On New Years Eve we decided to meet some Rotary exchange students from Sydney. And who was there: no one else than your exchange student Stefan. So it came that we partied together with some other exchange students in year 2006. We watched the amazing fireworks from the opposite site of Darling Harbour. It was a perfect place. It wasn't too crowded and we could see the Harbour Bridge with the Opera house in the background. I think it



probably was my best New Years Eve in my life. It was fabulous!

At the moment Maxime is for a visit at my house and from Saturday I will be for a week in Yamba. After that I already move to my third host family. I still can't believe that the half of my exchange is quiet over now. It all went much too fast.

In the course of this or the next week I will send another travel form to you. My next host family plans to go to Bundaberg in the last week of my holidays.

See you at the next camp

Kind regards

Christopher

Lara - I'm having a really good time!

Lara Kleimeyer reporting
for **Muenster** Rotary Club,
Germany

Dateline: - December, 2005

Location: - ?? Rotary Club,
Australia

December: We got holidays on the 2nd December and our

Inbound/Outbound weekend was on the 3rd and 4th. I got to know the rest of all the Outbound exchange students who are leaving in January. I've met most of them before.

We had a lot of fun. It was my Birthday on the 4th December and we all stayed awake till midnight and they sang Happy Birthday for me. I also got a big Birthday Cake from my host mum and Trigger=) After the camp I had some in and Outbounds coming over to my place to celebrate my birthday and some of the Rotarians from my club came over as well. It was a really great Birthday.

My host family and I went out with a houseboat the next day and we spend 5 days on the water. It was really relaxing not to do anything... =) I spend a lot of time with a friend of mine who is going to Belgium in January on exchange, because it was my last opportunity to see her before she is leaving. It is a bit sad, because she is a really good friend of mine, but I hope to see her in Europe in 2006.

I spend Christmas Eve at my Counsellor's house and we went out with the boat. It was really different

to have a hot Christmas. I didn't really get the whole Christmas feeling, but it was a good experience. I spend Christmas day with my host family and my host sister and my 2 host brothers woke me up at 5.30...

I went over to my 1st host family on Boxing Day and I got to know my host sister who just came back from Japan.

I'm having a really good time and everyone keeps me busy so I don't really have time for homesickness, which is good.

I wish you a Happy New Year!!!

Lara

Ebony – I am only 13!



Ebony Anderson reporting for **Burleigh Heads Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - January, 2006

*Location: - **Fribourg - Sense Rotary Club, Switzerland***

I am only 13 days into my exchange and I have already realised that this is the best opportunity I have ever been given in my life.

So far I have been able to do things that I have only dreamed of doing and seeing. Just being able to go overseas by myself – without my parents was an experience.

Sure it is hard to say goodbye at the airport but you don't feel sad just excited about your trip ahead. The plane trip is long and at some stages very boring, but what keeps you going is the fact that you know that at the other end of the plane trip a world of experiences and adventures awaits you.

The moment my plane landed I felt my heart jump as I now realised that this is real and happening. The first few days are a blur as everything is new and exciting and you have to try and take everything in as well as getting over jetlag.

My first two weeks have been jam packed. I have not had a minute to spare, I am always doing something and everything I have done so far I have enjoyed thoroughly. I have been able to see the snow for the first time in my life (I don't remember seeing it when I was little so it doesn't count.) I have

also had the opportunity to learn how to hike in the snow and also to learn how to ski.

Twelve months ago I never would of dreamed that in twelve months from that date I would be on the other side of the world in the snow! I have also had the opportunity now to go holidaying with my host family to Grächen (which is in the south of Switzerland, near the Italian border) for their annual ski week holiday. I am so excited as now that I am learning how to ski I will be able to take part in their activities.

My host family has also been so great – I couldn't have asked for a better host family. They are so excited to be hosting a student from Australia (a country they loved so much they went on a 3 month holiday to it a few years ago!) My host family also wants me to be able to experience as much as I can on my exchange and have really helped me so far by integrating me into their family routine and weekly activities. For example, on Friday nights my host sister and host father go rock climbing up the inside of a 15th century tower in the middle of my hosting city – Fribourg. They took me along in my first week as an exchange student. I had never rock climbed before and was very excited. They helped me get arranged and then I went climbing. I made it three of the walls and half way up the 4th (it was very difficult and I was very tired from using muscles I never knew I had!!) I have now found a new sport that I like and can't wait to go again.

I have found the Swiss culture different from Australia, however I like it and it is my personal challenge to learn their language (which is German and French in my town as it is bilingual and also the Swiss German that they speak at home, which is completely different from good German). I am excited and am looking forward to the coming months and the new adventures I come across. (*Ebony – that's the magic of the YEP program. Ed!*)

The Rotary program is excellent as it has allowed me to make friends with people from all around the world and I know that even after my exchange year is over I will still keep in contact with them!!!!



Ebony – I can Ski!

Ebony Anderson reporting for **Burleigh Heads Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - February, 2006

Location: - **Fribourg - Sense Rotary Club, Switzerland**

Well, I can definitely say now that being an exchange student is the busiest thing I have ever done. Everyday I have something new happening, a new place to visit, new words I am learning, people I am meeting. And even though by the time I go to bed I am almost dead from being so tired from filling my day with new and exciting things I am also really excited and happy with what I am doing as I love it and it doesn't matter how tired I am as long as I am loving what I am doing that is making me tired!!!!

I also love all the new experiences you have the opportunity to do. I for instance have had the luck to learn how to ski and then go on a one week skiing holiday to the south of Switzerland. It was one of the best and most fun filled weeks I have ever had. I even got to go down the Mogul piste which is so much fun and challenging too.

Also, just going to the school, even though at first it is difficult with not being able to understand everything that is being said – it is the friendships you make with the people at the school which makes you want to go. It is also really interesting in the classes to see how they teach the subject and how the school and classes operate – I am not sure about other people but my school is really different from the school in Australia – but in a good way of being different!

I love being an exchange student and wish just like all of you probably do too, that every teenager could have the chance we do to go on an exchange!! (*Just think what a wonderful world this would be – if everybody had this opportunity – and learnt from it! Ed!*)

Ebony

**Heidi – I am here!**

Heidi Clare reporting for **Mullumbimby Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - January, 2006

Location: - **Charleroi Porte de France Rotary Club, Belgium**

Hey John and Claudia,

Well all is well here, I am doing very well. The trip was long and exhausting...I hardly got any sleep. So when I arrived I was really tired.

My host family are really nice people, but they speak hardly any English, which is difficult for the both of us. My French is lacking a lot. I need some tutorials in French.. Hopefully as an after school thing. I have a host brother called Bastien he is 15 and a host sister Romy she is 9. Romy speaks no English. I am going to help Bastien with his English, cause he has an exam on Thursday..

I start my first day of school on Wednesday... And I finish at 12pm; then in the night I go to my first Rotary meeting. How exciting. Hopefully make lots of friends...at school.

Belgium is so lovely, yet cold. I have to put on lots of layers of clothes...

Well just emailing to say HELLO and that I am safe and well...

Love from

Heidi

Steven - Bonjour!

Steven Adams reporting for **Jimboomba Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - February, 2006

Location: - **?? Rotary Club, Belgium**

Bonjour,

I have finally made it. The flight was long and tiring, but I'm here now in my town called Embourg and I'm freezing my tosh off. At the moment it is -12.

My host family are very nice and I love them to bits already. They are a very social family and they have guests every Monday night for dinner. I have made 6 new friends in the neighbourhood, and I have been playing soccer with them in the afternoon. I am fitting in very well and the French is coming to me slowly. I am very happy. I start school tomorrow, and that will be exciting. And on Wednesdays they

have half a day, so that's really cool. I have chosen my subjects that I will be doing at school. I only have to do 22 hours of school a week. Math, English, Religion and French classes are compulsory. I had to choose another language class, so I have chosen Spanish. I have also chosen sport and economics.

So far so good. I will keep you all informed and will talk to you soon. Cheers Steve

Steven

Tarran – Just a quick note!



Tarran Beavis reporting for **Ballina on Richmond Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - February, 2006

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, France

Hey, just a quick note to say that I have settled in here quite well, my French is not very good but my host family speak a bit of English, so our conversation is half French half English. My town is amazing, and my host family are very nice and very friendly. My house is cosy and behind it are mountains and in front is a river. *(So – you have a room with a great view! Ed!)*

It is pretty cold here it is -4 here today, and my host mum said that if it snows in the next two weeks they will take me skiing! I have never seen snow!! My flight was very long, I had about 25 hours on the plane and about 9 hours at airports. But it was not too bad I made heaps of friends.

Well I better go, my host parents lent me a bike so that I can ride into town and have a look around because they are at work.

Best wishes,

Tarran

Ebony – I can officially say!



Ebony Anderson reporting for **Burleigh Heads Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - March, 2006

Location: - Fribourg - Sense Rotary Club, Switzerland

Well I can now officially say that I understand what the old exchange student said about being so busy and having new things to do and experience on a daily and weekly basis. I love it though and wouldn't trade any of the fun experiences I have had yet.

I also got to go on a Rotex camp this month which was heaps of fun because it gave us a chance to meet up with other exchange students that we hadn't seen in a long time due to them being on the other side of the country, but also with exchangees that haven't been to the other Rotary events. The best thing I have found so far is how open people are. Not only the exchangees but also the people in the school. They people in the school had only known me one week and then it was my 18th birthday. They had all asked when it was but I didn't expect them to remember or do anything as we had a holiday for the Fasnacht. But when we went back to the school they had a cake and some small presents and some even joined in and sung 'Happy Birthday' for me – in English!! This made me feel so welcome into their school and friendship circles even though I had only been there for one week!

Ebony

Sian-Alana - How time flies!



Sian-Alana McGee reporting for **Warwick Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - March, 2006

Location: - Bordeaux Rotary Club, France

Salut mes amis – hey my friends!

How time flies, it's been nearly two months here in France and about time for another update! Hope this finds you all studying and working hard but managing to find some time to relax too!

It's been a very busy month, life as an exchange student is never boring! Have been getting used to the school routine, the early starts but comfortable early finishes! The weather is starting to get a little bit nicer, so it's light when I go to school. I'm still not understanding virtually anything my teachers are talking about – they talk too fast and rarely write notes on the board!

As you may have heard, the political scene here at the moment is wild! It's all a lot to do with industrial relations, similar to in Australia, but young people are really passionate about it too. As a result of all the protests and strikes, called 'manifestations', for the second week in March I had two whole days off school! I attended one of the manifestations in Bordeaux, along with 50 000 other people! It rained and we didn't have umbrellas, so we didn't stay for long but I slightly felt as though I was doing my part for the Left wing here on the other side of the world! Last week there was a 'bloque' at school, which meant school was closed all day!

Have been doing a lot more exploring of Bordeaux with my new French friends and also the three other exchange students here. At the moment there is a huge faire at Place Quincones, where I have had good and bad experiences! The Ferris wheel is great for a nice view of the city and some nice photos, but some of the other rides are less enjoyable. One of the many Haunted Houses put me off ever going again, being grabbed and prodded in the dark – I felt so violated! Can you imagine doing that as a job?? And the bumper cars, oh la la! People pay 4 Euros for the chance to violently ram people guilt-free. I think it's the destination of anger management classes, an opportunity to release all your frustration. I spent the five minutes trying to avoid everybody else to save my neck and spine from fatal damage. No wonder the sign at the booth says 'We take no responsibility for injuries sustained during this ride'. But overall the fair is great fun!!

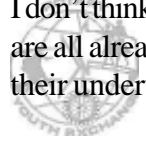
Went to the movies to see *Les Bronzes 3*, the third instalment in a French series (the first one was made in 1968) about a group of friends who get up to all kinds of mischief on holiday together. Even though I couldn't understand everything that was said, I caught the thread of it and it was quite funny, though I don't think they could make another one, the actors are all already in their 50s, so don't look so great in their underwear anymore! I have also been out to

coffee (and actually drink coffee, which is always an espresso here, it's so strong!) with my French girlfriends and we went dancing at Victoire – the Bordeaux version of Surfers Paradise – the other night, which was great fun.

Was also very luck to go to another soccer match with my host dad: Bordeaux versus Toulouse. Because the two cities are geographically reasonably close, there is a lot of competition, and so to avoid fights etc, the police patrolled the streets around the stadium and the Toulouse supporters section of seating was sealed off by barricades! Apparently it will be even tighter for the Bordeaux – Marseille match (which I'm going to yay!!)!! Luckily, Bordeaux beat Toulouse 2-0!! Allez Bordeaux! Earlier that day I ate at the most popular restaurant in Bordeaux, 'Entre Cote'. They serve only one menu: salad (literally a few lettuce leaves and some walnuts) followed by steak and frites (chips). The steak is ribs, but they take the meat off the bone for you! Despite its simplicity, the meal is very, very good. So good that people queue for 40 minutes outside in the Bordeaux cold to get a table!

Have also attended quite a few Rotary meetings and activities this month, though still am yet to see much community service being done!! Went with Frederico, the Brazilian student, to his club meeting, Rotary Club of Bordeaux West and witnessed the induction of their first female member! Apparently one member was so against it that he left the club! Also went to a Trivia Night which involved all the clubs (about 8) of Bordeaux. It was quite fun, there were some questions about Australia and some other geography ones (thanks Ms Edwards and Ms King) that I answered correctly, though my table came second last!! Have been to another couple of meetings with my club and feel very welcome there. It's good for my French too because the old guys always talk lots!! Last Saturday I went with my host mum and dad to a local shopping centre to help hand out flyers about Mental Illness Research fundraising. I think it's a very worthwhile cause, but it was two long hours of being ignored and avoided by people and when they take a flyer, I had no idea how to explain in French!!

Finally, I have been very lucky with my host family because they have taken me somewhere new in the region every Sunday! I visited my first chateau (castle), 'Roquetaillade', built in 1307!! The interior



was amazing – so lavish – and apparently it was redecorated in the 1800s by the most famous French decorator of the time! The next weekend we visited Langon, a small town about 40 minutes from Bordeaux. We went for ‘Fete de Cochon’, the festival of the pig, because my host parents are fanatic about pigs!! It was a bit of a let down, just some huge (and not very pretty) pigs sleeping in their pens! So we went to St Macaire, a medieval town just down the road. Had a delicious lunch at the ‘Medieval Restaurant’ (including a dessert called the ‘Gourment Plate’, meaning the food lover’s plate! After lunch we explored the city on foot, the highlight of which was the church. Every town here, no matter how small, has a huge, lavishly decorated church! They really are very beautiful. After St Macaire, it was Verdelaize and St Croix de Mont (two more churches)! Last weekend we went to the beach! It was just like home! The town is called Lacanau and it’s the French version of Byron Bay or Noosa. And there were lots of pubs, all serving Fosters beer and displaying the Australian flag – made me feel so patriotic!! There was even a café called the Ayers Rock Café, with a mural of Uluru. Though have no idea why the Australian theme here, maybe just because of the beach and surf??!!

Last but not least, this weekend was my first Rotary YEP weekend with all the other students in the district. It was held at Biscarosse, which is a tiny little beach holiday town. There are about 30 inbound students from USA, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Finland, Norway, Japan, Mexico, Equator and Brazil. There are five other Australians, four girls and one guy. It was so soothing to hear the Australian accent again and fantastic to meet a great group of people who are all in the same boat as me. Everyone talks English too which is a nice break from French. The weekend was very full on, we did some sightseeing (visited the biggest sand dune in Europe, though it’s nothing compared to Fraser Island!), did a little showcase presentation for all the Rotarians (Australians did ‘Give me a home among the gum trees’, with actions which we made the audience do too – see photos!), partied long into the night (I had a total of six hours sleep over the two nights!) and prepared for the Fête du Students, a big entertainment night in May where we all present special items from our country. Made some lovely new friends and even though I

was nearly falling asleep in class the next day, it was great fun!

So that’s probably quite enough for now! Hope you have all found it at least slightly interesting and like the photos – do you think I’m starting to put on weight from the French food yet??!!

Would love to hear from you all when you get a chance!

Bonne semaine! Have a good week!

Sian Anna xxx

Tarran – Spring has started!



Tarran Beavis reporting for **Ballina on Richmond Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - March, 2006

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, France

Spring has started and the weather has started to warm up - there are even some flowers blooming in front of the fountain in the middle of town which is now flowing again after a snow encased winter.

Now that winter is over people have started leaving their houses and there are more and more things happening in my town of Millau. On the 11th of March I celebrated the carnivale of my town - it was so different to anything I had ever seen back in Australia. It was a celebration with the same idea as the carnivale of Venice (with the masks), but a lot smaller – oh, and a lot less water!

In my town they blocked off all the streets in centre ville and everybody dressed up in costumes and the whole town walked together like a big parade through the streets. There was a few marching bands playing jazz and people walking with stands carrying heaps of blow up balloons for the little kids, confetti was flying everywhere and every now and then you would get a nice spray of coloured string in your hair. The theme this year was bird flu and so a lot of people dressed up as sick chickens and the float was a giant chicken. We followed the parade to Millau’s open parking lot and they placed the chicken float in the middle. I didn’t know what they were doing but I had my camera ready. After a few minutes of getting the chicken in place they set it

alight and it went up in flames so fast, and when it was almost all burnt we all joined hands and skipped around the ashes.

The night of the carnivale there was a huge concert in the town park. The opening band was a French heavy metal band, it was certainly different!

There is just something that doesn't mix with the romantic French language and heavy metal music, but they were followed by a French ska band called "Les Cameleons", and they were really good.

In my town there are markets every Wednesday and Friday morning and on the 3rd of March there was a huge market in my town that took up all of centre Ville. Access was blocked off for cars and the town was packed with little old French ladies, tourists and market stalls everywhere - it was exactly what I imagined typical French markets to be like, and I even saw the stereotypical French man, with a baguette under one arm, a beret on his head and a thick moustache. It was great! I took a photo!

This month the cinema celebrated "Printemps au Cinema" where entry is only 3 Euros and not the usual 7 Euros. (That translates to \$5 instead of \$11.50) It lasted for three days so I took advantage of the cheaper tickets and went three days in a row. I saw "Le jour du lendemain", "Toi et Moi" and "Toute le beaute du monde".

After being in France for 2 months it is becoming a routine of making a tarte for dessert every Saturday. I knew that the south of France was very Catholic but I have only just noticed that here we eat fish every Friday. Speaking of food I had my first Souflée and when my host mum opened the lid of the pot all of the family, including me, gathered around and watched to see if it fell, and it did. I also tried veal intestines, which were surprisingly pretty good, after the initial shock that the French eat that, but I am becoming more accustomed to the different eating habits here in the south of France. One night I sat down to dinner and there was a flower in the middle of every plate, I was about to comment on the table decorations when my family started eating them. That was another shock for me, but it was good! I think it was a dandelion - it is that one that is yellow and it also has the white round ball type thing that little kids pick and blow into the wind and all the little pieces go flying everywhere - I still don't know why we ate them though!

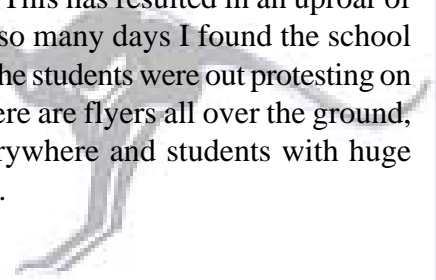


After visiting a small town called Sète, on the Mediterranean Sea, with my host family I tried their specialty food called a "Teille Tart" which is a pie made from lots of different kinds of seafood in a tomato sauce. It didn't taste like anything I had tried before, but I liked it just like all the other food here in France! At Sète my host family took me to the beach for the first time in France and the first thing I did was took off my shoes and went running in the sand. I got a few strange looks and I noticed that I was the only one without shoes on, it could have been because it was still winter and it was about 10degrees Celsius outside, but for me you can't be on the beach with your shoes on!

Back in my town of Millau I saw a kayak competition and there was an Australian who had come all the way to compete, but I didn't get anytime to talk because I was going to be late for sport. Which actually wouldn't have bothered me because in sport we were doing endurance running - not my strong point. After close to 3 months of eating just about all the cheeses and pastries in France, and doing no sport, I was definitely not the best at endurance running and so I was quite happy to be back in the school foyer playing Foosball with my friends.

My first host family took me to Larzac to see the old castles, and living in Australia and never seeing a castle before I was like a Japanese tourist with a camera. My host mum also took me to Villefranche to see the hundreds of years old houses and the huge Cathedral, and that was where I tried Rabbit for the first time.

School has not really happened this month and statements like "RETRAIT DU CPE" and "NON AU CPE" have been ringing through the street of Millau and all over France. CPE is law that has been passed and has gotten many people upset. The law in short says that people can't receive job security until they have been working at one job for 2 years. This means that someone could work at one place for 1 year and 363 days and the employer can tell them they are fired or "laid off" and not have to justify why. This has resulted in an uproar of protesting and so many days I found the school "blocked" and the students were out protesting on the streets. There are flyers all over the ground, posters up everywhere and students with huge cardboard signs.



Very Les Miserable! I was expecting to see the guillotine wheeled out of some dusty shed and set up in the ville as a special treat for the minister – actually, I’m glad it wasn’t because many French are SO passionately against this law they probably would have used it.

I am finding life here very different to back in Australia and that is what is so special about my experience. I am still having a fantastic time!

Au revoir,

Tarran

Ebony – Deine Englisch ist Kaput!



Ebony Anderson reporting for **Burleigh Heads Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - April, 2006

Location: - **Fribourg - Sense Rotary Club, Switzerland**

Well after waking up this morning and freaking out that it is already May and I can’t believe the time has flown and I now have to write another monthly report. In the past month I got the chance thanks to two weeks holiday for Easter to get out and explore Switzerland with friends from school and other exchange students. I love the GA (which is the transport pass given to a few lucky people in Switzerland which gives us all public transport for free!!) So this month I have been and explored the cities and cultural differences of cities far and wide across Switzerland. I have been and experienced a real ‘International’ city aka Geneva where the United Nations and International Red Cross are located. I was very happy and excited when I got to have a guided tour of the United Nations building – definitely the highlight of the trip!! Then over the next two weeks I visited 9 other cities/towns across Switzerland! (*Wow! Ed!*)

My success stories this month (although I am not sure if I think of it as success..) but my host family said to me ‘Deine Englisch ist Kaput’ when I couldn’t read out loud a English newspaper they had, which means my English is terrible, but the success that I see is that my German has improved to the level where I only use English (less than 10 words per day to communicate) and all other times

it is in German!! So that is good but I hope my English doesn’t get really bad... I don’t want to forget my own language!! (*Kursteilnehmer sagen dieser der höchsten Punkte, träumt auf Deutsch! Ed!*)

I am loving the Swiss culture and love all the new places and people that I get to meet. I hope that time will slow down just a little bit so I could have even more time here! Time is moving at a supersonic speed for me!!

Ebony

Heidi – My Trips!



Heidi Clare reporting for **Mullumbimby Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - April, 2006

Location: - **Charleroi Porte de France Rotary Club, Belgium**

This month I went on a number of trips out of Belgium.

The first one was with Rotary and exchange students to Normandy-France. We left 1st of April and returned on the 5th. There were at least 45 exchange students on the trip, all from different countries. The first two days were history and about War, on the Normandy beaches. We visited a number of beaches, one of many was Omaha. The next following days we visited Benedicte - French alcohol. We were able to have a sample of it, but didn’t taste too wonderful.

Other visits to the Apple Cider making farm, which has been owned by the family for 200 years. Also a visit to a farm which makes cheese - Cheese fabrication. It’s been running for 30 years and the cheese tasted delicious. The highlight of the trip was visiting the beaches and visiting the war museum, I found it to be very interesting.

My next trip was to England for the day with my friend and her host father on the 9th April. We took the ferry to Dover (harbour port for ships) and then drove to a place called Canterbury and Sandwich. We had a walk around the village, of Sandwich, it was small yet beautiful and cold. Next we drove to Canterbury, where we ate lunch and walked around shops, we never got the opportunity to go to the

Cathedral, we had missed the opening times, so instead we walked around the shops. My friend and I got a free ring from the market, that was one of the highlights of the day.

My third trip this month was again to England on the 29th-1st May with my school. There were two classes combined together 6eme and 5eme students. It was a trip to help the students to improve their English and as a history tour. We visited a number of beautiful and very interesting places in England such as Salisbury Cathedral, Roman Baths and a tour of Bath itself, Stonehenge, Eton College, Windsor and Kew Gardens in London. We stayed in Bath roughly around 1 and half from London to the west. (*Heidi, I have to ask, 1 and a half what? From London. Ed!*) The first day involved a visit to Eton College, where the Princes of England used to go to school. Then the next day we had a tour of bath, the city and then Roman Baths. After that we went onto Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral. The next day was just a visit to Kew Gardens in London and then back to the ferry to go home.

I think that the highlight of the trip was visiting the Roman Baths, Stonehenge and Eton College.

Heidi

Jackie - I was in Holland!



Jackie Van Den Bos
reporting for **Alstonville**
Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - April, 2006

Location: - ?? Rotary Club,
Germany

Dear Sue, Mal and the members of the Rotary club or Alstonville.

Moin moin!

Well the holidays are just about over... I go back to school tomorrow. I really don't want these holidays to end... I'm having far too much fun. I really don't know where to begin. I can't remember what I told you last time I wrote.

I was in Holland at the start of the holidays....we went to the coast (me and my host family) it was really nice but I must say I have never worn so many clothes on the beach before in my life. I have also

been to cologne and I saw the huge cathedral and the chocolate museum but I'm not sure if I told you that or not. I've also been to countless castles and palaces and ruins and gardens that it's impossible for me to give you details of them all.

But you can sleep soundly knowing that I am enjoying myself completely!!

The past three days I spent with my host family in Würzburg... I fell in love with the city. I don't think I have ever seen a place I like so much. We visited cathedrals and the Residenz and the castles there and went shopping and ate soooooo much good food that I never wanted to leave. My host sister, Diane, studies there so I will be able to visit her when I want to.

My German is improving. However it is a much slower business than I was hoping for... ha ha. My German teacher is really great. She is from Russia and German is her second language and English her third. We don't have many lessons left but my host dad wants to ask the Rotary club if I can have some more money so I can complete the course.

I don't like to say it but I'm still having trouble getting in contact with my councillor. He is a very busy man (doctor). Because he is so busy it makes it hard to keep in contact with him but we are still trying.

in school I have been put into a year 12 English class... so I'm with people my age and I have already made friends with a few of the people in the class.

Spring I think is finally here (a month too late)... but it is worth it.

The flowers are beautiful and the trees are getting green and the weather is warmer... so I'm happy.

I will be changing host families in a month... I don't want to leave this family... but I'm excited still. I think we are going to organise a meeting with them so that I meet them before I move in... hopefully.

For now I think that is all of my news. Thankyou for all of the post cards again! I really enjoy getting them and my host family think that the pictures are lovely.

Thankyou so much for giving me this opportunity.

I'm having a ball.

Jackie



Sian-Alana - Three months already!

Sian-Alana McGee
reporting for **Warwick**
Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - April, 2006

Location: - **Bordeaux**
Rotary Club, France

Three months already can you believe it?? For us all it was the month of Easter (too much chocolate) and holidays (though more for some than others!). I hope you all enjoyed the break, even if it was only short!

This month my family decided to desert me for three weeks and make the thirty hour long voyage to Australia, to see their son who is on exchange in Mount Gambier! Though I was daunted by the prospect of staying with more foreign French people, I actually had a really enjoyable time! For the first weekend I stayed with my host aunt Véronique and her family. I have three host cousins there: Zachary (21), Inès (18) and Ilias (13). Inès and I get along really well, so much so that we now call ourselves 'real cousins'! On the Saturday I got to play tour guide for two other exchange students (Kiri, Australian and Ryan, American) who came to Bordeaux. They live in a very small town about an hour from Bordeaux so were craving a day in the big city! We passed the time shopping in Rue St Catherine, climbing the torturous Tour Pey Berland for a beautiful view of the city, attempting to scam a Merry-Go-Round operator by explaining that one ticket is for all day in England (!!), going to the movies, basking in the sun at the Jardin Publique and visiting the Australia Bar for the first time. I loved the chance to show off my new city!!

As you would have probably heard, the following week France was disrupted by national strikes which meant school was closed and I ended up with three weeks holiday! Everybody has something to say about the 'CPE', though me, not really understanding it, am just glad they are talking about something other than the Bird Flu! So while I stayed with my host dad's parents who have an apartment right in the centre of Bordeaux! This gave me another different perspective of France and Bordeaux, living with an 'older generation'. Had my first 'Class Dinner' at a nice Italian restaurant and enjoyed an aperitif (strictly non-alcoholic of course!) beforehand with my very

French, very chic friend Louise, soaking up the late sunset and Bordeaux atmosphere. The city really starts to come alive in spring, it's awesome! Spend the rest of the week going to Rotary, catching up with the other exchange students before they head off on their bus tour of Europe and doing things with my host grandparents.

Have my first French church Sunday visit with my very Catholic host grandparents at the town where their other country residence (à la compagne!) is – St Jean D'Illac. It's the weekend before Easter so the service is for Rameaux, not that I can understand anything! After the service we have lunch at a host Uncle Vincent's house, he has six children!!! As you can imagine, my extended host family is very large, there are six children and seventeen grandchildren with another on the way!

The following week I'm back at Véronique's and spend most of the week with her and her friends because Inès is studying hard for the 'Bac'. In France, Terminale (year 12) is ten times more stressful than year 12 in Australia, so holidays simply mean more work and more stress! I see three movies this week, including Asterix with host cousins Ilias and Louis; a kid's movie and I still can't understand it! How embarrassing. For the Easter weekend we spend Saturday at Vincent's house for the birthday celebrations of host cousins Amelie (21) and Baptiste (18). All the family is there and I have now finally met everyone! Coming from a family totalling Mum and I in Australia, this is a big change; one that has made me want to have a big family of my own, though not for a while yet! Saturday is all the family again, but this time at the grandparents' house. The three youngest cousins delight in the searching of the garden for Easter eggs, and everyone receives something! Another huge but delicious meal follows, which I compensate for by playing with the younger kids in the garden!

The following week I'm off to Barbazieux, a very small town about an hour north of Bordeaux, to stay with my host mum's parents. Here, it's just me and them, so a big change from all the activity of the last week! Though the town is pretty, there really isn't much for a seventeen year old exchange student to do, so we spend most of the week visiting some French sites! We spend an entire day in the Loire Valley (can you believe it, I was only an hour and a half drive away from Paris??!!) visiting chateaus.

Chambord: the biggest chateau after Versailles (which they promised me they will take me to another time!) built by King Francois the first, who never stayed there for more than twenty days! Then Cheverny (my favourite) which has a pack of hunting beagles (twice the size of normal beagles) living on site and was lived in up until the 1950s. Lastly was Chenonceau, a chateau whose construction was overseen by the wife and mistress of the king at the time! It has beautiful gardens and is built over a river. Another day we went to La Rochelle, about three hours north of Bordeaux. I fell in love with the city, with its seaside architecture, yacht-filled harbour and cafes by the water! Summer is truly on the way, the sky is clear and the sun is hot!! If you ever come to France, La Rochelle is certainly a place to see!

Last weekend was the Rotary District Conference at Cognac, a very pretty town which was birthplace of King Francois the first (who built Chateau Chambord). Have to do a little self-introduction in front of five hundred people and as usual am stressed out by the pronunciation of the word 'accueilè' (welcomed), but all passes smoothly and by the end of the day I have invitations to Biarritz (on the beach near Spain!) and Arcachon (a beautiful bayside town north of Bordeaux), so it wasn't a bad day's work!

My host family arrived back tanned (or 'bronzè' as they say in French!) and relaxed from their holiday in Oz last Sunday. More huge meals out and about, one with all my host cousins (those over 16!), which really makes me feel part of the family! And then a dinner with my host mum and about ten other Rotary wives from my host dad's club. Since then I have started back at school, though it's only another six weeks until three months of summer holidays, so I'm not complaining (Eurotour with all the other Aussie exchange students, then three days in Paris with my host family!!!) This weekend, as a way of celebrating the long-anticipated arrival of Spring here in Bordeaux, we are having a Student Exchange picnic at the Jardin Publique and I'm off to the house in the country for the long weekend!

So life here is still good – the sun is finally shining and I'm starting to warm up again! Hope the sun is shining for you all too! Have a good month and would love to hear from you all if you get a chance!

Bisous et à bientôt!



Sian-Alana xxx

Sian-Alana - Three months already!



Sian-Alana McGee
reporting for **Warwick**
Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - May, 2006

Location: - **Bordeaux**
Rotary Club, France

Bonjour everyone!

Month after month is just flying by so quickly, I want things to slow down! May has been another very busy month, starting with two long weekends in a row! Have started some new French lifestyle things this month: riding a bike and playing badminton! As the weather is much more bearable now, the occasional bike ride is quite enjoyable, never mind that I fell very embarrassingly in front of a tram stop on my first long ride – haven't fallen since! I use my host mum's bike, which she bought when she was 14 (and she has kids my age!) and is a very attractive metallic green. But it's good fun and very French! I started badminton with a couple of friends from school and it's quite good fun, not too serious either which suits me well! Racquet sports are really popular in France, even table tennis is cool.

On one of the long weekends I visited St Emilion, a small town half an hour away from Bordeaux. It's home to the best (and most expensive) wines in France and also macaroons, yummy little biscuits which were more in my price range. Before it became famous for wine, St Emilion was known for being one of the oldest French villages, settled in the eighth century!! There is an amazing underground monolithic church with tombs, where I saw a real human skull, which was not so pretty.

As it's coming up to the end of the year school year here, my French for foreigners class had a class dinner one Friday night. Imagine ten non-frenchies in a French restaurant trying to read the menu and safely order! And we don't all speak English, so French is the only language we can communicate in, very funny! Luckily with French food, everything tastes good so we were all happy.

Biggest highlight of the month would have to be the soccer match of Bordeaux versus Marseille. It was the last match of the season, and the most hyped up – because Bordeaux and Marseille are deadly enemies when it comes to soccer. So much so that

the Marseille supporters who came were only allowed (not sure by who!) to come into the city for the match and then it was straight back to Marseille! Their buses were accompanied by police entourages both before and after the match, and luckily it was 1-1, so no real reason for violence! The game was followed by fireworks, it was a perfect night! Overall, Bordeaux came second in all of France!

Another biggest highlight (can't decide which is better!) from the month was the Fête de Students, a big dinner and showcase put on by all the inbound students in the district. In theory, it is the last time all the students see each other before leaving (because all the northern hemisphere students arrive and leave on the northern summer); and also a chance for us to meet all the French students who will be going to our countries in a couple of months. There were about three hundred people, so quite a big crowd! The Australians (seven of us) performed 'Give me a home among the gum trees', and managed to get the entire auditorium up to copy the actions – all the French love the Australians! The night didn't finish until nearly 2am and was very sad for all those who are leaving soon. I had three other students stay at my house for the weekend too, so am still suffering from sleep deprivation!!

Apart from that, have been doing the normal routine things: going to school, going to Rotary meetings, spending time with my host family (immediate and extended!) and generally enjoying myself! Looking forward to a four day weekend this weekend, off to the beach for the big family reunion, then one week left of school before the long, long, long summer holidays!! Head off for Eurotour (France, Austria, Germany, Italy and Switzerland!) on the 3rd of June and then have two and a half months of summer holidays to fill with partying, travelling and a bit of relaxing! This is the life!!

Hope once again this finds you all well and enjoying life. Please keep in touch and let me know how you are going!

Love always,

Sian Mana xxx



Heidi – Spring has sprung!



Heidi Clare reporting for **Mullumbimby Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2006

Location: - Charleroi Porte de France Rotary Club, Belgium

Bonjour John, I am going very well actually, exams started last week, and so I did my English exams on Friday and today...

My back is holding up strongly at the moment, I went to the doctors last Thursday and he said that it was looking beautiful. I am allowed to play sport, so my host sister and I go to the gym, and tomorrow I am playing tennis against a family friend. I am scared she is apparently good...

Hahah but its all for fun...

Oh yes they are all heading home, here they head home after the Euro tour...

So in July, and they are all scared and sad. Yes and I knew Julien was going home. But I'm not sure when Charelotte will be home, but when she does I am sure I will get in touch with them and catch up also...

Well Euro tour is in 6 days, very very excited and its going to be an awesome experience and the countries and places we are going to are superb... so really excited...

Hope you and Claudia are safe and well, and I shall email after the Euro tour, because I am going to Germany to visit Jackie Van den Bos on Wednesday and we arrive back together in Belgium a day before the tour... So I won't have a lot of time. But happy and safe holidays for the both of you.

Thankyou, for your support.

Heidi



Peter – The best Days!

Peter Matheson reporting
for **Surfers Paradise**
Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - June, 2006

Location: - **Oulun**
Eteläinen Rotary Club,
Finland

I'm nearly half way into my exchange and half of the exchange students are going to be going home.

The time I spend with these people will fast become the best days of my life.

Remember to give it your all... you only get out of it what you put into it.

Peter

Sian-Alana - Warning!

Sian-Alana McGee
reporting for **Warwick**
Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - June, 2006

Location: - **Bordeaux**
Rotary Club, France

Bonjour again everyone!

WARNING: This report is very, very long because of the two weeks I spent on Eurotrip, just letting you know! Feel free to skip large chunks when bored!

So for you all at home in Australia winter has well and truly started, but some consolation – most of you are on holidays at the moment I think! Here in the northern hemisphere we've had the reverse change of seasons and summer has brought with it holidays and festivities!

The last weekend of May was the much anticipated Schieber Family Reunion! One hundred fifty people ranging from eight months to eighty! Never before had I seen so many people all stemming from the one set of parents! It was a great weekend: we ate, drank, laughed, soaked up the sun for the first time in ages and even did a high ropes course! My personal task for the weekend was to remember as many names and places on the family tree as possible, and although I failed miserably, I had a really

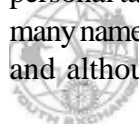
enjoyable time and it was a privilege to share in the family celebrations (they even let me in the Family Photo!).

The first week of June was my last week of school for three whole months! Even better, a lot of my teachers were away so I had very few classes! The Tuesday was the 50th wedding Anniversary of my host dad's parents and so they had a little soiree at their house. Saw many familiar faces (though most names still elude me!) from the reunion weekend and the party gave me a good excuse to buy a pretty skirt! The following night was Fred's 18th birthday (he's the Brazilian exchange student at Bordeaux with me) so my host mum, sister and I went to his host family's house for a birthday dinner. It was especially sweet afterwards because my host mum said that they will have an 18th dinner for me at their place even though I won't be staying with them anymore! I'm feeling so much a part of the family now: my host dad told me he sees me like a daughter now and my host sister public wrote on her blog that I've become like a sister to her! (I thought that was pretty big compliment coming from a very cool-conscious 16 year old!). The Thursday night my host sister and I were very lucky to be given tickets by our next door neighbours to see a classical music piece at Bordeaux's Grand Theatre! It was a first time for both of us actually inside the theatre, which is beautifully decorated, though smaller than I had expected! We had fantastic balcony seats and while I think Coco was a little bored, I loved it!

Then with the end of school, came perfectly timed the start of my Eurotour with Rotary! **THIS IS WHERE IT BECOMES VERY LONG**, my apologies!!!! (*Why apologise, it's better to write it all down now, than forget it later! Ed!*)

So home after twelve days feeling quite tired, I remembered that I'd organised with an Australian girl, Hilary, who lives just outside Bordeaux (on another exchange program) to go and see a ballet, and for her to stay the night at my house! She had bought two extra tickets for the ballet so my host sister brought her best friend along. It certainly wasn't the traditional ballet I was expecting, quite bizarre with a mix of jazz and acting, but it was still a nice evening.

That weekend I managed to catch up on some sleep then we had the Rotary Changeover dinner for my host dad's Rotary Club. My host dad, taken



completely by surprise, was made a Paul Harris fellow (I was so proud!) and then the following day the club held a fun bike ride thing at the President's house near the beach, so we got some good exercise while enjoying the sun!!

Last Wednesday was the annual Fete de la Musique, which apparently happens all over Europe on the same night every year! It's a festival of live music all through the streets of the city and it was great fun, though more people than you can imagine!

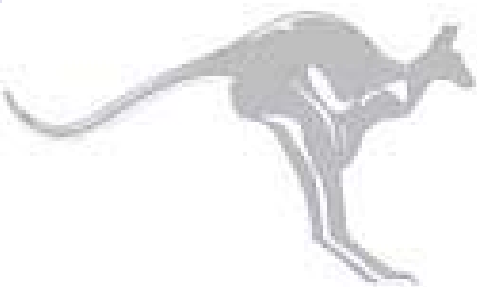
Since then I haven't been doing much other than sleeping in lots, going to Rotary, having afternoon drinks with the frenchie girls from school and getting into the World Cup fever! Last weekend we stayed at my host family's house in the country where we did nothing but relax in hammocks and pick cherries from the tree in the garden (in my estimated we picked about 15kgs!).

Have also been spending lots of time with Fred and Miyuki, the other students at Bordeaux, because they return home at the start of July and I'm going to be the only student here until at least mid-August! It's very sad because we've become great friends and who knows how long it will be before we meet again! But I'm sure I'll survive, have lots of things during the holidays to keep me occupied!

So that's probably more than enough for now, I hope none of you have got the flu or any other nasty winter bugs! Drop me an email if you ever feel like it, love seeing familiar names in my inbox!

Gros bisous et à bientôt!

Sian-Alana



Sian-Alana - Eurotour!



Sian-Alana McGee reporting for **Warwick Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2006

*Location: - **Bordeaux Rotary Club, France***

Eurotour – The Bus Trip !

DAY 1:

Day one of the much anticipated Europe Bus Trip started with me, Kate, Kiri and my host poarents waking up very early to be at the station for our 5.50am train! With our sandwiches, fruits, lollies and drinks (thanks to my host mum Christine!), we caught the train and three hours later were in Paris! Luckily, we found our chaperones quickly and lots



of other students who arrived at the same station. We met everyone else at the Gare de Lyon, where we also we left to find lunch. We came from all over the mostly English speaking world – Australia, Canada, United States, New

Zealand the exceptions of Argentina and Sweden! While leaving the station, from inside the bus we saw the French superstar Johnny Halliday, though nobody believes that it's really him in my photos!

We then did a mini-tour of Paris by bus, which was a real shame because everything passed too quickly and we only stopped at the Eiffel Tower. But still, it was amazing to be in Paris for my first time and take photos with the infamous French icon!



Luckily I'm going to Paris with my host family later during the holidays so will be able to see things in more detail!



Sad to be leaving Paris, we drove for a few hours to Reims and set up in our hotel. After dinner, the entire group went to see the Reims cathedral. Unfortunately we only saw the outside, but it is very beautiful anyway! After, we walked around the city and then went back to the hotel.

Photo's PARIS (Eiffel Tower)
 REIMS (Cathedral)

DAY 2:

All morning we were on the bus, then arrived at Strasbourg for lunch. We bought a sandwich then went and sat in a pretty park. The city is stunning, especially the architecture. Like many French cities, it is located on a river, which makes a pretty setting. We then did the souvenir shops a bit and found some huge and delicious 'pretzels', although they are more like donuts than what we call pretzels in Australia.



After lunch the group came together for the tour, the highlight of which was the Strasbourg cathedral. Apparently it is the biggest in France, and the interior is beautiful. There is a very special clock that shows the normal time etc, but also the phases of the moon and the zodiac signs. We then had some more free time so we sat in a café outside the cathedral with our first bus trip beer and soaked up the atmosphere!

We stayed the night in a youth hostel not far from the inner city and after dinner, everyone socialised in the hotel bar until 11 o'clock.

Photo's

STRASBOURG

(Special clock inside the Cathedral)

(La Retha and I with pretzels)

DAY 3:

Day three and we crossed the border into Germany! First stop at Munich was the Olympic Park, where the Summer Olympics were in 1972. I saw the film Munich (with Eric Bana) just before I left Australia,



and it was sad to think that this is where the massacre really happened. We didn't see inside the stadium, but we ate pizza by the little lake, then bought ice-creams from a singing machine!



After lunch we drove to the city centre and had a guided tour. It was quite cold, but I really loved the city. I loved the architecture and the ambience,

very classy and our guide told us that there is no crime, no theft, so we felt safe. Unfortunately, it was a public holiday, so all the shops were closed! We saw the lion statues which are everywhere in the city, the main place where there is a beautiful cathedral and the biggest pub I have ever seen!

After the tour we went to the hotel and had dinner. Surprisingly, the dinner was Italian (very yummy pizza and pasta!), but at the same time it was a shame because I hadn't eaten real German food at lunchtime, so I have still never tasted a real



German meal! After dinner, we all walked back into the city and went to the biggest pub. Everyone was allowed to drink one beer, though that is one very big beer – each glass is one litre! The atmosphere was amazing, at least 1000 people, a folk band and lots of different nationalities all in the one place together. We had a great night and were sad to leave!

Photo's

(At HB, the biggest pub I've ever seen!)

MUNICH

(La Retha with the singing ice-cream machine)

DAY 4:

Unfortunately we were only in Germany for one day, and day four saw us crossing into Austria. The Austrian alps are so beautiful and even though the weather was fine, there was still snow on the tops of the mountains! We arrived at Salzburg (the birthplace of Mozart) and shame, it was raining! We ate lunch in a (warm!) Italian/Austrian/Indian

restaurant and escaped the rain. We then did the guided tour (in the rain), we saw Mozart's house



and my favourite, a beautiful cathedral. In my opinion, it is one of the most beautiful cathedrals I have ever seen, because it is open to the light, rather than very dark like most others.

After the tour we had free time, so we went

to a café, then walked around and bought huge, delicious pretzels again. In the end, the pretzels were too big for us to finish, so we fed them to the pigeons! That night we ate dinner late and did nothing except all the girls watched the last episode of the OC (season 3) on Vanessa's laptop!



Photo's

SALZBURG

- (My favourite cathedral)
- (More giant pretzels)

DAY 5:

Still in Austria, we drive from Salzburg to Innsbruck. The city is beautifully set right at the bottom of mountains! We arrived for lunch and had some free time. We saw the best McDonalds restaurant in the world (nearly like a real restaurant!) and then did some souvenir shopping. The most popular souvenir in Austria is anything with 'No kangaroos in Austria' written with a road sign. Instead, I bought a cute Austrian red hat. During the afternoon we did a tour, first of outside the city at a beautiful lookout where we had a view of the city and of the surrounding mountains. We



tried to visit the inside of a church, but unfortunately there was a funeral! Back in the city we tried to

visit another church, but there was another funeral! The final part of the tour was the Swarovski crystal museum (and shop, though was a little too expensive for me!), where we saw a dress Beyonce Knowles wore and a pair of diamond Jimmy Choo shoes! If they weren't in a case I would have stolen them!

After the tour we had some more free time, but the girls were all very tired so we went to a nice beer garden and had a cocktail! We then left the city and found that we were literally staying in the alps! A tiny little village, where it seemed like there



was literally no one! The chalet was very kitsch and very badly decorated but very cute at the same time! We ate some nice Austrian food for dinner and then danced and drank at the little bar. Feeling very tired, La-Retha, Rachel and I fell asleep on the same bed without changing our clothes!

Photo's

INNSBRUCK:

- (The view of the alps from our chalet!)
- (Me in my Austrian hat)

DAY 6:

This was a long day of travel. We passed into Italy and to be honest, I didn't find it very pretty to begin



with. We were very fortunate though because our chaperones decided to stop at Verona for lunch and the afternoon, which was not

planned. Verona is very pretty; we ate our first Italian ice-cream for lunch, visited Juliet's balcony, did some market shopping, admired Italian shoes and then took photos with the Romans! I bought an Italian fashion magazine, shame that I can't understand any of it, but the pictures are gorgeous!



We left Verona very content to be in Italy, then drove a few more hours to Lido de Jesolo, where we stayed for two nights. The town is fantastic, right on the beach with shops, bars and nightlife! We had a delicious Italian dinner, then were allowed out to look at the shops and all the girls went for a cocktail (happy hour!). At the bar/restaurant there is karaoke, so of course everyone sang! Lido reminds me a lot of the Gold Coast, though on a smaller scale, because there are lots of hotels built right on the beach and there is a 'main strip' of shops, bars etc.



Photo's

VERONA:

(Roman posers!)

(Juliet's Balcony)



Photo

LIDO DE JESOLO :

(Cocktails and Karaoke YMCA !)

DAY 7:

The day for the much anticipated Venice had finally come! And it didn't disappoint. We went by boat, which is necessary because the city is only accessible by water! As soon as we arrived everyone had smiles on their faces!! The sun was out, it was warm and we



were so excited! We started with a guided tour of the city, seeing the main sights like St Marc's Place and Basilica. We then broke for lunch, when we



of course ate more Italian pizza and ice-cream! Also paid 4 euros (about \$7.50 Australian) for a glass of Sprite, which hurt a bit! After lunch, we re-met and then, yes I know you are jealous - we took a gondola ride!!! Absolute highlight of

the tour I think, cruising through the canals, with a singing (and handsome) gondolier - unbelievable! The tour lasted about 40 minutes and I was in awe the whole time! The best bit was when we entered the main canal, where there's lots of gondolas, big boats, other little boats, a beautiful bridge and amazing houses on the canal. I couldn't believe my luck, only 20 euros too!!

After the gondola ride we all went to the Venice Museum, which was huge! Not much to report, we were all too preoccupied with hitting the shops so didn't pay much attention! After the museum we had an hour before the last boat back to Lido. All the girls ran to the street where all the fake bags (Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci etc) are sold - illegally! It truly is an experience bargaining down prices, and I ended up buying a little Louis for 15 euros. We all had fun later finding the faults!! So we left Venice feeling very content, it was everyone's favourite place. Luckily that night we were still at Lido, so had another yummy Italian dinner then hit the town again.



Photo's

VENICE:

(St Marc's Cathedral)

(La Retha and I in the Gondola)

LIDO:

(La Retha and I with our identical Louis Vuittons!)

DAY 8:

Another long day of travel, though we were lucky to have another unplanned stop, this time at Sirmione, a little town on a huge Italian bay. We had lunch at a nice little café/restaurant and had real Italian spaghetti for the first time, though was disappointed with the serving size. Luckily we bought a huge tub of gelati to compensate the small spaghetti. And because it had been my goal to buy Italian shoes,



though I hadn't found any pretty enough in my price range, I bought a very cute pair of red stiletto earrings!

During the afternoon we drove to Genova, a sleepy little city with not much to do, though we were still in Italy! Because the World Cup had started, we were allowed to walk to a local bar and watch the match between Argentina and Ivory Coast. Before going to bed that night I saw Wolfmother on Italian tv too, go the Aussie bands!!

Photo

SIRMIONE:

(Italian gelato - only the best!)

DAY 9:

Day nine and we were back home in France, with real bread! We drove over Monaco, then stopped at Grasse, to visit the perfumery. The smells were beautiful, and everyone enjoyed the giftshop! After spending more money, we drove to and through Nice, then on to Cannes (yes, the home of the film festival) where we had a walk around and some lunch. From there we drove an hour or so to Cassis,



a beautiful port where we did a boat tour of all the little inlets – it was amazing! We then drove to Marseille and stayed at the youth hostel (the worst of the trip!) for the night.



Photo's

CANNES:

(On the beach)

CASSIS:

(Boat tour)

DAY 10:

Started the day with a little tour of Marseille. We stopped at the church, right at the top of the city, with great views of the entire city, the port and the sea! From Marseille we drove all day to Lyon, where we did a long tour of the city on



foot. Lyon is a beautiful city, like Bordeaux it is on a river and there is lots to do. We didn't get much time there but I think it is a city I

would really like to visit again during the year. That night we stayed in a really nice hotel, which was a welcome change from the Marseille youth hostel!

Photo's

MARSEILLE:

Overlooking the city

LYON:

On the river

DAY 11:

The last real day of the tour and we squeezed in one last country – Switzerland! We were very lucky to do a tour of the United Nations headquarters in Geneva. It was great to see people of all different nationalities working in the same place, made me more certain that I want to work there later! After the tour, we had some free time in Geneva. We had to struggle with Swiss Francs (Switzerland is not in the EU so doesn't use Euros!), everyone bought a



lot of chocolate and we all took photos with the famous fountain on the lake. For the rest of the afternoon we drove back into France, to Dijon, the home of mustard! That night after dinner, our chaperones threw us a little party with some champagne and we danced, took lots of photos and signed books, flags etc. Everyone was very sad that the trip was over, we had seen and experienced some amazing things together!

Photo's

GENEVA:

(The United Nations)

(The Geneva Lake fountain)

The twelve days flew past but I now have so many amazing experiences and memories to remember for the rest of my life! I made some great friends and now have the incurable travel bug!



Sian Alana



Carla - Hola!



Carla Baumer reporting for **Murwillumbah Central Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - July, 2006

Location: - **Cancun Rotary Club, Mexico**

HOLA!!!! (And good day to you to! Ed!)

I know that mass emails are a bit sucky and unpersonal but please understand that a giant update is better for me than writing 50!!!

Congrats to me...I made it to the halfway point of my exchange on the 22nd of July...I can hardly believe it! I went out clubbing to celebrate but we didn't stay too long coz there were sooooooo many people. It summer vacation and everyone is in Cancun. Luckily knowing the bouncer gives u line cuts and school ID means free entry lol!

I have been living with my friend from school Gabriela as her mother invited me to stay with them. It worked out well as my next Rotary host family had the house full of guests and my last host family left to visit Australia. So here I am and have been in their home for 2 weeks. Gaby is the same age and me and was in my class at school. She lives in a white house with pool near plaza las ameicas with her parents and younger bro. Her older sister studies in Mexico City. Gaby Oibly moved here form Mexico City a year ago for her father's work. He is an engineer and works on big hotels. Next week is Gaby's birthday and after that she is going to Merida to study interior design and landscaping. I will visit her there for sure!!

Soon I will change families again and live with the Lopez family. Tito is the father and a Rotarian and he has 4 kids: Tito Jr (20) Tomas (19) Omar (18) and Paola (15). He and his wife Sylvia always have exchange students at their house. The live fairly central in Cancun and are close to a mall, supermarket, gym and have a pool.

Hmm wat have I been up to???? Well last weekend was Paola's 15 birthday which is a really big deal in Mexico. They celebrate a girl being initiated into womanhood on her 15th birthday and the celebration is oover the top. It's like a wedding for one person!!!! The remaining exchange students all

attended which was a blast and my friend Megan (from Tassie) who lives in Merida (four hours away) stayed and Gaby's house as well.

After going out and partying Friday night, Saturday came and it was Pao's 15th. In the afternoon there was a formal church service. She had her hair and make up done and of course wore a hug dress. Like a wedding dress encrusted in beads and diamantes with lots of tulle...all in pink of course!!! There were matching flowers and a personalised sermon. Later that evening was the party or shall we say reception. It as a black tie event and held at the Cancun convention centre. Everything was decorated in white and shades of pink.

Paola entered at with her brothers and was formally presented. She danced with each of her brothers and then with her father. After that all male family members and friends that wanted to. There were speeches, dinner, her father sang to her, a ballet performance, and a popular dance performance. Not to mention DJ and dancing after everything. Oh and a videa / photo slideshow presentation

I have also been teaching. This coming week is my last week. I have been teaching English at a local primary school through summer school classes run by Rotary. Two teachers from the US came to teach but due to high numbers I help with the little beginners in the morning and then have my intermediate class at 11. I really enjoy it!! Not a career move but its fun. I have a lot more patience these days!!!...with kids anyway!!!

In the last 6 months I have learnt a moderte amount of Spanish, visited many sites and gotten used to the Mexican culture....somewhat accustomed anyway. Constant lateness and last minute plans is something hard to get used to. The driving is still frightening. The fact that one word has multiple meanings is still confusing. The beach is still beautiful, the clubs are still wonderful and the people are great!

I am really lucky in my Rotary club because all the Rotarians are very nice and helpful. Although only a few speak English I feel like the adopted niece and they all refer to themselves as my uncle. I was recently invited to a fishing trip... but it was cancelled due to fishing restrictions. Hmmm me fishing????...sounds good when it's off the coast of a tropical island!!!!!! Julio is the new club president and he is very supportive. I am also looking forward

to doing more community activities and taking my teaching further. I just believe that I am incredibly lucky and sooo fortunate in my life that I might as well use my time here to help and learn. Hopefully give something back.

In the coming months I am hoping to travel although getting set dates of what is happening and when is almost impossible...everything is fairly last minute and it drives me nuts!!!! Although exchange students usually go on a big trip Megan (from Tassie) and I miss out because the next one for our

District is in Abrila and we won't be here. It has been suggested that we join another district although for the 1000 dollars u pay for 2 weeks I would prefer to travel solo with megs and get a months worth of travels out of it!!! Also Gaby's aunt has offered to train me as an ESL teacher in her school so I would do either 1 or 2 courses for 6 weeks each. But as her language coordinator just quit she is trying to find a replacement.

Estimate time is end of august till October. Not sure.

My goals for the next 6 months are improve my Spanish, travel and gain greater knowledge and understanding of Mexico and its culture, to learn skills that I can take with me (from teaching English to how to cook delicious Mexican meals) and to contribute to the community.

Well that's about it for now. Hope all is well on the other side to the world!!

Cuidate te extraño

Carla

Heidi – Euro Tour!



Heidi Clare reporting for **Mullumbimby Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - July, 2006

Location: - **Charleroi Porte de France Rotary Club, Belgium**

Hey.

This is my latest Rotary update. Sorry that it has arrived late. Last week got back from the most amazing 2 weeks of my life... It was just so awesome.



The Euro tour... So I have been recuperating...

In the last month... what have I done...?

My second host family took me to Disneyland in Paris. That was a lot and a lot of FUN... though I couldn't get onto the big rollercoaster rides I had fun anyway going on little kiddies rides. We spent 2 days there and the weather was just the way we wanted it to be. I have never been to Disneyland so it was a really great experience....

Then in June, my town had a festival for 4 days....All the men from my town participated in a march (including my host father) which never ended. The men dress in the Napolean outfit. Very smart looking. One night they walked until 6 in the morning, stopping every now and again for a drink.

Luckily I was enjoying my sleep, though I could hear in the distance the music. It was a lot of fun to watch this, because we don't have it in Australia. My Rotary club were helping at this fete, and so the other exchange student and myself went to help with serving drinks...

From then on, I haven't done a lot. The week before Euro tour, I went to see Jacki Van den Bos in Germany for about 4 days. That was awesome. I loved Germany and her host family are so wonderful. We both had a great time catching up with each other since we hadn't seen one another for nearly 5 months.

Then the following week 19TH June, she came back with me to Belgium and the next day we started our journey on the Euro tour...

The tour began in Munich, were we met ALOT of Aussies, there supporting the Soccerroos or just there for the fun of the world cup. In Germany they have these crazy 1L jugs of beer. That surprised us all. Munich was just an overnight stop.

Then off to Prague. I love this city. It was so beautiful. I wish we stayed there maybe an extra night. At night the Charles bridge topped it all off. It was spectacular...

We had a tour of city, and we were able to take lots of photos from up top. Then there was a surprise. A high powerful Japanese we think came to the castle in Prague, so everyone stood to watch this.

Then to Vienna in Austria. Another awesome city... Then to Salzburg... got to ride bikes through the city. Enjoyed this experience a lot...

Then to Venice, BEAUTIFUL... really loved the gondolas... The beach was very different from Australia.

Then to Florence....I didnt feel this city to amazing, like the others. I didn't see very much of it.

Then to Nice in France. Extremely beautiful Ville. We all went to Monaco for the day... Very wealthy country. And the home of French Riviera. WOW... is all I can say about this country.

Then back home... and a lot of sleep... Tomorrow I am off to Italy again with my host parents and host cousins for 10days. Will be a lot of fun.

Well take care everyone.

Sorry again that this is laaaaate. Promise next time I will be better organised.

Lots of Love

Heidi

Peter – Reporting Nothing!



Peter Matheson reporting for **Surfers Paradise** Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - July, 2006

Location: - **Oulun Eteläinen** Rotary Club, Finland

General things of interest you would like to share? Nothing at this point in time. (A man of few words – obviously! Ed!)

Peter

Sasha – Yikes!

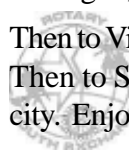


Sasha Heywood reporting for **Stanthorpe** Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - July, 2006

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Denmark

Hello everyone, Just writing quickly to update you all on what I am up to at the moment. I have changed host families... am on to number three and now officially half way through my exchange! Yikes! Time has snuck away from me it seems...



I am now staying with the Hildebrandt's and they have three Children Lasse, Lena and Anders but only Anders still living with them who has just returned home from his exchange in a place near Rockhampton in QLD, Australia! He is a really fantastic host brother having 'been there' and takes very good care of me (as well as making us speak only Danish!!! Frustrating at times but it is paying off - my Danish has improved so much already!)

I start school on the 15th of August and until then am still on holidays... doesn't look like I am going to London now either but that is ok. There are other holidays this year! Plus I am broke from Spain... (I love Spain!)

Well, at the moment I have been in touch with my newbie, Kurtis from Argentina (one of the new batch of exchange students arriving in July...) and I really look forward to meeting him a lot. It will be good to introduce him to Denmark and show him around! He will arrive in about two weeks time...

I am sorry if I have failed to keep in touch with some of you... actually some of you don't seem to be getting my emails or anything. I don't know what has happened there, but I hope you get this one!

I am also in the process of making a huge written and illustrated report which journalises my trips to Dublin and Spain and of course Euro tour to send home to you Rotarians. It is nearly finished so you have something to look forward to getting!

Also, I have sent heaps of postcards. If you suspect you should be a postcard receiver and have not received one please let me know. I probably scrawled the address and I will write you another one. (I have spares!) Well, at the moment I am really loving my exchange... my Danish is coming along and I am making a lot of Danish friends. They are really great! I have found quite a few gems and enjoy getting to know them more and more. Lots of fun!

Must be going now... am going camping with my host bro and his friends for five days on an Island with great beaches somewhere... it will be a lot of fun! I will write when I get back.

Hope you are all well and for those of you who don't have my other email address here is my msn: sashaheywood@hotmail.com so feel free just to email me here or add m on. I think I have most of you already.

Ok farvel to you all!

Knus,

Sasha

Carla - Mi informe en español!



Carla Baumer reporting for **Murwillumbah Central Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - July, 2006

Location: - **Cancun Rotary Club, Mexico**

hola!

¿comos estas? soy carla baumer y vivo cancun, quintana roo!!!!

Yo se tu es mi nuevo couseilor cuando Brian tiene su vacciones (bueno creo son vacciones pero no seguro!!! oops) Ahora estoy en casa de mi amiga gabriela porque mi ultima familia se fue a australia para visitar su hija monica (en ashmore) entonces no puedo quardar en su casa. Gabriela es mi mejor amiga aqui en mexico y su familia invitame. Aqui no puedes quardar con una familia que no son rotarios pero mi proximo familia (de tito lopez y es casi mi counsellor) tienen muchos personas en su casa para la fiesta de 15 años de su hija. Entonces no ay espacio para mi!!!

No te preocupes porque estoy muy contenta en esta casa y voy a cambiar mi casa en la proximo semana. Hmmm que mas. A si, yo incinio classes de ingles en una escuela. Tengo la classe intermedio y son muy amable. Mis estudiantes tienen 9 a 17 años en esta classe y en la mañana ayudo 2 otra maestras de estados unidos con su classes. Tenemos classes cada dia todo julio. los classes son un program de los rotarios y ellos quieren incinio classes de ingles a un otro lugar tambien. No seguro si voy pero me encanta los classes!! soy maestra ha ha ha que chistoso!!!

En fin de semana pasado mi amiga meg de tasmania fue a cancun. Solo por un fin de semana (paola's fiesa de quince años) pero disfrutamos mucho!!!

Megan es muy linda y queremos viajar juntos. Creo estamos un bueno equipo ha ha ha!

bueno, voy porque tengo muerto de sueno!!!! es a las 2 en la mañana y voy a trabajar a las 9 entonces



creo es mejor si voy a dormir. Lo siento para mi español!!!! mal yo lo se!!!!

cuidate

Carla

Heidi – Very, very well!



Heidi Clare reporting for **Mullumbimby** Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - August, 2006

Location: - **Charleroi Porte de France** Rotary Club, Belgium

Bonjour John et Claudia,

How are you?

I am going very very well.

Just sending an email to say Hello, and ask how things are at home.

I'm having lots of fun as usual... Loving it here. The New kids are all going to start arriving anytime soon.

This month, I haven't done all so much. Went to Italy with my host parents for 10 days. Really really enjoyed that a lot. Stayed at a place called Camolgi not far from Geneova, if you know that city.

Was lovely, very different from AUZ.

Since that, I have been at home, catching up with friends. Went to a festival, with music from all over the world, was great. The ambiance was awesome.

My mum is coming to Europe next week. I am very excited, going to do some travel together.

That's about it really for the time being.

Would love to hear from you

Lots of Love

Heidi



Peter – Reporting Nothing!



Peter Matheson reporting for **Surfers Paradise** Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - August, 2006

Location: - **Oulun Eteläinen** Rotary Club, Finland

General things of interest you would like to share? The time flies. (A man of even fewer words! Ed!)

Peter

Benjamin - Where do I begin!



Benjamin Robertson reporting for **Ashmore** Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - September, 2006

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Austria

Okay... dude, where to begin!!

Seeing as my lovely club has missed out on so much the past few months, I must literally spam your e-mails to get it through!

Ok, so I believe I left you lost somewhere after the ski-camp. I have been doing a lot since then, the first big Rotary event we had after that was the district conference on the 21 of May. In my home town of St. Florian, nearby the major city of Linz in upper Austria.

It was held in the 'stift St. Florian' which is a huge house that belonged to a long line of the Austrian royal family as a holiday house. It was also the inspirational setting of the composer 'Bruckner' who is a famous organ componist of the 1800's.

One half of this magnificent mansion is the church, built in honour of the original St. Florian, who was executed by the Romans, while standing up for his Christian beliefs. He is now remembered by this church, and the fact that his image is painted on EVERY fire brigade building in Austria, as he is the watcher over the homes, and the fire brigade.

The next event was of course EURO TOUR!!! Wow... I'm filled with a warm fuzzy feeling all of a sudden. If you haven't guessed, it was great.

We went to all sorts of places (the list is attached to this e-mail), but I'll only tell you the most interesting (in no particular order). 'The Louvre', taking photos of the Mona Lisa, and then running from the security personnel that are paranoid about flash cameras. Having my mobile phone stolen in the beautiful beachside town of Cinque Terres, on the west coast of Italy. Performing the haka NUMEROUS times, all around Europe with the most multi-cultural bunch of strong, healthy, (crazy) boys you've ever seen before.

And then at the end of it all, getting pneumonia and having a good month of bed rest, and enough antibiotics to make a cat dance.

Unfortunately, on a downside, in August, I left all of my friends in Enns, St. Florian, and Linz, to go to Vienna. I had troubles with my host-family, as I had been there so long, they were feeling VERY uncomfortable with a foreigner's presence. I had been unable to become one of the family, despite my efforts, and so I left to live in another family, and start again.

Life in school has been rather fun, making new friends, and visiting all the sites around Vienna. I was as you had heard in Rome, with my other school in Enns. As I had paid to go before I left my family there.

IT WAS AWESOME!!! Posing with ugly looking gladiators, and dancing in bunny ears to the delight of the people on my bus. (14 hour bus ride... you get bored).

All the sites were as old as you'd expect em' to be, and as dirty too. The catacombs, colosseum, and all the ruins scattered around the city.

Enough 'o' that, GERMAN...

Well that was the reason I went, and am pleased to say that it is coming along VERY well, ain't perfect, but pretty good, had a few dreams, and am speaking it 99% of the time.

I hope that this is a good enough catch up on my year, and I wish you all the best...

Benjamin

Eva – People are friendly!



Australia

Eva Willimski reporting for **Furtwangen-Triberg Rotary Club, Germany**

Dateline: - September, 2006

*Location: - **Ballina on Richmond Rotary Club,***

I love being an exchange student, I experience so many new things, Rob and Maree organised a lot of trips for me and I can try a lot of new activities like paddling outriggers, kayaks, surfing, touch football etc.

My weekends are always very full and eventful. I had contact to many people so that I experience a lot and different Australian ways of life. (*Eva, that's what being an exchange student is all about! Ed.*)

The culture is quite similar to the German one but the people here are more open-minded and very friendly what I really enjoy!

A challenge is my school because there are only a few people that I'm trying to find friends.

The best thing I did was joining the surf club and doing my bronze medallion.

Rob and Maree are great and lovely host parents and I will stay with them for probably four months because of my allergy were only found three families.

I'm happy and looking forward to my holiday trip. I'm going to do my speech for my host club in November.

My relationship to my counsellor is very good, Lyndal is helpful interested and like a friend.

My success experiences were becoming age champion in sport, learning a little bit to play the guitar and learning to cook. (Rob and Maree are excellent teachers)

Eva



Hikaru – My Three Months Worth!

Hikaru Kosugi reporting for
Kumano Rotary Club,
Japan

Dateline: - September,
2006

Location: - **Mudgeeraba**
Rotary Club, Australia

I'm so sorry about I send reports too late.

And also I don't know what I should write. I didn't do special.

I usually went to shopping with my friends on the weekend.

On 13th to 15th, I had the exam. It was too difficult for me. I'm sure I get bad marks.

On 22nd the holiday would start until on the 9th of October. I'm happy about that.

Hikaru

Jackie - Hello!

Jackie Van Den Bos
reporting for **Alstonville**
Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - September,
2006

Location: - ?? Rotary Club,
Germany

Hello hello hello (*Is there an*
echo, echo, echo, around

here? Ed!)

Well this cant be a long email because I leave the country in a few hours and I have stuff to do... BUT I just though I'd say HI and I hope you are all jealous because I'm off for a week in Malta. It's a small

independent island directly south of Sicily... I'm going with my school. It will be amazing.

Then when I come back (29th September) I have to quickly wash all my clothes because on the 31st I am going with my amazing host family to Poland for 2 weeks... (School autumn holidays) so yeah... I'm a busy girl. And when I come back from Poland school starts up again and I have a week to pack up and then I move to my last host family.

I don't have their address yet but I will send it as soon as I can. I have met them twice already and they are lovely... and literally a 45-second walk from school. I move to them on the 21st of October... wish me luck. (*You don't sound like you'll need any luck. You'll just have a great time! Ed!*)

I really should be going.... I hope you are all really well... and big warm lovely greetings to my Rotary club and a big thankyou along side.

Lots of love.

Jackie

Peter – Reporting Nothing!

Peter Matheson reporting
for **Surfers Paradise**
Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - September,
2006

Location: - **Oulun**
Eteläinen Rotary Club,
Finland

My exchange is fast approaching 3 quarter time and it's been a great time here too. Getting to know all of these people has been one of the best things in my life and I'm grateful to those who gave me this opportunity. I still have time left and I plan on making the most of it, don't let the exchange just pass you by... you'll always just wish for another week. (*Egads - words! Ed!*)

Peter



Benjamin – Where to begin!



Benjamin Robertson reporting for **Ashmore Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - October, 2006
Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Austria

To my darling rotary club, to whom I am ever-indebted.

Great opening line huh?? (No Comment! Ed.)

Well, where to begin!! On Monday, I travelled two hours to get to Linz where my host club is, I believe you know I went to Vienna??

Together we visited a HUGE juice factory, under the name of Pfanne, a popular fruit drink in Austria and Europe. THAT was interesting.

Last weekend I did a tour with the Rotary exchangees in Vienna, for the Wien weekend. We saw an opera in the Volksoper. (Public opera= poor exchange students)

Saw many museums and only one church... thank goodness, as Euro-tour was ALL churches. The oldest building in Wien, St. Stephan's Cathedral.

School is going great, have made friends with nearly the whole school, as my classes range to about the 4th class, to the 8th class. Have visited the Czech Republic on Friday with the school.

My German has taken leaps and bounds as, I have been in a city that speaks almost fluent high-German. My time in Linz was difficult, as Austria has a very difficult standard of dialect that is not taught in books.

And the time now is only 13 weeks left... AAAAAAHHHH!!!! But now that winter is arriving I have a lot to look forward to, the parties for New Year, called 'Sylvester', Christmas, and snowboarding with the host-family!! Wahoo.

Have also been invited to Egypt with my host-mum at the end of October. And Mayorca- Spain, with my host dad, at the end of December, coming back on the 5th of January.... so my holidays are pretty much packed to the end of my trip.

Looking forward to seeing you all in person once I get back. Thanks forever,

Benjamin

Ebony – Is getting Nervous!



Ebony Anderson reporting for **Burleigh Heads Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - October, 2006
Location: - **Fribourg - Sense Rotary Club, Switzerland**

With just over 2 months to go in my exchange year I am starting to get nervous about how I am going to get all my stuff home and how to say good-bye to all the great new friends and people I have meet this year. (Well – if you'd sent home little "Care" packages to yourself – most of it would be there waiting for you. Ed!)

I have now finished all my holidays and travelling for the year I hope and will enjoy my time left here in Switzerland. I had a great time on our Eurotrip where I got to meet lots of new exchange students from all over Switzerland. These two weeks are definitely ones I will remember into the future. We saw lots of exciting new places across 5 countries; Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Italy and Switzerland. One of the highlights was getting to go on a gondola in Venice!! Every day on Eurotrip we got to see something new and all of us ate enough Galati ice cream in Italy for our entire lifetimes!!

Then after coming back from Eurotrip I had a little over 12 hours to re-pack my suitcase again as I was leaving early the next day to go on holiday with my host family in Djerba, Tunisia (Africa). This was definitely a huge highlight of my year! This was the first time I was in Africa and I really liked it! We stayed in a resort on the beach and the weather was great, I felt a little bit like being at home on the Gold Coast being so close to the beach again!! We got to do and see many interesting things while we were in Djerba! We even went on a Safari into the Sahara desert where we got to go Camel riding through a small portion of the Sahara desert!

Then after my many adventures I headed back to Switzerland. I am back at school and I am loving it!! I am really going to miss my class and my friends when I have to go back to Australia! This year has definitely gone by too fast!!! Only a short 65 days until I am home!



Peter – Having a Great Time!

Peter Matheson reporting for **Surfers Paradise Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - October, 2006

Location: - **Oulun Eteläinen Rotary Club, Finland**

So far my exchange has been wonderful. I've been having a great time doing so many things that I never thought I'd be doing. I've made tons of new friends and I'm even starting plans for my return trip. I've been skiing, snowboarding, had a sauna with pretty much all of my friends, been camping, swimming in subzero temperatures and learnt so much about a very fascinating language. I was lucky enough to spend my 18th birthday here among some of the best friends and people that I will ever meet. The only thing bad that I can say is that this opportunity isn't available to more people, this is one of the best things that has ever happened to me and it will shape both me today and the person that I will be in years to come. Thankyou to all of the people that made this possible

Peter

Tiffany - I'm back at school!

Tiffany Webb reporting for **Grafton Midday Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - October, 2006

Location: - ?? Rotary Club, Japan

Well everyone... it's that time of the month... yes time for my

Rotary report...

I'm back at school FINALLY... well now I really wana have holidays back... although I know I wouldn't have all that much to do... so maybe I don't wish I had holidays back! Anyways during the past month... I met up with all my Aussie buddies and that came here with me... well half the way with me from Singapore to Japan... in this region there is 5 Aussies, 1 Malaysian, 1 American and 1 Swedish person we all met up in Gifu which is a 4 hour car trip from Kumano... oh the distance... we had an



orientation day for the new exchange students and everyone that was going on the trip to Kyushu!

ANYWAYS... once we all finished talking and for me catching up we all made our way home... well for me I had to go to the airport hotel, with a member of a rotary club! We all met at the airport at 7:30 a.m.... we went to Kagoshima in the southern part of the island...

I think in those 3 days that we were there I had about 3 hours sleep... a lot of sight seeing was done... went to Sakurajima... the volcano island thing... we were meant to take a tour on the actual volcano but it looked very wet so they changed our schedule and instead we spent the last 2 hours shopping... it was a very short trip but a lot of fun... I think if it were longer I would have slept for a week once returning back home to Kumano... from lack of sleep and talking to much!

Well so been back at school I am again attending all English lessons with Simon a English teacher here... and I'm also studying Japanese for 3 hours a day in hope that I can learn 1000 kanji and 6000 words before the beginning of December... and that's because I am now AGAIN going to do the Nikyu test and no it wasn't my decision my teacher filled the form in for me and yea... now I have to study twice as hard so I can pass!! YAY cramming gota love it...

I haven't changed families yet... that's not until October the 1st and that's the day my parents arrive... here yay... money here I come... (*Tiffany, why is it that Exchange Students equate Parents with Money – I don't see the connection! Ed!*)

Anyways that's all...

Bye-bye mwa

Tiffany



Vanessa – I feel good!



Vanessa Pire reporting for
Esneux-Aywaille Rotary
Club, Belgium

Dateline: - November, 2006

Location: - **Jimboomba**
Rotary Club, Australia

I feel very good about being an exchange student. I discover new things every day. I'm glad because a lot of people are with me and try to do the best for me (to have a good time). Every body is very kind with me! I'm very busy and I like that! I do a lot of different activities like horse racing, ice skating, kayaking on the Brisbane river, shopping in Brisbane, sunbathe in the coast ... I hope that it will continue in this way! *(We hope so as well. Ed!)* My experience in Australia is great.

Vanessa

