



Toran - I love this change!

Toran Penfold reporting for **Southport Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - January, 2007

Location: - Charlottetown Rotary Club, Canada

This is awesome lol.

I love this change, but it is not easy, however at the same time it isn't hard, you just have to figure out how things work and go with the flow or when required against it. You have to adapt to your surroundings, for example myself being rather shy I went to a youth group program where all these kids know each other but I knew absolutely no body, but by the end of the night I'd made so many friends. This also turned out to be awesome as I had quite a few of those people in my classes when I went to school 3 days later so I know people in my class and have people to sit with at lunch and to show me round the school. Also a note to some people. When choosing subjects don't let the deans of students or whoever try to push you into subjects choose ones you want to do. The dean tried to get me into home economics ha ha ha. Fat chance of that! So I talked him into a corner and got spares. But yeah, look at it this way, these people don't know you and you don't know them, they don't know how shy you were and a majority of these people you wont get to see again so if in the name of fun you stand out or make a fool of yourself who cares!? That's just some advice I picked up off Sophie my sister in Switzerland (had her stay at our house 5 months).

Oh well I'm off to youth group tonight and I hope everyone else is having as much fun over here as I am regardless of the -35 degrees winds, walking to school was painful to say the least lol. Anyway caio. *(Maybe you should wash with anti-freeze, it works for cars! Ed.)*

Toran



Toran - enjoying my time here!

Toran Penfold reporting for **Southport Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - February, 2007

Location: - Charlottetown Rotary Club, Canada

Still enjoying my time here heaps... I finally figured out

why Americans/Canadians are on the computer so much compared to Aus... its cause you don't want to go outside in winter ha-ha-ha. You don't go outside unless you have a purpose to in winter. Meaning you're cooped up inside a lot he-he. Even so its still good fun, I'm starting get used to the weather here... wind, wind and more wind, carrying lots of COLD! Here's a little note that my mum would enjoy he-he, I'm back in my boxers. But yeah I've made quite a good bunch of friends here and am having a blast. Also New York is an awesome place all the lights are hypnotising ha-ha-ha. But yeah that's all from me this month.

Cya

Toran



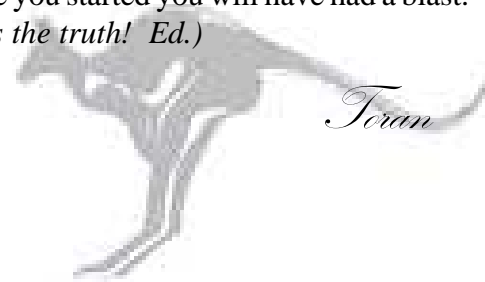
Toran - nothing really interesting!

Toran Penfold reporting for **Southport Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - March, 2007

Location: - Charlottetown Rotary Club, Canada

Nothing really interesting has happened lately, just a bit of emotional stress and character building going on. This parts the hard part I think 3-4 months in, but it will get better, because this is like a rollercoaster it goes up, down and around, but when its over and your back where you started you will have had a blast. *(And that's the truth! Ed.)*



Toran



Bianca - Success!

Bianca Brooks reporting for **Robina Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - April, 2007

Location: - Motosu Rotary Club, Japan

Hrmmm, success?? Well my Japanese is coming along so well!! I cannot believe it... I honestly thought that I would totally bum out in the Japanese speaking side of the exchange, but I'm getting the hang of it. I still can't put together two sentences, but I can make one!! *(Excellent! Ed.)*

I just read the first issue of our Hopping Mag, and it's so cool, that everyone is having a great time. It's kind of a little embarrassing that my pictures are the first one on the page. But I'm flattered that they are there.

And I'm sending more pictures now so you can see. These are of the rebounders from Aus and one from Malaysia. *(Have a look in the Photo Gallery for Bianca's photos! Ed.)*

Then there is a picture of some of the students after the rebounder meeting at karaoke!! Fun times, Japanese karaoke is awesome!!

Loves yas, and do this again next month... bye byes...

Bianca



Billie - make it a Memorial Year!

Billie Mertens reporting for **Tamborine Mountain Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - April, 2007

Location: - Verviers Rotary Club, Belgium

Enjoy this year as much as you can cause its really a once in a life time experience and the friends we make here are so important and forever we will remember this year so go out and do stuff to make it a memorial year and cause whenever you are feeling down missing home or upset with the country just remember when we go back to the real world we will be wishing we were back in our host countries and

our extraordinary lives we are leading here. Remember to smile always have fun be good stay safe and love life - bisous billie xoxox

Billie



Daniel - had a great month!

Daniel Foster reporting for **Tweed Heads South Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - April, 2007

Location: - Künzelsau-Oehringen Rotary Club, Germany

Hi how are you?

Hope all is well, had a great month, saw lots and met heaps of new people, many of whom are Rotary Exchange students in Germany from all around the world. Thought i'd thow in a phot for u too. And just to make sure u could see, me I jumped in right at the front, lol. *(You'll find Daniel's phot in the Phot Gallery. Ed.)*

Talk to you later, Daniel

Daniel



Esther - never say no to anything!

Esther Crothers reporting for **Grafton Midday Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - April, 2007

Location: - Marennes/Oleron Rotary Club, France

Never say no to anything!

When I was in Germany Katharina's mum suggested we got to the Schlossburg Castle and Kat was a bit negative about it all and didn't want to go and tried to encourage me not to go because it was really "boring", however, I put on a smile a little reluctantly after her reaction and told her mum I would love to go!

As it turned out I loved it! *(Aren't you glad that you did? You never know what it will be like, but, that's the magic about being an exchangee! Ed.)*



It was definitely a highlight of my trip to Germany! I am really glad I agreed to go because it was really interesting and beautiful!

And as much as I love history it was amazing in that perspective something Katharina was not interested in!

So it was a lesson well learnt to always say yes despite what it sounds like, there will always be something positive come out of it! *(That's certainly true! Ed.)*

Esther



Jessica - my month has been awesome!

Jessica Hoey reporting for **Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club, Australia**
 Dateline: - April, 2007
 Location: - Gannat Rotary Club, France

This past month has been awesome! For the Easter holidays I went to Barcelona for a few days with my host family. We went all around the city and did lots of sight seeing. It the most beautiful city!! I also had Easter celebrations with my current host parent's family and my first host family. Easter here is pretty similar to Australia - spending time with family and lots of chocolate! *(I like the lots of Chocolate bit! Ed.)* But there is no Easter bunny. *(Maybe, he can't swim that far! Ed.)* Another highlight was going to the Pringtemp de Bourge - an international festival and seeing Australian band the John Butler Trio playing. I also saw other French and African bands. On AZNAC day I taught my host mother how to make Anzac biscuits and she taught me how to make a traditional French cake. I had a bit of trouble translating the ingredients but they tasted ok! I also ate snails this month and although they look like worms they taste pretty good! On the 29th I worked with my host parents making crepes, churros and waffles for the markets in Charroux. It was lost of fun and very busy.

That all for now, looking forward to the next Rotex soon and still learning French.

xoxo



Jessica



Kaye - oh my goodness!

Kaye Titmarsh reporting for **Boonah Rotary Club, Australia**
 Dateline: - April, 2007
 Location: - Charlottenlund Rotary Club, Denmark

Hi back home! Oh my goodness...

I think that pretty much sums up how I'm feeling at the moment, I can't believe a quarter of my exchange is over already. It's so crazy, in one way it does actually feel like three months because I've seen and experienced so many things, but at the same time it's gone so quickly I hardly know where the time has gone. I can't get over how well the Danish Rotary looks after the students here, so far we've had 3 get-togethers organised for us and they've all been amazing! It's been so wonderful getting to meet people from all over the world, it truly is the experience of a lifetime. *(Yup - just what YEP is about! Ed.)*

Before I came to Denmark I had never been overseas, and already since being here I have seen most of Denmark, (not hard as it's a really small country, but quality over quantity), I've been to London with my school class and Sweden 3 times! Not to mention that I leave for euro tour in about 2 or so weeks. *(Alright - we won't mention it! Ed.)*

So everything is amazing and sweet! I'm having the best time and it's only going to get better.

Kaye



Laura - how awesome!

Laura Priest reporting for **Ashmore Rotary Club, Australia**
 Dateline: - April, 2007
 Location: - ?? Rotary Club, USA

This past month I have realized how awesome it has been to live in an English speaking country. I am a girl with a lot to say and a lot of well... wisdom to

impart on the girls at my high school - things that I know I wouldn't express to the same degree if I was in a non-English speaking country. That's not to say that going somewhere else would be dreadful... but I am really passionate about helping my friends build high esteems, because at the moment it is almost non-existent. Well... I last contacted before I left for my big ten day trip down the east coast of the states and I had a fantastic time with my host brother and father (my mum went on a women's trip!). We mainly stayed in Florida and in Atlanta for the most part - but stopping to see some historic sights all the way down the coast and up. At Venice Beach, I did a lot of things by myself while my host dad went golfing and my bro hung out with his girlfriend. I had a blast but! I could do what I wanted when I wanted! So I went shopping, and ate lots of great fudge and I treated myself to a day spa which was much needed and well deserved... sort of! I went sun baking at the beach which is on the Gulf of Mexico... it was very, very hot and beautiful! I made friends with some kids from Germany who were there on holiday also which was great. We then went back up to Atlanta to stay with an aunt... she is the most wonderful woman I have ever met, and her cooking is sensational. I experienced seeing my first ever baseball game (major league) The Atlanta Braves VS the Florida Marlins... it was a great game and was played at the Olympic park which I was very honored to be in. My family took me on tours through the CBS building was gigantic and on Titanic's 95th anniversary we went to the Titanic exhibit in the city... I was intrigued at how preserved many artifacts were from being in the ocean for all that time - it was a brilliant exhibit and I enjoyed it thoroughly... it has inspired me to read up more on the Titanic... a tragic story as we all well know. *(I wanted to see the movie, but someone spoiled it by telling me the ending, it wasn't worth going after that! Ed.)* These were my main highlights... everything else was awesome still, I had the most wonderful trip.

Back at school now, which isn't so bad because we only have 30 days left until SUMMER! Everyone has talked summer up so much, I am anticipating experiencing summer in Hammondsport soo soo much. Everything else

is great! People STILL laugh at my accent, and ask if I'm Steve Irwin's daughter, and also a common question is if I learnt to speak English BEFORE I came to America... *(Just say yes, and they will compliment you on how well you do speak! Ed.)* I don't know what these kids are being taught but I love them, I love my friends, I love my family and I am loving experiencing a different culture to my own - people think Oz and USA are alike... we were so so wrong!

Until next time! Cheers!

Laura



Samuel - just another week in the office!

Samuel Brown reporting for **Grafton Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - April, 2007

Location: - Butanta Rotary Club, Brazil

S'pose I should talk about a little thing I did last month. You know I just popped up to the Amazon for nine days. Nothing too special, just 40 other exchange students, you know got to hold a crocodile and snake, went fishing for piranhas, played football with Indians. Just another week in the office really. *(If it's that boring, we can arrange for you to come back home again! Ed.)* Na seriously it was simply awesome in the true awe inspiring meaning of the word.

Samuel



Toran - short and sweet!

Toran Penfold reporting for **Southport Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - April, 2007

Location: - Charlottetown Rotary Club, Canada

Short and sweet comments this week, some of the best times you have on your exchange are catching up and getting to know your fellow exchange students in the same country as you that themselves are from nearly every country

around the world, they are the people you best relate with, and usually are the most interesting people to talk to, as you can learn a lot about them, where they are from, and possibly even yourself.

Toran



Ashleigh - it's different for everyone!

Ashleigh Luke reporting for **Coomera Valley Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Odense Hunderup Rotary Club, Denmark

I think the one thing I have learnt this month was that people can tell you that exchange is hard and people can tell it gets easier, but it's different for everyone. I think that it doesn't necessarily get easier but you just learn how to cope with your feelings better.

Learning to cope with your feelings better can take time for some and not so much time for others. I have a friend who has learnt to cope with his feelings and homesickness really well already but me, I am having a bit more trouble. So you can listen to what people tell you but remember that it may be different for you. You just have to be as ready as you can be to deal with what ever comes your way. *(It just goes to show that were are all the same, but different in little ways. Ed.)*

Ashleigh



Caroline - an amazing experience!

Caroline Pardal Takara reporting for ?? Rotary Club, Brazil

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Broadwater Southport Rotary Club, Australia

To be an exchange student is being an amazing experience. I have no words to explain!

In this month I was on the Safari. I went to Manly, Sydney, Canberra, Broken Hill, Alice Spring, Townsville, Great Keppel Island... It was so

good! To be with 34 exchange students and could know a little bit about different cultures of 11 countries and to learn a bit of 5 different languages, was very nice! All of us so similar and in the same time so different living in another place which already has our culture and kind of life, and the students together made a new world with a bit of their own country.

Thanks so much for all things!

Caroline



Esther - how bizarre!

Esther Crothers reporting for **Grafton Midday Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Marennes/Oleron Rotary Club, France

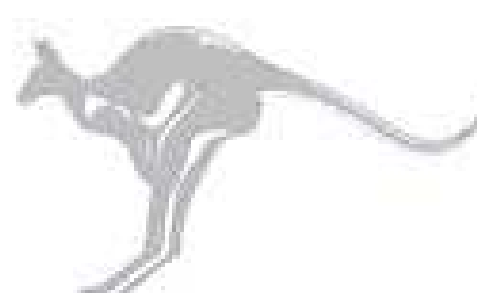
How bizarre????

It's now coming in to summer and the sun comes up like in Australia around 6 am but here it doesn't set until about 10 pm. This has taken some getting used too! As this is the time I normally go to sleep it's a little more difficult to go to sleep just as the sun sets.

And you forget until about 9.30 ohhh I have to eat dinner! When I first arrived in winter the sun didn't rise until about 9 am and it would set by 6pm! This has been one very different experience here! But I love it! Now in summer I can spend so much more time outside! *(But then, you'll miss your normal bed time! Ed.)*

Next week is the bus trip (euro tour) I'm so excited I can't wait!!!! I go to Germany Switzerland France Austria and Italy!!!!

Esther





Greg - a huge 2 months!

Greg Rulfs reporting for **Surfers Paradise West Rotary Club, Australia**
Dateline: - May, 2007
Location: - Mazatlan A.C Rotary Club, Mexico

It has been quite a huge 2 months since I missed last Months report. That was due to the fact that we were on the Rotary Tour during that time and so I obviously wasn't able to send it. (*Excuses, excuses, excuses! Ed.*) After that things got so busy that I thought it would be best to wait until this one. So to start with the Ruta Maya (main route) took us 7000km around Mexico from about 1000km south of LA on the west coast city of Mazatlan all the way to Cancun right at the tip of Mexico.

It was 2 buses full of students from countries all over the world (the usual exchange student thing) and we travelled to a city every day or 2. We obviously spent a huge amount of time on the bus to be able to cover such an area but it was great fun. I will send some photos of the highlights of this trip so you can picture it better. (*Some of Greg's photos will be in the Photo Gallery. Ed.*) About 3 weeks later we headed off for the District Conference in the resort city of Puerto Vallarta. It was a beautiful place in a resort right on the beach. It was a good time to get to know the Mexican Rotarians as well as spend some time with the students before they all go back to their respective countries as their 12 months is now coming to an end. I will also send photos of the ball that we had where everyone is dressed up and a few others of the conference. Since my last 2 months has been littered with travels it has been very busy but very rewarding, I already have more than 1000 photos of my exchange year after 4 months And I won't dare to extrapolate on that. (*Egads! Ed.*) My Spanish is just about fluent and I am able to understand and speak everything I need to I just need to extend my vocabulary by practicing with my family and school friends. I am reading in Spanish too which is helping. The city here becomes more and more like a home every time I return to it which is a funny feeling. The year has gone by so fast already but at the same time

I feel like I have been here for sure a great amount of time and grown close to this country. This isn't to say I don't miss home, I find myself frequently thinking of life at home and my friends and family there. That said I am able to get on with things over here knowing that the time will come so fast when I am heading home again. It's a strange feeling to see all my Rotary friends leaving to go back to their homes, a feeling I will eventually have to face but it seems like way to far to even think about. I am often assured that I won't know where the time will go and I'm sure that's true. My next 3 months are already roughly planned out and I'm sure they will also go as fast as the first few. I'm always gaining friends here, Mexicans are so friendly and as soon as you have a friend its like you have another 10!

My host family continues to be fantastic and I am getting close to my host brother who will leave for Australia in about 2 months. I am glad I am able to be talking to him about my country and giving him a feel for what it might be like. As time goes by and I know I am only one of few Aussies in this country I become very proud and honoured to be Australian. Perhaps it is being in Mexico where the Government isn't so good and the general condition of the country is corrupt and dirty or maybe it is just that being away from home makes you appreciate it so much more. I don't mean to say Mexico is a bad country, like everywhere it has its problems, but it just goes to show how much we get used to where we live and what we call home. I am enjoying discovering the culture here and how it makes me appreciate at the same time my home and my culture and who I am. Australia is a beautiful place... especially when QLD wins origin! (*Let's hope that the do! Ed.*)

Greg





Isaac - I feel like I belong!

Isaac Dufficy reporting for **Maclean Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Dielsdorf Rotary Club, Switzerland

It's taken me 3 and a half months but finally I feel apart of the exchangee life. Before I would slightly awkward at certain functions or in certain scenarios. Now with a better handle of the language and knowing all the people involved I feel like I belong here, in my family, in my class and in my soccer team.

My advice to anyone going on exchange... It may seem strange in the beginning and very difficult. Learning the language feels hopeless and you feel as though you are the ugly duckling amongst the already concrete tight social groups but give it time. Eventually people open up. You become more involved and you feel more apart of everything. This does take time but when it happens it's worth it. Your exchange will open up and you will enjoy everything more and you will start to understand how some previous exchange students have ended up crying when they leave. All I can say is keep trying and be patient because the rewards are beyond doubt worth it. *(Nicely put! Ed.)*

Isaac



Jessica - this amazing opportunity!

Jessica Hoey reporting for **Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Gannat Rotary Club, France

Hi everyone,

We had another Rotex this month for my district and the district above ours. *(For those reading this missive, and wondering who or what Rotex is, I'll tell you. Rotex is the Alumni (past exchange students) from the YEP program, and they assist with the YEP program by organising social gatherings, etc.. In Europe, Rotex plays*

a major part in organising and running Eurotour, as an example. Ed.) It was great to be able to catch up with everyone especially those who I flew over with but haven't seen since then. It was also a bit sad because it was the last time to see some of the northern hemisphere people as they start going home soon and some have already left. It was a good reminder of how quick this year goes and how we have to make the most of this amazing opportunity.

Enjoying a lot of pupil free days this month there seems to be at least one every week! I have been doing a bit of travelling around the region I am staying in with my host families; we went to a lot of the older towns and saw churches and castles from the middle ages. It was amazing because we don't have a lot of buildings that old in Australia.

I also climbed the Pre du Dome with my host father and visited the tallest mountain in this region Le Pre Du Sancy. Amazing view from the top but it took a long time to climb up!!

The presidential election was also on this month in France and it was interesting to see the differences between the French and Australian systems. The French people are very passionate about the election and there were many discussions and debates revolving around the new president. Every channel on TV was covering the election at all times in the weeks leading up to it! *(It's a pity we don't take as much interest in our political system as others do! Although the Americans take it to the extreme, the elections are not until November, 2008, yet the main topic of every news program is about the candidates running for President and the parties that they represent! Ed.)*

It was also great to catch up with some people from my club in Australia who were travelling around Europe, and to catch up on some of the news from my sponsor club and town in Aus.

Looking forward to going on the euro tour with all the Aussies next week it should be great!

Bisous,





Kaye – can I stay forever!

Kaye Titmarsh reporting for **Boonah Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Charlottenlund Rotary Club, Denmark

Well I have to say, they don't lie when they tell you that a Rotary exchange will be the best year of your life! (*You betcha! Ed.*)

I've just had the most amazing 18 days of my life, ones that I will treasure forever!

Picture this, 60 exchange students, 2 Chaperons, 1 tour guide named Papa, 1 bus driver named, no joke, Mr Kill, 1 Double Decker bus and 18 days driving around Europe... it was madness! (*Sounds like a killer trip! Ed.*)

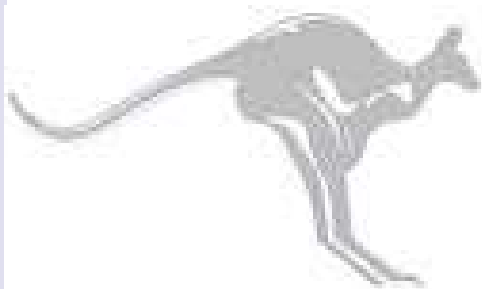
We travelled to the most amazing cities and places in Europe; we went to Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Venice, San Remo, Veron, Avignon, Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam. We went to the Berlin Wall, Check-point Charlie, the Spanish Riding School, we went for a gondola ride, climbed the Eiffel tower, saw the Mona Lisa, took a canal tour and saw the red-light district in Amsterdam... it was just the most amazingly fantastic trip I have ever or will ever take.

I can't possibly begin to describe how awesome euro tour was, everyone on the bus got along so well, I made friends in 18 days that I know I will have for life, I've met some of the most down-to-earth, lovely people and I love them all so much, the only sad thing about it was having to say goodbye!

I LOVE EURO TOUR AND I LOVE MY ROTARY EXCHANGE! Ken, is it ok if I never come home?

Ha-ha

Kaye



Naomi - the most fun!

Naomi Nishiguchi reporting for **Broadwater Southport Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Freistadt Rotary Club, Austria

Hello!

This has been the most fun, exciting and eye opening month ever! I spent the first weekend in the glorious city of Vienna with a dear friend. Together we did a bit of sight seeing and went to a huge ball for all the schools in Vienna. There were thousands of students, waltzes, clubs, girls in beautiful ball gowns, guys in tux's, we danced the whole night away. (*Sounds like a wonderful Cinderella experience! Ed.*)

The following weekend I went to Salzburg. It was so pretty and definitely one of my favourite places in Austria. My closest exchange student friends and I took a Sound of Music cycling tour which was fantastic. We had a Rotary conference where all the students put together a talent show. I performed a piece on the viola and was accompanied by my friend on piano. (*And pray tell, where did you find the Viola? Ed.*) The next Friday, all the exchangees travelled to Corinthia for another district conference.

And then began Eurotour!!! 9 countries, 17 days, 95 exchange students, 2 teachers equals the best experiences and absolute time of my life! We started in the glorious Italy, our first stop was on the coast of Jesolo. It was delightful to see the ocean again so we were always swimming. During the day we travelled by boat to Venice. It was simply stunning. We travelled through the canals by gondola which was really cool. The next day we went to Florence where we took a walking tour through the town. Saw an amazingly huge church, ate lots of pizza and lasagne and gelati too! We went to Pisa and had lots of fun posing with the leaning tower! (*Did you try pushing it back upright? Ed.*) Cinqueterre was the most loveliest and cute town ever, I absolutely loved it. It was so picturesque and we were lucky because the weather was so fine that we spent the entire afternoon swimming

in the Mediterranean Sea! We visited some other little cities before heading off to a little country called Monaco. It is really famous for some car race we were there for, its Casino's and even some James Bond movies were filmed there.

Our next stop was Paris and I fell in love! Went to the Eiffel Tower by day but also at night which was breathtakingly beautiful. Every hour it would light up with flashing lights. Then went to the Louvre, absorbed all the culture and artwork - including Mona Lisa! Saw a show at the Moulin Rouge which was so exciting and entertaining.

Then in a little town called Brugge, on the same little street, at the same time, I happened to run into a friend from high school in Australia! It was the biggest surprise ever and such a coincidence! We tried Belgium waffles and bought some delicious chocolates. Next stop was Amsterdam where we took a boat tour of the intriguing city. From the Netherlands we went to Germany and then to the Czech Republic. Prague was very impressive and we enjoyed the night life a lot. Now I am back home in small little Freistadt and am exhausted!

Bye for now, love

Naomi



Ryan - Prague was WOW!

Ryan Burton-Ree reporting for **Stanthorpe** Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Braine-le-compte Rotary Club, Belgium

I spent my Easter holidays in Germany (Berlin) and the Czech Republic (Prague). They are the most incredible cities. Berlin still has a long way to go before it will be normal; this is due to the Wars and the fall of the wall. A lot of the buildings are demolished or have blast hole still in them. Prague was WOW. I have never seen such a beautiful city in my life. The colours and people!!!!!! I also saw Adrian Brody (the actor from "The Pianist") shooting a scene. The weather was perfect, and there was live music everywhere, violinists or jazz bands. It was an

incredible experience. (*Oh! it must be such a pain being an exchange student – NOT! Ed.*)

Ryan



Samuel - Que Pais É Este!

Samuel Brown reporting for **Grafton** Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - May, 2007

Location: - Butanta Rotary Club, Brazil

Well it's been a week and a bit since I got back from the Amazon. The whole time I got back I've been trying to write a piece on my time there but after talking to some other exchange students and reading one of their blogs about the Amazon I've been compelled to take another tact. Originally I planned a bit of a light hearted travel diary talking about all the fun things and all the finny times of my trip but I've decided on a different course. I've decided this not because I didn't have fun on the trip (you can see in the pictures that I had a ball), it is the most fun I've had since I got to Brazil, it's because I think its important I let you know what are the things that are changing me and the more serious things that have disturbed or confused me.

The Amazon is one of the most beautiful and unique places I have ever been (possible THE most) and when I came back I did some Wikipedia research on it. Turns out as well as being a beautiful and amazing place for biologists to ply their trade it is also considered a great place by some for loggers to ply their trade. It is so sad to see this amazing place which also acts as the worlds 'lungs' be raped so badly. Also while I was marvelling at this places beauty on our 4 night boat ride I couldn't help but see oil slicks on the top of the river, probably from the shoddy boats we were travelling that I have no doubt were leaking oil.

There is a song in Brazil called Que Pais É Este and it means "what is this place?" I couldn't help asking myself the same question when in the Indian villages we visited they had souvenir stores selling the same things (yes that means they

bought them from some bloody mass production factory) and also I saw a giant TV satellite in the center of one of their villages (and I have a picture), another saddening image I was left with was seeing a father and her daughter paddling up to our motor boats in their canoe showing us a small alligator and anaconda but then asking for small change because they need it to survive. The worst part of this was seeing the look in the girls face and realizing that they really do need it, they are probably living in a shack somewhere and not getting dinner if we don't pay them.

The final insult humans have thrown at the Amazon is littering. We only went on one trek where we couldn't see empty beer cans littered round the track and the one exception was because we weren't on a track but making our own and I have no doubt that at least one person left something behind to probably kill a small animal. (*So - there is a benefit in getting lost, as it were! Ed.*)

Going to the Amazon was tons of fun (you can look at my photos on my Myspace... and if you would like to see more then email me) but I just felt the need to say what I have.

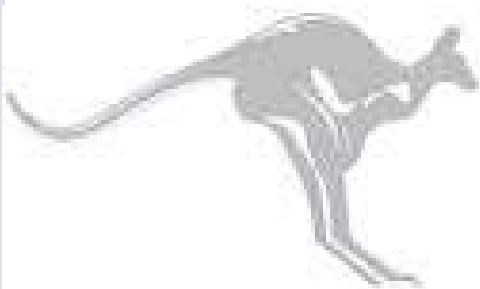
Well peace out ladies and gentlemen.

P.S. I would like to thank Rotary for giving me the opportunity to take this amazing trip and also my parents for paying for it.

Oh and another P.S. (I believe it's a P.P.S.) I still want emails from ppl about what's going on (they only have to be short) and thanks to the people who have already sent me some you know who you are.

And finally I'm missing you all dearly (that sounds a tad gay but I don't know how else to say it)

Samuel



Ashleigh - it's short and sweet!

Ashleigh Luke reporting for **Coomera Valley Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Odense Hunderup Rotary Club, Denmark

I will forward an email to you about my euro tour as soon as possible. (*Ashleigh, you are a woman of few words! Ed.*)

Ashleigh



Bianca - in a jocular mood!

Bianca Brooks reporting for **Robina Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Motosu Rotary Club, Japan

Not much for the Hopping Mag this month.

But I have been reading joke books lately to escape from the heat here.

So I'll give you two of my favourite ones.

If you can stay calm while all around you is chaos...

Then you probably haven't understood the situation.

A person that has a smile when things go wrong...

Has found someone to blame it on.

Hope you all have a good laugh. Laugh everyday like you mean it, and just all around have fun. Oh and for those in Europe, I'm sorry it seems like Europe is getting a bit of a trashing with the weather. 'Thankyou global warming.' hope you have/had fun on the eurotrip!!

Bianca





Emma - EuroTour!

Emma Wood reporting for **Burleigh Heads Rotary Club, Australia**

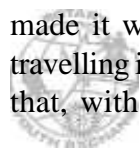
Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Flers Rotary Club, France

Of EuroTour, Muse in Paris and speaking Franglais Well, I have to say that I am loving the French summer so far! Although the weather has been HORRIBLE I have done so many things and experienced so much in such a short amount of time that it doesn't matter.

First of all... EUROTOUR!

Definitely the 12 best days of my life. Twelve days of travelling around France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland and Monaco with the best group of exchange students in the world! We had SO much fun together; everyone became so close so quickly. Unfortunately, most of them have left for home now, but I'll always have the photos and the memories! Swimming in the Mediterranean at night, exploring Venice on a Gondola, driving (and climbing!) through the Alps, spending WAY too much on Italian gelati and fancy French restaurants... there was not a single bad moment! Although there was one night where my friend and I managed to go to the wrong hotel room... we ended up drinking all the coffee (and accidentally spilling it everywhere), eating all their biscuits, drinking their Coke ('Is the Coke yours?' 'No, it must be my roommate's' 'Ok, I'm sure he won't mind if I drink it all') and getting sand all over the bed. We didn't even realise that none of the stuff in the room belonged to either of us until the person who was staying there knocked on the door and asked what we were doing... it was hilarious! (*I hope you cleaned up before you left! Ed.*) There were so many other things that happened which I'll always remember. I could go on about it forever but people would probably start to get bored. Or jealous! (*More the latter than the former! Ed.*) The first few months may have been difficult at times with the language, but EuroTour definitely made it worth it! I know I'll be doing more travelling in the future but nothing ever again like that, with such an amazing group of people.



Exchange students are by far the most awesome people in the world! A week after I arrived back home (to my VERY small town so it was extremely difficult after gallivanting all around Europe) I was back in Paris for a concert - my favourite band, Muse. I had had tickets to see them in Australia but my plane left two days before. But I think that seeing them in Paris is way better than back home! My favourite band in my favourite city... what more could you want? The concert was amazing and because they only spoke English, I always knew what was going on but the people around me were totally confused! Especially when they said something like 'And now for the first song off our first album' and it's one of my favourite songs so I was jumping up and down screaming whilst all the French people around me were like 'Quoi?!' Twas très amusant. And there's a bit of Franglais for you. After 5 months I am now just speaking... Franglais. And I'm happy to say that it's more French than English! I can even understand conversations on the phone and most conversations. It is VERY exhausting though having to concentrate so much but at the same time it's really satisfying, especially as I've never learnt French before! (*Excellent! Ed.*) Well I'll end this for now as I have to pack for my week-long holiday in Bretagne which starts tomorrow. And after that, a week long holiday in Corse! But one more thing. In France, for the first day of summer (21st of June) they celebrate by having la Fete de la Musique. Musicians play out in the streets and in the big cities there's heaps of stages set up with all different types of music, going into the early hours of the morning. I think that we should do the same thing back home! Bisous!

Emma





Isaac – my 3-word report!

Isaac Dufficy reporting for **Maclean Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Dielsdorf Rotary Club, Switzerland

(Each student is required to fill in a Monthly Report. The monthly report has a section where each student can fill out with information, if they would like to share this with others via the pages of the Hopping Mag. This is his full response! Ed.)

Not really. Sorry

Isaac



Jessica - an awesome time!

Jessica Hoey reporting for **Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Gannat Rotary Club, France

Bonjour,

Had an awesome time this month on the euro trip!! We went to Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Monaco and the south coast of France in 12 days!! We saw so many amazing places, some of the highlights include going on the gondolas in Venice and le place de la basilic Saint Marc, swimming in the Atlantic ocean in Lido di Jesolo, seeing the home of Mozart and the sound of music in Austria, and the amazing Alps, going to a beer factory in Munich, Germany, The biggest Swarovski crystal factory in Caderousse, the United Nations in Geneva and seeing beautiful Monaco. We had the best group of people - 43 mainly from the Southern Hemisphere and 27 Aussies!! There were also some Mexicans, Americans, and Brazilians. It was great to speak in English with people who could actually understand you, but after the trip it was hard to go back to speaking French!! The euro trip was the highlight of the year so far!! Sad it's over now but made lots of great friends I can visit in the holidays.

This month was also the fete de la musique - a huge festival in every town for the start of summer. And also the final for the European fireworks competition. There were 3 huge displays by France, Germany and Denmark and it was very extravagant with each display going for about 15 minutes. (Wow! Ed.)

There was also a Rotary dinner for the changing of president of my club in Gannat with all the Rotarians and exchange students.

I've got 2 months of summer holidays now so lots of plans to catch up with people.

Jessica



Kaye - getting better and better!

Kaye Titmarsh reporting for **Boonah Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Charlottenlund Rotary Club, Denmark

Wow, My life as an exchange student just seems to be getting better and better! It's crazy to think that I'm almost halfway through my year away, it feels like only a week since I left home.

I had the best birthday of my life, not only because I turned the big 1-8 but it was just so cool to celebrate your birthday in a foreign country! I had the best day, I had a picnic with my friends during the day, then a lovely dinner with all my host families and some friends and my school class had a party for me and it was just so nice! (Wow - Awesome! Ed.)

I also understood my first Danish cartoon in the newspaper the other day... ha-ha I was so excited! My Danish is actually coming along pretty well, it's so mad, before I left I could only speak English and a tiny bit of German, now I speak English, Danish, Italian, a little bit of German and I'm working on my Portuguese! Exchange really opens up doors for you, I love it!

People often ask me if I'm homesick, but in all honesty I'm too busy to be homesick! Life as an exchangee is just so crazy busy, it's when you are sitting at home all day doing nothing that you

get homesick, so I like to keep busy. (*Great advice Kaye, Ed.*) And even if I wanted to do nothing, I probably couldn't! There's always something new and exciting that people are offering to show me or that I'm exploring on my own, it's so wonderful!

Reality started to set in this month when we had to start saying goodbye to our oldies, these guys looked after us so well when we first arrived, and had no idea what we'd gotten ourselves into and now the time has come for them to leave, for the most part, it still feels like they're here in DK and I'll just be seeing them next week some time, it's so unreal! I've been to the airport a couple of times to say goodbye and it's just the weirdest, most horrible feeling. It's so strange the way we just made friends so easily, but not just friends, I love these kids with all my heart, they're truly the best people I've ever known, we've bonded in such a special way, its amazing! We've had so many good times together, it's so nice sometimes to just talk and reflect on the memories, ha-ha wow we had some fun! All the exchangees in the KBH area look out for each other and we all just get along so well, ha-ha we're all so crazy we just have such a great time! So, with the oldies leaving, it's finally hit me that my time will come sooner rather than later (*What, and become an 'Oldie', egads! Ed.*), I can't imagine what it's going to be like to leave Denmark, I don't think I'm going to be ready to leave, but I have no choice - that's all part of it though, but having to say goodbye to all my Danish friends, and the exchangees is going to be horrible! The thing about leaving Australia was, I always knew I was going back, and everyone would still be there and it'd be sweet, but with my exchange, I don't know for sure when I will see these people again, it could be one year, it could be ten. But that is life as an exchange student I guess, it can't be all good - but for the record saying goodbye is a small price to pay for the most amazing year of my life!

Jeg elsker Danmark og jeg kan godt lide mit udvekslingstudenter venner!



Kaye



Naomi - June just slipped by!

Naomi Nishiguchi reporting for **Broadwater Southport Rotary Club, Australia**
 Dateline: - June, 2007
 Location: - Freistadt Rotary Club, Austria

Hello!

The month of June just slipped by! After finishing Eurotour I needed a few restful days before heading back to school. It is nearing the end of term so all the students are really busy studying for tests. Then it was Father's Day in Austria which to me felt unusually early in the year! I went to two Rotary meetings. One was at a large timber company where we had an interesting tour through the factory. The next week was the change of president meeting. It is interesting because in Austria they hold this event in the hometown of the president. So all the Rotary members and their families travelled to Steyr for a nice lunch and the next president was announced. It was a lady because in my club there are about the same amount of females as there are males. The next weekend I went to a festival called NovaRock! It was so cool! There were heaps of bands, including the Killers, 160 000 people, either camping or in caravans. The following week my host sister came back from doing her year's exchange in Australia! Wow! That was awesome! I loved her the moment I saw her. It was really emotional for everyone and me too because I began to think what it will be like when I go home. This had its benefit because I will know what to expect, but I got a little homesick after hearing her Aussie accent! To finish off the month I went to Germany with the class for an excursion. It was fascinating and I got to see some beautiful towns. The students were learning about some philosophers. We went to a great Baroque Museum, saw an Andy Warhol exhibition and saw Picasso in one gallery. (*Did you get a chance to say Hi! And introduce yourself? Ed.*)

That's all for now,

Naomi



Paola - was amazing!

Paola Lopez Hernandez reporting for **Cancun Rotary Club, Mexico**

Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Coomera Valley Rotary Club, Australia

I really enjoy my safari: D! Was amazing!!!

I love my host family!!

Paola



Ryan - going to Norway!

Ryan Burton-Ree reporting for **Stanthorpe Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Braine-le-compte Rotary Club, Belgium

Hi

How are you going? I am having a great time. I was on my Rotary trip in Italy last week and had a blast. We went to Sienna, Venice, Pisa and Florence. It was really beautiful and the weather was 35 degrees. I am going to Norway this week for 2 weeks holiday with my host family. I am really looking forward to it, but I think it is going to rain the whole time. *(Don't let that dampen your enthusiasm! Ed.)*

Anyway, I hope all is going well in Aust

Take care,

Ryan



Samuel - here is the news!

Samuel Brown reporting for **Grafton Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - June, 2007

Location: - Butanta Rotary Club, Brazil

Written like a news report here is my success of the month. *(And edited like one! Ed.)*

The exchange trip Samuel Brown has taken to Brazil has unearthed quite a solid soccer player.

After a 6 year hiatus playing rugby union the trip of the 18 year old man has rekindled a love for football and also surprisingly revealed a small streak of talent in the young boy. *(Where's my red pen? Either a Man or a Boy, not both! Ed.)* Playing in the right back position for his interschool challenge side (as in championship of the school) he has surprised many of the much more highly fancied Brazilian players with his uncompromising man-marking defensive style. The Australians pushing of the rules physical approach is obviously influenced by his years spent throwing his body in the way of rugby players. And while this approach has cost him a yellow card and much criticism from the opposition but it has been quite effective in nullifying the superior, footsal honed skills of his Brazilian opponents. *(A Smith & Wessen beats four aces every time. Ed.)*

With every game the young exchange student seems to grow in confidence with every game. *(Red pen time, repetition! Ed.)* After surprising many with his 2nd half performance in his first game, a one all draw, it was his 3rd game that he really showed his marked improvements. With his side down players and not being able to afford reserves, his ferocious man marking of the right defensive area may have erred on the wrong side of the rules at times and earned the rookie a yellow card, it succeeded in shutting down countless attacks. Another vital role this played was forcing the tactical moving of the opposition left-winger to his less effective right side. Another development was his occasional forays forward into the attack, which were quite rewarding, playing a vital assist in his sides' only goal and also coming within centimetres of a goal for himself. His performance in the vital game earned a much-deserved man of the match award.

While his future in the sport football is uncertain as the lure of rugby union when he returns to Australia will be strong it is obvious that he has been enjoying a change in sports.

Samuel





Ashleigh - EuroTour!

Ashleigh Luke reporting for
Coomera Valley Rotary Club, Australia

Dateline: - 20 June, 2007

Location: - Odense Hunderup Rotary Club, Denmark

Day 1.

So now I am on the bus and have left on the euro tour. I have been waiting all week for this and now it's finally here. Being on the bus is boring but I am sure it will get more exciting soon. *(I can guarantee that it will! Ed.)*

Later...

Ok so now it is 23:50 and the evening has been much more exciting than the bus ride (on which I slept a lot). We arrived at the hostel in Berlin at approximately 19:30. When we arrived we ate dinner and then we settled into our rooms. At 20:00 we went for a walk in town until 23:00. We looked at all the little cafe's and food places and I had my first Turkish pizza. Now we are in our room listening to music and just chillin. Tomorrow should be an exciting day also as we will be doing a lot of site seeing.

Day 2.

Today we spent most of the day on the west side of the Berlin wall where we saw parliament and a lot of consulates. We also visited the check point between the east and west this place is called Checkpoint Charlie. At this place we also saw part of the original Berlin Wall. In the afternoon we spent our time shopping on the east side in the city centre. I don't know exactly what I saw today because there are rude people at the back of the bus who constantly talk while the tour guide is talking (in English) then when he is talking in Danish they shut up. So when I can't understand they are quite and when I can understand they talk. It is so annoying. After dinner we went back to the parliament to the top of the building into a dome where we had a really good view of the city. It was absolutely amazing (except it started pouring down with rain). Today I also saw crosses for Jewish people who were either shot or drowned (or both) trying to cross the Berlin Wall.

Day 3.

Today was not as fun as what I was expecting. Today we were supposed to cross the boarder from Germany to the Czeck Republic and then visit an old concentration camp before heading to Prague, but when we reached the boarder and we surrender our passports for checking we waited at the boarder for 6 hours and 50 minutes, 3 people didn't have the correct something a rather and we couldn't cross the boarder until it was sorted out. *(Now you can see why the YEP Committee in Australia work hard at making sure that everything is prepared properly, so that these sort of things don't happen! Ed.)* When we finally started driving again we didn't have enough time to see the concentration camp, this really annoyed me as I find those kind of things interesting. Then as we were driving through the Czeck republic I couldn't even take pictures of the gorgeous view. The Czeck Republic is an amazing and completely gorgeous place and I am so excited about site seeing and shopping in Prague. Oh while in Berlin I almost said the stupidest thing. I almost asked what language they speak in Berlin!! How blonde is that?! *(Ummmm, do you really want an answer to that question! Ed.)*

Day 4.

Today was great, I got up early and had a shower and I was really fresh and cheery, we went site seeing and saw the amazing castles and buildings in the beautiful city of Prague. Then we bought some souvenirs and then we went to the yellow market to buy fake Loui Vitton and Gucci. This was a lot of fun. The whole shopping experience at the yellow market was all about the haggling. The prices of the stuff is always put up and it's your job to get it down. The people selling will always put the price down cos they want your money, some are more stubborn than others but if you know how to haggle properly then you can always get the price down. The best thing you can do is to start walking away, it always works to get a cheaper price. Like I needed a summer jacket and I found one that I liked so I asked how much it was and the lady said 650 Czeck kroner, so I told her I would think about it and come back and I didn't even get to turn

around when she said buy it now for 300, so I did cos it was less than half the original price she told me. (*Atta Girl! Ed.*)

Day 5.

Today we drove to Austria. It was pretty uneventful, we watched American history X, we got pulled over by the police (just routine check) and then we watched some Sex and the City. We arrived in Austria and took our luggage to our rooms and then had dinner. After dinner we went to an Amusement Park and it was so awesome! On the bus on the way to the amusement park I was so excited, I felt like a little kid whose mum was letting them eat candy all day. The first ride I went on was a water ride and all I could do was laugh and scream the whole time, it was so much fun! Then I went on a roller coaster where you are laying in a horizontal position, that was awesome as well. Then I went on the Ferris wheel the view was amazing and I got some really good photos. I went on a haunted house ride which scared me but no one else. I bought a t-shirt as well and it is really cool it has the sign that means be careful of the kangaroos and it says no kangaroos in Austria. I have spent more money than I have expected to which is bad but it will be a long time before I can come back to these places again.

Day 6.

Today we went site seeing in Vienna. It was great I saw many old churches and a gorgeous museum. It was all very amazing, I saw the church of St Elizabeth and when I walked inside the church I could feel the peacefulness and calmness, it felt magical. Today we also found out that 4 people from bus 2 (Argentineans) are going back to Argentina cos while in Berlin they got caught by the police for stealing number plates. The police took them back to the hotel in handcuffs and they are now back in Denmark and will be going back to Argentina in 10 days. Amongst these 4 boys was my friend pika. Me and him were good friends, he called me his little friend. I was really looking forward to seeing him when bus 1 and 2 meet up in Italy but now I won't see him again at all. (*How sad – what a stupid way to cut short your exchange – I wonder if they think it was worth the effort! Ed.*) We went to a concert

tonight as well it was an orchestra with dancers and opera singers it was very good except we were stuck in the back corner of the concert hall and it was very hot we practically roasted.

Day 7.

We travelled into Italy today and our tour guide organised for us to go to a discothèque tonight and it was crazy fun with lots of music and dancing!!!

Day 8.

We just relaxed today it was very nice, we spent the whole day at the beach it was so nice. Then at night we had a beach party that was also really good. It was a wonderful day in Italy.

Day 9.

Today we went site seeing in Venice. It was absolutely wonderful, we went shopping and ate pizza and ice cream. That night bus 2 arrived at the hotel in Italy which was really great, we got to see a lot of the other exchange students and then we went to a discothèque again and it was a lot of fun!

Day 10.

I slept really well last night and I got up extra early to make sure that I packed all my stuff and didn't leave anything behind at the hotel. Then we got on the bus and drove to San Remo where we were to stay the night. Now it is 00:20am and I have just got back into my room after being locked out. Our curfew was in rooms by 12 but when me and Gabbi got back from our walk at 12 the other 2 girls had locked the door and gone to sleep with the TV on so they didn't hear us knocking on the door, but we finally got in.

Day 11.

Today we went to Monaco to see a castle that was taken over by warriors dressed up as Monks. We also got to see the Formula 1 time trials, I managed to get pictures of the cars and a short film. I also bought myself the 2007 Formula 1 grand prix t-shirt and I got dad a hat. It was lots of fun! Then we continued to France, here we visited a perfume factory and were able to buy cheap perfume I didn't buy any though cos I couldn't really afford it. Then we drove further

into France to Avignon to our hostel. We put our luggage in our rooms and had dinner. While waiting to go for a walk after dinner me and my Brazilian friends wanted a photo with our tour guide and while we were standing to take the photo he burnt me with his smoke. It wasn't just a little touch either he almost put it out on my head. It really, really hurt! (*I hope you said something to him! Ed.*)

Day 12.

Ok, so this morning I thought I wasn't going to get breakfast cos I didn't get the ticket we needed to pay for breakfast, but it worked out in the end cos they didn't take Dai's ticket. Then we went to a river that is made from a spring coming up out of the ground and I had a very nice crepe with Nutella. Then we went into the city for a while. When we got back to the hostel we hung out until dinner. Dinner was much better tonight compared to last night we had pizza and spaghetti with ice cream for dessert. (*I'm glad you added the 'for dessert' bit, I was imagining what spaghetti would taste like with ice cream! Ed.*) After dinner we had a little party for Jessica's b'day we had music and cake.

Day 13.

I had a ticket for breakfast today so I didn't have to worry about not getting any. I was the key master for my room and this morning before we left I had to give the key to the Rotary people so they could check the room, but the problem was that no one seemed to have the key so I was a little worried. I was asking everyone in the room but they kept sending me to other people. Eventually one of the Japanese girls decided to check her bag and guess what she had it. For the rest of the day we drove to Paris.

Day 14.

Today we went site seeing on the bus in Paris and saw many marvellous land marks including Notre Dame, the Eifel Tower and the Louvre Museum and we went on a river tour as well. We went to the Louvre and saw the Mona Lisa among with lots of other beautiful pieces of artwork. I then went to the Notre Dame church and went inside to have a look. It was so beautiful. I then had Italian food for dinner and

then went back to the hotel. I went to the internet cafe with a friend and on the way back to the hotel we got followed by a creepy black guy, we were lucky that the guy who works at the hotel who really took a liking to me got rid of the creepy guy for us.

Day 15.

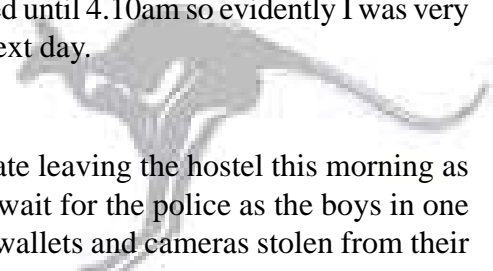
Today we went site seeing on our own. I went to see the Moulin Rouge Theatre. Then I got to see the Sacre Core (I don't know how it's spelt) (*That's all right, I don't either! Ed.*), a huge beautiful Catholic church. This church was amazing and there was a mass while I was there with singing and everything. Even though it was in French it just felt like god was there, it made me want to sing out to god. After this amazing experience we had lunch and then went shopping. When we had finished looking around we headed back to the hotel to get ready to go to the Cirque de Silay. The circus was really good some of the things were so amazing and the clowns were very funny. However we missed the start of the circus, let me explain. We left the hotel at 6pm to get to the circus at 8pm. We got off the subway at 7.30pm but we weren't sure which direction to walk in so we asked for directions. We followed the directions and couldn't find it. After this happened about 3 times and it was 7.45pm we found some police and asked them for directions. Following there directions we finally found it and we were late but the annoying thing is that when we found it we could see the big sport stadium where we had gotten off the subway. It was so annoying. In the end the circus was good that's the main thing.

Day 16.

This morning we left Paris on our way to Belgium. We had a couple of hours to shop and then we went to the hostel for dinner and to settle in for the night. I planned on going to bed early as I wasn't feeling so good but I didn't end up going to bed until 4.10am so evidently I was very tired the next day.

Day 17.

We were late leaving the hostel this morning as we had to wait for the police as the boys in one room had wallets and cameras stolen from their



room. We finally got on our way to Arheim. We stopped in Amsterdam for an hour and a half and then drove 3 hours to the hostel where we were sleeping. It was a pretty boring night. There was a lot of flag signing, it is a popular idea to have a flag from your country and get everyone to sign it. *(That would be a cool memento of the trip! Ed.)*

Day 18.

We travelled back to Denmark today and it was a rather sad trip for 2 reasons. One we didn't want our trip to end and 2 it was the last time a lot of us were going to be seeing a lot of the exchange students before they left to go back home. There was crying lots of photos and lots of hugging and singing.

So that is my euro tour in the shortest possible form hope you enjoy!!!

Lots of love - xoxox

Ashleigh



Esther - I am having a ball!

Esther Crothers reporting for **Grafton Midday Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - July, 2007

Location: - Marenes/Oleron Rotary Club, France

Take up every opportunity possible the things you get to do while abroad are amazing!!!! I am having a ball!!! *(Great advice for everyone! Ed.)*

Esther



Greg - was more independent!

Greg Rulfs reporting for **Surfers Paradise West Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - July, 2007

Location: - Mazatlan A.C Rotary Club, Mexico

Honestly not so much happening this month over here. The start of the month I was still in school because the school I

am going to doesn't have summer vacations like the others, I'm not sure why not. The month was basically spent just living life here in Mexico and being part of the family here. Over the last month I have felt that I've gotten closer to my host brothers and parents too. I feel more welcome in their home each day. This was the first month when I was pretty much the only exchange student in the city and it's a strange feeling. Usually you feel like your one of a greater number of people doing the same thing as you but this month it was like I'm by myself. In some ways I enjoyed it more because I could do things and it was like I was more independent here. At the same time it's a bit lonely and I had become great friends with most of the students and it was different to have them gone. Also it's a strange feeling because when I arrived I met them all and it seemed like they were perfectly settled in, speaking Spanish perfectly and a huge part of the way through their year. When they left I realised I've been here that amount of time too and it really doesn't seem half as long as it's been although so much has happened. I enjoyed meeting all the Mexican students from this city who had been on exchange and I had already met most of their families. Looking back and seeing how far into the year it is I have no doubt the next 5 months will go by so fast so I'm looking forward to all the things coming up as I move into the final half of the year.

Greg



Jessica - summer holidays!

Jessica Hoey reporting for **Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - July, 2007

Location: - Gannat Rotary Club, France

Hey everyone,

For the summer holidays my host family took me to the south coast of France for a week. It was really great weather and it was good to go to the beach again - I live about 3 hours away - we went shopping and to the beach in the day and concerts on the beach at night. On one of the days we

went to Cassis and did a boat ride around the islands, it was amazing. I've also been travelling a lot in my region with friends and my host family, visiting Vichy, Clermont Ferrand, Limoges, Montlucon and Milau. It's really interesting to see how different the departments of France are. They all have their own specialities and traditions.

My host sister came back from an exchange in New Zealand at the beginning of the month and it was great to hear about her trip and see how easy it was for her to adjust to life back home. We have been cooking a lot of Australian and New Zealand for our host family to try.

This month was also the National Day of France, it's similar to Australia day with fireworks in every town and big parties. I was in Toulon for the fete and we went to the top of a mountain and could see the fireworks in all the surrounding towns.

Salut

Jessica



Billie - this surreal world of exchange!

Billie Mertens reporting for **Tamborine Mountain Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - August, 2007

Location: - Verviers Rotary Club, Belgium

This year is so super amazing and it fly byes way too fast!! It's so cool to be an exchange student! The people you meet, the friendships you create around the world is so special, the places you go are unbelievable, the things you see and experience are so hard to comprehend but yes we have been there and yes we did get through that. We grow up and don't want to return to our normal lives but as we are told all good things must come to and end and unfortunately this amazing thing is coming all too quickly to an end. So we out there making the most of every moment we have left in this surreal world of exchange.

Bisous Billie xoxo



Billie



Greg - a fantastic month!

Greg Rulfs reporting for **Surfers Paradise West Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - August, 2007

Location: - Mazatlan A.C Rotary Club, Mexico

Had a fantastic month in August. At the start of the year I remember looking at the calendar thinking, when I get to August I will be starting the final half of my exchange and I didn't expect it to come as suddenly as it did. I can't believe I look at my watch and it tells me that it's the 9th month of they year. The month started a bit slow since I was at home with my host dad and the rest of the family were visiting an aunt up north so it was a little bit lonely but a friend came and stayed for a while and I was able to keep myself busy. On the 16th I flew out to Los Angeles with my host dad (in first class) where we went to pick up the rest of the family who had been staying just across the border. We stayed in San Diego a few nights before returning to Los Angeles for another night. We then returned to Mazatlan where it was extremely hot, about 35 to 40 most days, and I only spent 5 days there before I flew out to Guadalajara, a city about 5 hours by car south. I stayed with a family there and had a fantastic time getting to know the city. It has a lot of history and is really beautiful, it never ceases to amaze me how different the different parts of Mexico are. This month I really felt like I started to feel more at home then ever here in Mazatlan. I look some advanced Spanish classes at the start of the month and as a result I feel really confident and not like the language is holding me back. (*Greg, that's really great news! Ed.*) From this point in your exchange you tend to forget about how long it is before you come home and rather just enjoy the time you have knowing that if you dare check the calendar you'll be left wondering how the time went so fast. That's all for this month, the next little while looks to be just as exciting. New students have arrived and I met them this morning at the Rotary meeting. It's strange to be the one who has been here the longest and knows the language etc. Also I'm starting in my new school where I'm going to be studying music and art.

Everything so far seems to have been a great success.

Greg



Jessica - very lucky this month!

Jessica Hoey reporting for **Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club, Australia**
 Dateline: - August, 2007
 Location: - Gannat Rotary Club, France

Hi,

I've been very lucky this month and been on lots of trips; I spent the first 2 weeks of August in Ireland with my new host family. We spent 1 week driving along the beautiful west coast and the 1 week in Dublin. (*As a passenger, I trust! Ed.*) The scenery was amazing and I visited St Patrick's Cathedral, the Book of Kells in Trinity university, Dublin Castle, a performance of traditional Irish dance and music and many other castles and churches.

Then my mum arrived and we spent 2 days in Biarritz on the west coast of France; we then went to Paris and did lots of tours of the city. I climbed the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triumph, visited the Louvre and saw the Mona Lisa and the Winged Victory, went to the Moulin Rouge, toured the Royal Opera and visited the Grande and Petit Palaces. On one of the days we were there we saw the filming of the Pink Panther 2 and saw Steve Martin!

Then we flew to Germany and stayed with Eva (a German exchange student who stayed with my family) and her family and visited her Town and the surrounding area... After that we returned to Riom, my town, and stayed with my host family for a few days and attended a Rotary dinner to introduce my mum to my French Rotary Club. Then my grandparents arrived and we rented a house in a village just near Riom. I was able to show them all around my town, introduce them to my host families and friends and Rotary club. (*Sounds like you're having a grand old time! Ed.*)

Looking forward to the start of school and the Rugby World cup starting in September!

Ciao

Jessica



Josephine - I am really happy!

Josephine Hohrein reporting for **Mainz 50 Nord Rotary Club, Germany**
 Dateline: - August, 2007
 Location: - Grafton Midday Rotary Club, Australia

Rotary Club, Australia

My first month here is over and I am really happy to be here!

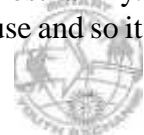
Of course there were some very exciting things e.g., my first day at school and my first host family... actually everything was very exciting! But I have already met so many nice people and every one tries to help me and show me many, many new things!

On the day I arrived in Australia the first big different I noticed was the landscape. All the plants were different and there were so many interesting things to discover... I was really excited but also really tired. (*Just because you'd spent over a day travelling, that's no excuse for being tired! Ed.*)

After two days at home with the family of my host counsellor I had my first day at school. I was really nervous how the other students would welcome me... but actually there was nothing to worry about. Every one was really nice to me and in my first weeks always one of the students showed me the way to my next class room so I did not get lost in the school!

Now I have already made some friends at school and I am able to find the right rooms on my own. Of course yet my friends here are not the same like my friends in Germany but I am confident that I will find some really good friends while I am here!

This month I also moved to my first host family. I am the first host student in their house and so it is a new experience for all of us.



I have one host sister only a bit younger than me and to older brothers but they don't live at home any more. I get along with my host sister very well and because she is nearly the same age I can to her sports with her.

The first day in this house were a bit strange because I felt more like a guest than a family member but now I fell like a part of the family. *(Excellent! Ed.)*

And they gave me even my own house keys! At the weekends they always try to show me something new e.g., take me to the beach and look for dolphins or find some kangaroos for me! They are really nice!!

Another highlight this month was the Rotary briefing camp at the Gold Coast.

It was just amazing how easy it is to make friends from all over the world!! And because we all made similar experiences during the last Month we got good friends really fast! I am already looking forward to the next camp!

I think that was enough about this month even if I had many more great experiences!!!

Josephine



Karen - the first weeks were horrible!

Karen Braak reporting for **Brunsbüttel Rotary Club, Germany**

Dateline: - August, 2007
Location: - Warwick Evening

Rotary Club, Australia

The first weeks were horrible for me. I was so homesick, although I hadn't expected to be. *(Nobody ever does! Ed.)* After the first week I had to move to another family, THAT was definitely a challenge. But now I've settled in very good. It's true what everybody tells me: You get used to it. Now I know that it's true. *(Yup, that it is! You just have to give it a try! Ed.)*

School is VERY different from school in Germany. Easier... that's quite good. I like the open minded atmosphere of the people in Australia, they just accept you and don't judge

by the things you wear, your friends, where you come from etc.

Karen



Tobias - dressage and cross country!

Tobias Niederberger reporting for ?? Rotary Club, Switzerland

Dateline: - August, 2007
Location: - Nerang Rotary

Club, Australia

On the 25/26 of August Tony and Leigh took me up to Warwick for the horse event. We had great fun on Saturday watching dressage and cross country. Unfortunately it got all cancelled on Sunday but we then went for a drive with visit of the Glengallan Homestead.

Tobias

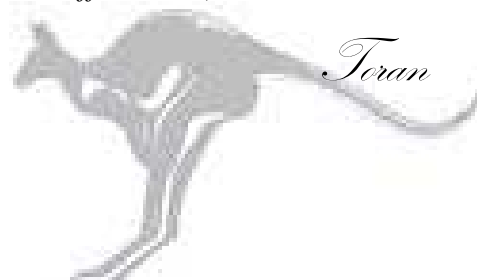


Toran - cross Canada tour!

Toran Penfold reporting for **Southport Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - August, 2007
Location: - Charlottetown Rotary Club, Canada

Went on the cross Canada tour recently, went to Moncton, Pei, Shediac, Qbec, Montreal, Ottawa (on Canada day) , Toronto, Edminton, Calgary (during the stampede), Bampff , Jasper (in the Rockies) Vancouver, Saltspring island , Vancouver island. And we stopped off at a few more places along the way. It really was the time of my life, if there's any chance of an exchange student going on a euro tour or across Canada tour or something they would be nuts not to go... *(I may have used a stronger word like IDtenT, but 'Nuts' will suffice! Ed.)*





Daniel - it's a bit late!

Daniel Foster reporting for **Tweed Heads South Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - September, 2007
Location: - Künzelsau-Oehringen Rotary Club, Germany

Hi, sorry it's a bit late. I was in Berlin with my Parents and only got home yesterday evening. (*Excuses, excuses, excuses, that's all Exchange Students always have for late (or missed) reports - is excuses. Ed.*) Hope all is well back home. Loving it here as always and am optimistic for yet another month here in Germany.

Well I'll talk to u again soon.

Daniel



Emma - another late report!

Emma Wood reporting for **Burleigh Heads Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - September, 2007
Location: - Flers Rotary Club, France

Bonjour Voila!

Another late report which won't be very long as I have to rush off to Paris soon! (*Well, some people! Ed.*)

I'm spending the weekend there with my new host family for a birthday... I think. I just know that there's going to be HEAPS of family, none of whom I know... should be fun!

I changed host families on the 14th of September and am now chez la famille Thomas. It's a complete change as there are 4 children (Charlotte 16, Helene 2, Georges 23 and Clothilde 25) and all the uncles and aunts and cousins and grandparents and EVERYONE in the family lives in Conde. So every weekend there's some new relative coming round for dinner who I've never met and who's name I forget straight away. Un peu amusant!

It's been fine, I settled in straight away and they're all nice and easy to get along with. AND I've

joined the local gym and am doing step classes every Thursday with Clothilde which is quite fun, but I'm incredibly uncoordinated so it's quite embarrassing when I'm tripping over the step thing whilst all the other women who are in their 60's are jumping up and down doing everything perfectly. (*Ahhhh - that's the secret then - lots of practice obviously! Ed.*)

As for events this month... well, school, of course which I'm absolutely LOVING at the moment. I really, really don't want to go home now because I keep making more and more friends and it's so fun... I'm going to miss it.

On the 14th and 15th of September the Rotary club hosted members of its sister club in Warminster, England. So for the weekend I was translator! We went to le Mont St Michel (again!) and went bowling, had a few nice meals in restaurants... it was a good weekend. But I had to end it by packing up all my stuff in order to change families. THAT wasn't too fun! There's still sooo much chez Veronique : I'm not sure of the exact date but we also had the District Governor at a Rotary meeting so I presented him with the Burleigh Heads Rotary flag and I THINK all the Rotarian's now think that the club is LITERALLY on the beach, sitting in the sand, thanks to some not-too-good French! Mais tant pis!

Oh! There was also a day where all the exchange students in the district met up. It was weird because there's only me and another Australian in this district and we've been here since January, whilst all the new ones are Canadian, American, Japanese, etc., so they've JUST arrived and everything is so new to them all. It makes me wish that I had arrived at the same time as the rest because they're all going through the same things that I did, but about 9 months ago. There's a weekend organised with 4 districts in France for the first few days of the holidays. We're going to go to le Mont St Michel (5th time!!!) and around Cane, the D-Day beaches... a weekend which I already did in March but it was good so I'm not complaining. And time with the other students is always fun!

That's it for this month. I've had a few little problems with the new family in the sense that



they are VERY strict with the rules but that's just something I'll have to get used to. Not that I'm even sure if going to the local park (which I walk through every morning to get to school) to have a picnic with a friend is forbidden... mais c'est comme ca!!

I was talking to some friends on MSN the other day and they were talking about how it's getting hotter already, whilst here I'm walking to school in the dark, wearing God knows HOW many of layers of clothes! I'll be home in 3 months and a bit and I'm really not looking forward to it, it's going to go SO quickly! OH!! I don't know if I've mentioned it, but my family and I are living in France NEXT year, from July to the July after! And maybe indefinitely for me!! We have an old house near Toulouse (so I'll pickup a GREAT accent) with a pool and I can't wait! I'm so happy that I'll be returning to France because I really do love the culture here and I can come back and see all my friends... c'est trop bien!!

I better go, I think we're leaving soon.

Au revoir et a bien tot!!

Emma



Esther – never give up!

Esther Crothers reporting for **Grafton Midday Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - September, 2007

Location: - Marennes/Oleron Rotary Club, France

On my weekend in Royan where all the exchange students got together for the first time since the new arrivals, I met this girl from the USA who apparently was having an awful time here in France, they have only been here for a month and she was telling us how she just felt she didn't fit it and it was all so different. Of course things are going to be different in another country with a different language, and it's going to take a while to settle in. I have just had news she is on the next flight home because she says, she gives up its just too hard... We tried and tried to tell her on the weekend the first 3 months are always a little hard but you have to try and pull through

and get to the stage us Australians are at now after 8 months and we don't want to come home, we kept saying it gets better and that you will have a ball! But no I think she had already given up... Piece of advice to all current new Inbounders and all those thinking about going on exchange... It's not always easy!!! But never give up!!! Like this girl I think it was all in her head and she had already decided to give up before she gave it a proper chance, you pull through and have the best time of your life... now I don't want to leave!!! DONT GIVE UP WHEN THINGS AREN'T PERFECT! (*What excellent advice Esther! Ed.*)

Esther



Greg - a huge fake moustache!

Greg Rulfs reporting for **Surfers Paradise West Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - September, 2007

Location: - Mazatlan A.C Rotary Club, Mexico

September up until now has been mostly spent getting into my new school which has gone well. I'm studying music and friends seem to be easy to make there. Other than that the climate is starting to cool down slightly and hurricanes are less frequent and so it's becoming more pleasant. I am enjoying life here as usual and enjoying being in such a nice place. New exchange students arrived last month and so this month I have been able to meet most of them and get to know them a bit, it's good not to be the only exchange student here again. Independence Day was on the 15th of September. I was able to go with my host dad to a political party in the City Hall with the president and kind of the main place for the night. That was a good experience but a bit boring, afterwards I went to a Rotary function dressed up in a huge fake moustache and Mexican hat in which I made the newspaper the next day. (*That would have been great! Where's the copy of the photo? Ed.*) It was a fun night and everyone was crazy which is the usual when something happens here in Mexico. (*Crazy is not quite the word for it,*

Mexicans have a great zest for life and are such nice happy people! Ed.) Other than that there isn't a lot more to write about since I have only been here about 2 weeks since my last report. I'm writing early this month because I won't be here for the change of the month and so I need to get it in early. There will be a lot more to tell for my next report in which I will include the last week of September.

Greg



Jordan - I love being an exchange student!

Jordan LaPoint reporting for **Manistee-Sunrise Rotary Club, USA**
Dateline: - September, 2007

Location: - Ballina Rotary Club, Australia

I love being an exchange student. It has opened my eyes to so many new things and I have met so many new people already. *(That's the magic about being on exchange! Ed.)* When I go back to the United States I will encourage people to sponsor exchange students and for anyone interested in becoming an exchange student. Learning things about a different culture first hand is so much better than anything you could experience in a classroom at your school in your home country. *(You got that right! Ed.)*

Jordan



Josephine - no weekend at home!

Josephine Hohrein reporting for **Mainz 50 Nord Rotary Club, Germany**
Dateline: - September, 2007
Location: - Grafton Midday Rotary Club, Australia

Now is already my 2nd month in Australia over... Well, let's see what has happened this month... actually a lot!

I was no weekend at home!! First I was in Yamba at the beach and then at Red Rock for father's day. I had many really Australian BBQs and learned about the Aussie Rules Football... The next weekend a member of my host club took

me for a camping weekend at Mulligan's Hut and we did some really great bush walks - two through the rain forest and one through the dry eucalypt forest. Australia has so many different landscapes so close together!

I saw thousand new plants and a wallaby sat for nearly a whole day next to our campsite!!

In the week after that I had my final exams for Year 11... because in Germany our school year starts in August I had just finished Year 10 and now after only 7 weeks I finished Year 11! And on top of that I managed it to pass some of my subjects!! *(Wow! Ed.)*

Another big thing I have done this month is my art project for school. I like drawing and because I am already in Australia I thought I could try some really old Australian art: an Aboriginal painting!!! I liked those colourful painting but I actually knew nothing about it.

So the first thing I learned is that every Aboriginal painting tells a story. I was fascinated from this idea and so I decided to draw my own Story - "My exchange year in Australia"... Now after many hours of painting dots my drawing is finally finished!!! It looks really colourful and tells an exciting story... and I am in this story at the moment!

That's enough about that. Another really exciting thing has happened this month: I went to Sydney!!! My host sister had a science Experience course in the University of NSW and so my host family took me to Sydney and I was wonderful!! Sydney is just huge!

We walked everywhere - across the Harbour Bridge and Opera House, to the Rocks, through Manly, to Darling Harbour, to the Sydney Aquarium, to the Art Gallery of NSW, through the Botanical Garden, up the Tower, through China Town, to the Queen Victoria Building, ... And after all this my feet were very used but I really like Sydney and I think I have seen the most important things... Besides this I have settled in a bit more into my family and at school. I already went to the beach with some of my friend.

Oh and before I forget: I have seen many Australian animals... kangaroos, wallabies, platypus, fish, tortoises, bats, wombat, snakes,

birds, Spiders (I went to a reptiles park), sting ray, dolphins ... All in all it was another really exciting month!

Josephine



Karen – goin’ Pign’!

Karen Braak reporting for **Brunsbüttel Rotary Club, Germany**

Dateline: - September, 2007
Location: - Warwick Evening Rotary Club, Australia

Well, yesterday people told me that you have wild pigs in Australia and that you can go and shoot them, called Pign’. It was quite funny when they explained me, that Pign’ wouldn’t be something for me to do. We’ll see, somebody from Rotary wants to take me shooting pigs. I really want to do that, I want to try everything while I am in Australia. (*Atta girl! Ed.*)

One of my biggest challenges was definitely the homesickness. I cried trough the whole first weeks. But it’s amazing to how many things a human being can get used to. Now I don’t want to go home again, except the times when I miss my family. And then I was wondering why I was putting on so much weight. I felt like one of those piggies I’m going to shoot, lol. But then I recognized, that the people around me really try to kill themselves with fast-food and that I just eat what they eat, and that’s why. Fast-food all in all is much more popular then in Germany, and you’ve got SO MUCH advertising on the TV and the radio for things like Red Rooster, Maccas, Subways, Hungry Jacks etc. etc. etc... We really don’t have that. Just sometimes Burger King or Maccas.

The thing I am the most happy about is the Australian landscape. It is so beautiful when the sun goes down and the last sparkling sunlight comes through the trees. And that I don’t even have to think about talking English all the time is pretty useful, too.

Just talk... and it works.



Karen



Kaye - going just great!

Kaye Titmarsh reporting for **Boonah Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - September, 2007
Location: - Charlottenlund Rotary Club, Denmark

Everything is going just great, I don’t really know what to write. I’ve been here long enough now that I don’t even feel like an exchange student anymore; I’m just another Danish kid. It’s really nice though, Denmark is my home and I love it. I look forward to coming home to see my family, but after a month I think I will be ready to come back to DK, it’s such a great country and I will miss my Danish friends a lot, but hopefully they will come visit me in Australia. (*You just never know! Great things just happen! Ed.*)

Kaye



Laura - having a blast!

Laura Priest reporting for **Ashmore Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - September, 2007
Location: - ?? Rotary Club, USA

Having a blast!!!! There’s never a dull moment when you’re an exchange student! (*Ain’t that the truth! Ed.*)

Laura



Toran – where are my plane tickets!

Toran Penfold reporting for **Southport Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - September, 2007
Location: - Charlottetown Rotary Club, Canada

(*General things of interest you would like to share?*) Ha-ha not really... just that packing to change host families can yield interesting discoveries... I had no idea where my plane tickets were...

But when I looked in a pocket of my big suitcase I found them... and I've been looking for it for the last 4 months ha-ha... so look where you least expect it! *(I've found that they are always in the last place you look, so I start there next time! Ed.)*

Toran



Esther - I'm sorry it's late!

Esther Crothers reporting for **Grafton Midday Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - October, 2007

Location: - Marennnes/Oleron Rotary Club, France

Bonjour Well none of my details have changed since the last report so in this one I will just give a run down of my very exciting month past... and I'm sorry it's late, you will understand why after you read about this busy month. *(Egads, even more excuses. Ed.)*

Well it started with going to Lacanau as I mentioned in the last report to visit the German rebounder who was holidaying in there in France, I got a phone call at 1pm from one of the other Australian exchange students who lives in Bordeaux saying he had managed to get us tickets for the Australia verse Canada Rugby game that afternoon at 3pm. It was very lucky I was at Lacanau which is only 1 hour from Bordeaux, I went to the bus stop got there 10 mins too late however was extremely lucky that the bus was running 20 mins late!!!! So I managed to get to Bordeaux I missed the kick off and only 3 mins of the game!!! *(Ahhh! The joys of a well run public transport system! Ed.)* It was fantastic surrounded by mad Australians yelling and screaming supporting the Wallabies, not many Canadians though. It was odd listening to the Australian accent again, being only exposed to the terrible French accent or English accent this year. Big celebrations in Bordeaux that night with all the Australians, seeing as we won, which made it even better.

I visited a chateau with my host dad and brother in my region called La Roche Courban. It was amazing. Like a fairy tale castle and people still

live in it, however as it is so large, their living quarters are sectioned off and the rest is open for exhibition, though we entered the dining room and kitchen which are still in use today. Also on the property of the Chateau are Neolithic Caves, formed by the river but there is lots of evidence that Neolithic men once lived there. *(What? Ancient beer cans, old cars, etc. Ed.)*

I am continuing with my personal French lessons and am progressing immensely! I'm working hard on the grammar and spelling etc., and am now finding it much easier understanding my classes. After the holidays I was following the course completely with out even realising it. Its very exciting when things happen like that you know you have it pretty well down pat when that happens. Oh and I have started dreaming in French and apparently sleep talk in French too. *(That's a good sign of the turning point in your understanding of the language! Ed.)*

This month I have also started giving English lessons to a young girl in about year 8 who has been really sick missed a lot of school, and is struggling particularly in English so I just help her revise what they did in the last class and with her vocabulary. *(Excellent! Ed.)*

Being in a host family of only boys my host mum is really grateful to have another girl finally in the house. We went to a fashion parade the other day in Rochefort, where all the local shops entered their latest winter fashions... It was nice to be able to share that with her, she is enjoying our girly times, as am I, as she reminds me a lot of my mum. Always beautiful and elegant and always has something nice and positive to say. I'm going to miss her a lot when I leave.

And the big highlight of my month was going to England! I have an Australian friend who is on a gap year working at a school at Brentwood near Essex close to London this year. She is a childhood friend so it was fantastic to catch up with her and discover England a little. We took one of the sightseeing buses around London where I saw Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, and St Pauls cathedral. We also visited the Tower of London where I saw the Royal Jewels... WOW!!!!!! Kensington Palace the former residence of Princess Diana, Buckingham Palace

the Queens current residence, and a River Thames cruise.

I also had the chance to see my favourite movie ever, Dirty Dancing performed live in musical! In one of the numerous theatres around Lycester square.

We went and spent the day in Cambridge, took another red sight-seeing bus around all the colleges of Cambridge University. It is a nice little town but without the university it wouldn't be very much, it was a little like Armidale actually. We also went river punting where the university student boys mainly punt or row you (a little like the Venetian gondolas) up and back on the river where you can see the internal parts of the colleges.

I also happened to be in England for the Rugby World Cup final England verse South Africa. My friend and I left half an hour before the game to go to a pub, thinking it would be plenty of time to get there and find a place however we waited in line for 45 mins to get into the sports bar but obviously no one was going to come out after the game started, so we decided to head home. However we found another bar called the Slug and Lettuce, where it was being played where all the overflow of the others 2 sports bars had come to watch the game, so the atmosphere was just as good... however England supporters were not very happy with the final result but my South African Exchange student friends were very pleased... (*I wonder why? Ed.*)

So Anna showed me London however hadn't been to Paris properly so we flew to Paris for the weekend and I showed her around a little... We visited the Pompidou Centre with its many famous artists and paintings, the Arc de Triomphe, Le Sacre Coeur, Versailles, a Seine River Cruise and visited Park Asterix, a theme park with roller coasters etc. We both really enjoyed Paris too, minus the few complications by only just making check in times and Anna's luggage not turning up on the luggage carousel in Charles De Gaulle airport in Paris.

I then had a Rotary weekend in a very small town called Nérac about an hour south of Bordeaux, this was the second meeting for all the new students who arrived in July and August so we

got to know them all a little better. However it was also the last meeting for us all together, the students from the Southern Hemisphere so the 7 Australians 1 New Zealander and 1 South African are leaving in January... We have got to know each other really well and it was really sad knowing it was our last official big meeting together and knowing that maybe we won't see some of the others again... We had a great weekend though. Consisting of an Orientation course which Daria my Aussie friend and the 2 Japanese girls and my self set out dawdling talking, taking our time, we managed to find every flag, one of the very few groups who managed to do so and we also came first!!!! We were very proud of our selves. We also were asked to take with us the ingredients of something from our country and we prepared it for all the Rotarians. We tasted the spicy Mexican food, elaborate Japanese and Taiwanese, American cookies, Reindeer Pate from Finland, Pavlova and I made Lamingtons and many more yummy things. (*And where, pray tell, is my Lammo's. Ed.*)

It was then the school holidays again and I visited Paris again... I love that city!!!! As I had already done all the touristy things, these 9 days consisted of doing the art and history hidden in Paris all with a great Parisian guide and friend. We visited the Catacombs where there is room after room lined with stacked up bones... No bodies just the bones piled up with the skulls making patterns in between, it was kind of creepy knowing all these people had been removed from their graves in an over crowded Parisian cemetery. My friend was also interested in visiting the other part of Paris, the underground sewer system I thought he was joking at first but no he was really interested. So we had a guided tour of the sewers with its rat's awful smell and rushing water amongst other delightful things... I did learn though that's Paris was the first city to use recycled drinking water. I climbed the Arc de Triomphe, the view was amazing in this view you can actually place the Eiffel Tower unlike when you are on top of it. I visited the Rodin Museum, amazing sculptures. The Quai Branly Museum where in the gift shop I looked up and there was Emma the other girl who came to France from our Rotary district in Australia, such a surprise to see her! It's a small world! I went to the

Picasso Museum, Monet Museum, this was amazing my favourite! Musée Galleria where there was a large display of 1920s clothes so all the dresses that look like potato sacks! (*Don't laugh, but most were! Ed.*) And le Sacre Coeur again for the 4th time, it's so beautiful and relaxing there! J'ADORE PARIS!... I LOVE PARIS!

From Paris I went directly to Chartres where I met my host mum who introduced me to all her family and they organised a personal tour of the Cathedral in Chartres; considered to be the most beautiful in France. I got to see the outside of the stained glass windows inside the roof of the church, climb the 326 steps of the steeple and see the 6 large bells! It was amazing and the view spectacular also!

I then came back home to my little town of Pont l'Abbé D'Arnoult, population 2000 and those 2000 are the teachers and families of the students of Saint Louis the private school which I now attend! It's beautiful and I love it here! I don't want to come home!!! 67 days and counting with regret! I can't wait to see my family and friends and share all my stories, but at the same time I don't want leave all my new friends and family it's going to be very hard saying goodbye!!!!

Well enjoy reading I know it's long but there is so much to tell! (*Don't stop on my behalf! Ed.*)

Esther



Isaac - it's been snowing!

Isaac Dufficy reporting for **Maclean Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - October, 2007

Location: - Dielsdorf Rotary Club, Switzerland

Hope all is well in Oz and hope it's getting nice and warm because it's freezing over here! It's been snowing a bit the past week or so and we had to play rugby in the snow on the weekend! (*That would make it interesting! Ed.*)

Talk to you soon.

Isaac



Kaye - still going great!

Kaye Titmarsh reporting for **Boonah Rotary Club, Australia**

Dateline: - October, 2007

Location: - Charlottenlund Rotary Club, Denmark

Well yep, things are still going great here, I never know what to write in these things ha-ha, but seriously having the time of my life still.

Last night at Rotary I met the young Danish boy who will be going out on exchange through my club, it was so cool to meet him, it made me remember what I felt when I was applying for exchange; it seems so long ago!

School is going really great, I have my school "prom" this Friday, I'm so stoked, it will be such a great night, everyone in my class are so lovely and it will be so much fun just hanging out with them and getting dressed up and all that stuff... I can't wait!

We had our last Rotary get-together last weekend and that was such a mean ass weekend, it was so great to see some of the kids I haven't seen in months, it was so crazy but so much fun! We danced and dressed up in Halloween costumes and pretty much just talked and talked and talked as it was the last time we will all be together... it was pretty surreal, it still feels like I will see them again soon, but some I may never see again in my life!

I moved host families about two weeks ago; that was SO hard. My previous host family were just so great, I really, truly love them but I still see them at least once a week so that is great, and hopefully they will come visit me in Australia one day! But my new host family are nice and I am really close to school again, I'm doing the whole Danish thing of cycling everywhere! Hopefully that will prevent a little bit of weight gain but I'm not too optimistic lol, it's coming into winter and also Christmas and from what I've been hearing every single person in this little Scandinavian country gains at least a few kilos over Christmas! Seriously, all they do is eat for the whole months ha-ha...it's madness! So I will get really fat, and really white... and then come

back to Australia! Yay!! But I don't really mind, if the worst thing that happened to me this year is that I gained weight than I have nothing to complain about, and the Danish food is really, really good! If you are reading this and ever considered coming to Denmark... do it! Hahaha it's so cool : D But I think that's it for me, not so many of this monthly reports to go now... Yay! Ha-ha just joking – I love it!

Har det godt alle sammen! Og vi ses snart!

Over and out!

Maya



Maya - Konnichiwa minasan!

Maya Nakamura reporting for **Yokkaichi Rotary Club, Japan**
 Dateline: - October, 2007
 Location: - Yamba Rotary Club, Australia

Konnichiwa minasan, or hi everyone! My name is Maya Nakamura. I came from Nara, which is located near Osaka and Kyoto.

I've already been here for two months and having great time. When I first arrived here by plane, my first words were; "Gee, what a massive land!!" Everything is big in here... land, sky, trees, birds and the people have big heart as well. My first host family is really nice and funny people. My host mother is a keen cook. She often bakes breads and the meals she makes are very good. What was surprising is that she makes tofu (curdled soy milk, which is Japanese food) and sells to people! I like cooking as well so I sometimes cook rice, miso - soup and few other Japanese cuisine. I'm so happy that my host family loves my cooking and I won't miss my country's food.

My host parents are both surfer and my host father took me to the surf last month. I used a big heavy board, paddled into the sea - which is bit scary for me - and my host father pushed me forward to help me riding the wave. In the four or fifth try, I stood up on the board for two seconds!! On the first day!! It was miracle. I should try again another day but my courage fails me. *(I have faith that you'll get there! Ed.)*

My 15 year-old host sister likes dance and piano. She is more sociable and talkative than me and she is now learning Spanish preparing for the exchange to Mexico. Ella es genial (She is brilliant).

School I go now is really different to mine in Japan. It's more like rough and lively, which is awesome. I made some friends. They are very friendly and kind. It was very, very surprising that some of them bought me a mobile phone!!! I went some sleep overs and birthday party.

I'm really enjoying this stay so far. I feel like having no home sick at all. *(Excellent! Ed.)*

By the way, because of my arrival was late, I missed the last briefing camp for the inbound students. I can't wait for the second camp on the 1st and 2nd of December!

Thank you!

Maya



Naomi - a busy month!

Naomi Nishiguchi reporting for **Broadwater Southport Rotary Club, Australia**
 Dateline: - October, 2007
 Location: - Freistadt Rotary Club, Austria

Hi!

October passed slowly and felt like I didn't do much but when I look back it actually was a busy month.

It began by attending Rotary because my host sis did a fab presentation about her exchange in Australia. We made ANZAC biscuits which went down well! I played volleyball with my friend Mirna on Wednesday and then on Thursday went to watch a school musical in Linz. Friday night was a big event for which everyone had been working so hard towards: the maturaball (aka year 12 formal). It was a fantastic night organised by the students, everyone looking amazing in their formal attire. At midnight there was a show put on by the students with dancing, waltzes and singing.

In the second week I was invited to an Oktoberfest Party where I got dressed up in a dirndl (the typical Austrian dress)! I have joined a gym with a friend which is good because we can go after school. Also went to Salzburg for the day with an exchangee Ed. Went 10 pin bowling for my first time in Austria with my friends in Linz one other weekend.

And then in the third week winter officially started because it started SNOWING! I was in Vienna with all the other exchange students for our Rotary organised get together. We went to museums, castles, saw an opera, went to St Stevens Cathedral and took a city tour by bus. It was wonderful as ever to see the old exchangees and spend some time with each other because all of us are starting to get excited about coming home! In the last weeks of the month we had autumn holidays in which 2 of my school friends celebrated their birthdays. I began my Christmas shopping and the rest of the time was spent relaxing with my cool host fam. Only two and a bit months left!

Bye,

Nacmi



Tobias - three beautiful weeks!

Tobias Niederberger
reporting for ?? Rotary Club,
Switzerland

Dateline: - October, 2007

Location: - Nerang Rotary

Club, Australia

From the 30.9.2007 to the 20.10.2007 my family was over here in Australia. We had three beautiful weeks travelling around in the country. Especially to see some countryside even I haven't seen before. We went from Ayers Rock to Kings Canyon, Glen Helen and Alice Springs, where we took the Ghan to Adelaide and then with visits on Kangaroo Island, the Great Ocean Road, Melbourne and Sydney we came back to the Gold Coast. *(Cool trip! Ed.)*

Tobias



Valerie - I'm having the best time!

Valerie Boeraeve reporting
for **Liege-Chaufontaine**
Rotary Club, Belgium

Dateline: - October, 2007

Location: - Glen Innes Rotary
Club, Australia

I'm having the best time! My family shows me a lot of Australia! We went to Byron Bay and Lennox Head. The beaches are beautiful! I swam next to a big shark, I was terrified! *(Just consider how the shark must of felt! Ed.)* Then I went to Toowoomba and Brisbane with my next host family. We went to the spring fair of my next host sister's school (Fairholme). Last week-end I went to Brisbane again, with my present host family this time. Saturday we went to Dreamworld, it was awesome! On Sunday we went to the beach at Surfers Paradise and then I went to the Justin Timberlake's concert at night. It was such a wonderful week-end! This week-end I'm going to the Jacaranda Festival with the other exchange students, I am very excited! Next Tuesday we are going on a trekking with my PE class. We are going to camp, it's gonna be great! The following week I'm going on another excursion to Brisbane and the sunshine coast. This excursion was supposed to be a few weeks ago, but a boy of my year died on a bad car accident a few days before the departure so we had to postponed it except this last event, all is still going very, very well! As you can see, I'm always away, and busy and it's very exciting! I can believe I have already spent 3 months here! Times flies when you are having fun... *(You got that right! Ed.)*

Valerie



Paola - I love everything!!

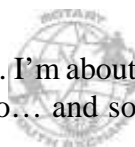
Paola Lopez Hernandez
reporting for **Cancun** Rotary
Club, Mexico

Dateline: - November, 2007

Location: - Coomera Valley

Rotary Club, Australia

I've been here for nearly 10 months... I'm about to go home... I've got 60 days to go... and so



far I'm having a great time... some times better than others but anyway I would never change this time for anything in the world. I love living in Australia! I love everything!!

Paola

