



**ALEXANDRA COOMBE. USA.**

Hello,

So it would seem that I'm half way through my exchange now! It's just flying by!

In less than a month I'll be leaving for my trip around the country. I'm so excited to be spending my time with such a great group of exchange students, and looking at the itinerary is making me even more

excited! I haven't been doing much travel yet, so it will be great to get to see the sights!

It's going into summer now and we're all looking forward to warm weather after all this snow. My host family and I have been working on our pool in the backyard in preparation:)

I went to Hershey Park the other weekend which is a big amusement park built by Hershey, a chocolate brand. :)



Hoping all the other exchange students are having a good time!

- Alex.



**JACQUI BRAND. SWEDEN.**

So I really don't know where I left off last time, mainly because time has gone insanely fast!

I will apologize in advance more my grammar and such, because even though my Swedish hasn't improved that much, apparently my English has gone down the drain!

So whats new? Hmm well I've moved families since my last report. I'm now about 30minutes out of town, but thats okay because the

public transport here is really good, annd its almost Sommar break! :D I really like my new family and house, its right on the lake and is so pretty!

Since school is finishing up there has been lots of fun things going, such as the "tradition" for the people graduating in 3rd year, to be drunk and drinking at school!! We also just had a gymnasieslaget which is where the four main highschoools compete against each other in dodgeball and cheerleading, it was so much fun! Also just attended yesterday

"Swedens largest water festival" which was supposed to break a world record for the largest one in the world. Oh and a massive highlight for me was going to Stockholm and seeing Angus & Julia Stone, my favourite band that are from Australia, so it was extra special. And last week I went to an archeipelago where my friends family had a house on one of the islands, which was so beautiful! I look forward to going back there. Also speaking of things I'm looking forward to; Two weeks and my darling sister will be here!

And in three weeks EURO RAMBLE! Eeeep :D

I am still having the time of my life here, nothing can get me down, till next time, **jacqui.** :)





**STEPHANIE HORTON. GERMANY.**

Moin! Wie gehts euch? (Hey (In northern German dialect) How are you all?)

I can't believe it's now time for another Rotayak! 5 months is nearly gone! Why does exchange have to go so quickly??? So much has happened since the last Rotayak. A trip to Southern Germany, new family, Euro tour, Rotex Sleepover. That's just the start.

Ok so first, there was a Rotex sleepover in March. That was a bit of fun. It was Las Vegas night.

The week before Easter I went on a trip with about 30 other exchange students to Southern Germany. We went to Ansbach, Würzburg, Nürnberg, Rothenberg and many more. That was an unbelievable week. It was so much fun but I was really tired after it. We came home Easter Saturday and I went with my host mum, sister and my host mum's friend to an 'Osterfeuer' which translated is 'Easter Fire'. It is like our bonfires in Australia but here they are so much bigger and hotter too! It was really cool. Then Easter Sunday! I woke up kinda late because I was really tired. My host mum had made a massive breakfast. Or should I say 'Brunch'. It was really nice. Then we had an Easter hunt. There was a lot of chocolate and we got little presents like socken und stiften (Socks and pens). Four days later.... I couldn't believe it. I had to move families for the first time. I had no idea how I was going to go. I was so scared actually because my German wasn't very good and my new host family didn't speak any English whatsoever. I now live with Familie Schreyer. I have two siblings but they are both in University. One in Berlin and the 'Lindt Chocolate' there). I have been to Berlin to go and visit my host sister. I went so much fun. School is good. I am managing to understand basically all the subjects I understand. E.g. Ethics and Physics. Also, I got to go to two Konfirmations. A friend was really good. It was something completely new to me. I mean, it was basically the first time I had a party after it. I would go to another one now. Then it was Europareise! We went to Luzern, Portofino, Sankt Margarita, Lavanga, Pisa, Florenz, Lido di Jesolo, Venice, and many more. No sleep at all. I think I had more sleep in the bus than in the hotels itself hahaha! Well, that I went with the group that I went with even though it was basically all the Latin American students who have English as their mother tongue. Four Aussies and an American. Well, in the end now all the exchange students who came last June, July, and August are now starting to leave. I really don't want them to leave. I have got so close to them. It's going to be really sad when they all go.



Well I think I'd better stop there and look forward to writing the next Rotayak.

Dankeschön Rotary Distrikts 9790 und 1850! (Thank-you Rotary Districts 9790 and 1850!)

Thanks to Rotary my dream is now a reality. I love you all.

**Steph xoxo**

## **ALEX VIBERT.GERMANY.**

I can't believe it's been five months already! Exchange is going so quick for me but honestly I don't want it to end. I absolutely love Germany. It's so beautiful!

I am now in my second host family and I love it so much ☺ I settled in really quickly with



this family and both their children are in another country but they have a Japanese exchange student from YFU. She is really nice and we get along really well. This family is pretty sporty which is really good. My host mum goes jogging and plays badminton, my host dad is a soccer fanatic and my host sister plays volleyball and I am now playing basketball for Dresden Neustadt. I've been to Dresden Dynamo matches (Dresden soccer team) and volleyball too. I loved my Easter here but it was so strange to be away from my family as well, but now that I think

about it I am with my new family for now ☺

We also went on a camping trip for five days. It was really good! I loved it. We went with two other families and for five days straight we went swimming, played volleyball and soccer



and went looking around the tourist places that were near the camping place.

All the other exchange students in my district are really nice! I went to my first rotary weekend a couple weeks ago it was really good! So many funny things happened. I find it funny how all exchange students can become friends with each other just after 5 minutes of meeting each other. I have just got back from Ueckermünde which is close to the Baltic Sea. I went for 8 days with all the exchange students in my district. It was the

last time that we were all together because everyone except the Australian and a couple Latinos (Latin Americans) go back to their countries this month. It was really cool! We went bike riding, paddle boating, swimming and just tried to spend as much time as we could together. On the last night we were in Görlitz, and there was an international music fest so all the English speakers went together and we did a line dance and then the south Americans went together and they did a salsa dance thing and at the end we all sang 'Let it Be' and the two Taiwanese girls sang a song in Chinese. On the Sunday we all said goodbye to everyone. It was really sad! Everyone was crying but we are all going to come back to Germany and have a reunion.



I am going on my Euro Tour end of July and I have my orientation weekend for it this week so I will meet everyone then. I can't wait to travel around Europe and see all the big cities like Paris and Rome!

Going on exchange would have to be the best decision of my life!

Tschüss (see you later) **Alex**



**KIRBY DAVIS. BRAZIL.**

OIII AUSTRALIA! <3

Amazon tour! 10 days, on a boat, with a bunch of exchange students from all around the world.. what could go wrong.. right?

So, we stayed in a hotel the first 2 nights, and the first night, I had a monkey eat part of my flag, it was plastic, and I thought it was going to choke on it.. and die!

luckily I had an American, and 2 Canadians with me to get it out of its mouth, before it died!

The second night, we went walking in the jungle, because we stayed in a hotel , in literally the middle of the forest! So we went walking in the jungle, and I almost got eaten by a jaguar.. well, no actually I didn't! but it would be a cool story to tell.

so we walked in the jungle for 3ish hours, swam fully clothed in a waterfall. And when we were walking back to the hotel, we saw the biggest, hugest snake i have seen in my life! i swear it was taller than me, but i have seen thicker! but i wasn't scared because i'm australian! and we see them everyday! (apparently)

Next day, we went to Manaus to get on our boats.. There was about 65 exchangers, so about 32 on each boat! And there was the food boat also, that joined us each day for breakfast, lunch and then again at dinner!

The first day on the boat, I was sick! But it wasn't that big of a deal, because we were just driving in the boats down the river! We got to sleep in hammocks every night so that was really cool, but by the end of the trip, it got rather unconfutable.

so, the first night being on the boat we went out in these canoes, and we had a leader with us. They told us, we were going to look for 'Jacare' which are like crocodiles, but different! So we were just thinking we would see them on the banks on the river, and anyway, the boat driver drove into these reed type things, and 'Nigel' our leader leaned down into the water with his hands, and picked up a Jacare from the water, WITH HIS HANDS! I was shocked! He said it was about a year old, or maybe a bit older!

Everyone got there turn in holding it, and I was last! There was no bind around it's nose, and we had to drive back to the big boat with it, because the other boat didn't get one.. and being the only Australian on the boat, everyone on the boat was just like 'Kirby, you're Australian. you know Steve Irwin! You can hold it on the way back' and I must admit, I giggled a little bit!

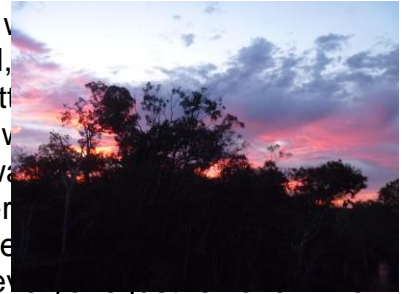
So we went back to the boat, the other canoe got to hold it, take their photos with it and everything, and then I let him back into the river!

The second day we travelled on the boats for a few hours, and then we went and saw a native tribe! the next 2 days we also went and saw tribes. A lot of the days we travelled for a few hours, on the boat! Which was a good way of getting to know everyone.

On the third day we travelled to another tribe, and this time we actually went into the village, most of the other times we went to them, we didn't go all the way into them. We got a tour from about 6 people, we got shown the school and the school kids,

which there was about 10 or so of them, sang for us, and did a traditional dance. And then we got shown how to cook Jacare, not that I think that is a skill in life I will ever need, but I guess that is something I guess I could need one day, when I come back to Brasil and marry a tribe leader, right? No not right, I couldn't live without my cell phone or facebook ;)

Then later that day, we went to a village type place, that we would call it more of a community, we went to the school, and took photos with us, which as an exchange student I have got to take a lot of. So we went here, and visited the school, and then there was a boys vs boys. Which the exchange students lost, but it was fun. Then the girls played, and I played this game! We had Jeronimo, which the exchangers did, the people that live there didn't. It had been raining for the 2 hours before we played, so we got out there, and even though the exchangers did anyways, because we are uncoordinated. But it made it so much more fun, getting covered in mud. Then later the night, they had a 'salsa party' at this community. So all the exchangers went to that, and were all horrible dancers, compared to the Brasilens. But that was good fun :)



So, the next day we went and saw the Pink River Dolphins. We got to feed them fish, and I got bitten on the hand by one. They are quiet ugly, but they are a cute ugly, so I find it hard to call them just ugly, without saying they are 'cute' ugly. So we fed them fish, and then went back to the boat, and then we went to a town and ate ice-cream. After/while we were eating ice-cream the group leader man, found a monkey, and brought it over to us, and it kept trying to eat all our ice creams. It was incredibly cute, and kept climbing all over everyone.

We went piranha fishing. This was hilarious! I have never been so excited finishing. The piranha's would nibble at the meat on the line, and everyone would get so excited about it! And then we would pull up the line, expecting there to be a piranha on the end, and there never was. My piranha fishing boat, which had about 10 people in it because the main boats split into 3 groups, and went out in the smaller boats. When our boat finally caught one, it was possibly the most exciting moments in my whole life! I saw a piranha! A real life one! And I will be the first to admit, their teeth do not look as sharp as everyone seems to think they would be! Sure they look sharp, and I wouldn't personally put my finger in ones mouth.. but still! And on the way to our fishing spot! WE SAW A SLOTH! It had a baby! And it was the cutest thing I have ever seen, I want to know why we don't have such cute animals in Australia. They are so slow, and they are incredibly protective of their babies. We saw a mum, and a baby! And we watched it for about 5 minutes, and then I think it got scared, and went away!

the very last night we had on the boat, my boat slept in the jungle, in our hammocks, we had a fire and everything. Was pretty cool!

And I guess, that is about all I have to tell you about my journeys!

So until next time I write! Hope everyone is having a great year also!

Beijos! Love always, **Kirby! Xxxxx**



**LUCY WISE-CHALKER. DENMARK** Hej,

It's now almost half way!

The last 5 months have been amazing and saying goodbye to oldies (exchange students going home) you realize how little time you have here.

I've just been on my euro tour with 50 or so other exchange students. I can easily say it has been the highlight of my year so far.

The tour lasted 2 weeks and 4 days; we travelled to Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Italy, France, Belgium and Holland.

In Italy I had my first taste of summer since coming to Denmark; we decided to spend the day on the beach tanning and relaxing in the 41 degree heat!

Coming home from euro tour wasn't boring; I've been travelling, to concerts, a Wedding Anniversary, Theme Park, boat tour and rode a horse for the first time. Summer is beginning to set in and everyone in Denmark is crazy keen on their summer time!

I'm now at my second host family and they're fantastic. The oldest sister is soon to return from USA so while we're waiting my family decided to go to a summer house for a week J

My Danish is getting better and better but I can't wait until it becomes fluent! It will make things so much easier!

Soon to arrive are new exchange students and everyone is excited to find out what they're like!

Love

Lucy & Danmark <3

**BRITTANY STONES. FORCALQUIER. FRANCE.**



Hey Australia :P

Couldn't believe my eyes when I got an email to say I needed to have my Rotayak done... 5 months already?!?! Why is it that 5 months in Australia feels like a lifetime but 5 months here goes quicker than anything??

Soooooo, where do I start! Since the last Rotayak I've been to a French wedding and it was really nice. There was a lot of people, but it seemed a lot more casual and quick. Everyone was dressed lovely, and the party went all night. We had a 4 course meal, entrée, main, cheese and dessert. We went to the camp site about 4:30am, and then got up

around 9am to go back to the hall to have lunch, it was a really good experience and I had a great time!

I've been to a festival in my town, and during the night, there were amazing fireworks on a church, it was a great night. I also tried a pedal boat, I went with my first host family and friends and spent ¾ of the time being pushed, tackled or slipping into the water! But it was so fun, and the water at the lake was so blue and sometimes so clear that it was a turquoise/green colour, it was beautiful. I am finally getting good at the game; 'BabyFoot' which is I think called Foosball or something in Australia. Everyone plays it here all the time, it's really popular and cheap, and everyone is really, really good. At the start, everyone tried to help me get better at it (because it's not popular in Australia and I had never really played) but I felt like a lost cause when I played and watched the Frenchies play!!

I am happy with how my French is progressing, I am always complimented by my friends and family here, and even people I don't know. It feels good to know I can hold a nice long conversation, although there are still a lot of things I need to learn. French is very difficult to learn, (in my opinion, because of all the different things you have to change by person and all that) but when you are forced to speak it over English all the time it kind of comes a little more naturally than I originally thought. I have changed families and I'm now at my second home and I love both of my families very much. In August, I change back to my first host families' house until I go back to Australia in January. I feel so happy and lucky I have 2 host families who include me well into their families. I celebrated my sweet sixteenth in France! It felt like an ordinary day on my birthday, I dyed my hair brown and I received nice presents from home, but on the weekend all my school friends, host families and rotary counsellor gave me a surprise party which really was the best!! I also went on a little tour to St. Tropez, Marseille, Frejus, Cannes and Nice in 5 days. I saw a few nice sites of tourism and got some pins for my blazer! (which is still pretty lame, but I haven't really done much yet, like a eurotour or anything). I finally got myself to try Foie Gras, the insides of a duck... And I don't regret it, it's so yummy! But I still haven't tried some other specialties like snails, frogs legs, horse meat..... but it is true that French food is soooo good, so I will try it when I get the opportunity!



I've also been to lots of things with Rotary. I went and stayed at Marseille and Cassis for 2 days, went to the snow for 3 days, had 2 Rotary days where there are the inbounds and outbounds and for one of them I spoke in front of 600 people. We also saw an aeroplane do tricks and stunts in the air which was so cool. Then soon I have another Rotary day, to say goodbye to the current inbounds who go back to Taiwan, Japan, China, America and Canada. We are going to do biscuiting/donuting with a Rotary member who has a boat!

I've also seen all of the Calanques at Cassis which was absolutely beautiful! And I've also been to Marineland and AquaSplash and they were great, I got a good tan and had so much fun in the sun! I've also now finished school (YAY) and passed into Premiere ES. Which is a class in year 11. I had the best year with some of the best people ever. Bring on the Summer holidays!!!! During the holidays I'm going on a 12 day trip with some Australians. I'm not sure where we are going exactly though, I just know that it is on the beach. I'm also going to Bretagne just before I go on the trip for Australians, which is about 12 hours by car from where I live, so I hope it will be good. Also I'll be touring Europe twice, once with my family (September) and once with my Eurotour (October).

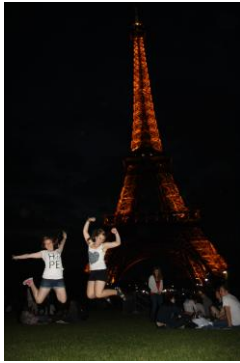
For anyone going to France, you should really go to the Fete de la Musique, It is in every town, and happens once a year. I went to the one in my town last night (21<sup>st</sup> June) and I had the best time ever!! I think that's about all I can report on....

OH! Just one last thing, receiving stuff from Australia is so good. I love getting letters and parcels, it makes me so happy :) Especially tim tams... yuuuuuuuum! I didn't realise how much I missed them!

I will leave it at that. Until next time,

Keep cool Australia! :)

**Britt** xo



## **SARAH McNAMARA. DENMARK.**

Hi All!

Since last time, things have definitely gotten more exciting in Denmark. It's warm now, for one!

I'm on summer holidays now :D I have been since the 7th of June, and will be until the 15th of August. The three weeks before I was on holidays I went on Eurotour. God that was so amazing! We went to Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Italy, France, Belgium and Holland, and saw so much. Prague was probably my favourite city, it was just so unexpectedly beautiful. We had a brilliant time the day we were there, so I think that influenced my opinion of it also. Venice was also gorgeous.

We took a gondola ride through the canals, and it was just so surreal. Paris. Ah Paris. What a fantastic city. We visited The Louvre, Arc de Triumph, climbed the Eiffel Tower, went on a cruise along the river. One of my favourite memories from the trip was sitting under the Eiffel Tower at night with my friends, just looking at it lit up. It was pretty sad when that trip ended, all of us on the bus had gotten so close and shared some amazing experiences together. But now I'm back in glorious Denmark. I definitely prefer Denmark in summer! It's been around 18°C on average and sunny, which is just great. Next week it's supposed to be 30°C though! Man, talk about hot! I think I've become too accustomed to the Danish climate. Tomorrow I'm off to Roskilde Festival, which is a music festival in Denmark, which I'm quite excited for. Some bands I'm really looking forward to seeing are playing, like Kings of Leon and Bright Eyes. I'm still with my first host family now, and will be for another month or so. I'm only having two this year, so I'm with each for 6 months. I love my current host family a lot though, they're fantastic. It's sad to think I only have 7 months left here, I don't know where all the time's gone. I would be perfectly happy to be here for longer! Until next time! Much love, **Sarah**



## **GEORGIE TERRILL. FRANCE.**

Bonjour, Numero 2 de Rotayak.

La première chose que j'aimerais vous dire, c'est je ne veux pas revenir en Australie!!!

Les 3 derniers mois ont été énorme franchement!

I'm having trouble speaking English again !

It's June and summer in the Vosges have come around really fast. It is a great struggle to squish everything I have done into a few short paragraphs, but I will try. The experiences that keep coming at me aren't going to last forever so a message to the new outbounds, "You really have to make the most of the opportunities that come along, the good and the bad and it always helps every now and then to see how your family are going!"

Life at the moment is perfect, I'm clearly the odd one out here being the only Australian and for wearing my socks and thongs after a big session of sport! In the last few months I've had my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday (lots of French champagne), did a presentation on Australia for my Rotary club and school, changed host families (they're amazing), been on random road trips with my host mum to places such as Colmar, Metz, Nancy, Senones (had a history lesson on Voltaire).

I have attended numerous Rotary events with exchange students and hit the edge of Germany! There have been numerous nasty experiences with the Vosgien cows but then I have also been to some beautiful chateaus, been gliding down and in between trees. Then there were the days of concerts, musical orchestras, holiday in the south at St Tropez, Cannes, St Raphael.

This year we had a big daffodil festival in my town called the Fete de Jonquilles. It was an amazing experience to see the battlefields of Verdun and still to come my host family and I are off to see La tour de France and later we will be spending a few days at the beach. I didn't mention the French Open at Roland Garros seeing Roger Federer up close (he's awesome!) and in a couple of weeks I will be changing host families, TO THE





**VAXELAIRES!!**

Later in the summer holidays I will visit my host family from last year. They live in Troyes and I can't wait to see Charlotte again. As I write this I am about to go to Chamonix for a weekend with my Rotary club members.

I'd love to say a big big thankyou to all of the Rotarians back in Australia for keeping in touch and also to my Rotary club here in France for having me and making this such a wonderful experience.

A Bientooooooooot ! **Georgie** :B



**JOSH EDWARD. VESTAL NY. USA.**

Hello! Soooo... Since the last time we talked I have been all over the place; I have been to New York City with Sami (the French exchange student) and his family. The city was amazing! We saw Times Square (at night), it was every bit as spectacular as I had imagined, the lights, the energy and all of the life of the city that never sleeps!

Then there was Bloomington, Indiana, home of Indiana University; their art gallery was incomparable,

it would have to, seeing it was designed by Leoh Ming Pei designer of the Pyramide du Louvre (the modern entrance to the Louvre). The school lived up to its reputation with its Grand Tutor Hall (pictured left) and its wall carvings, carved by master carvers



when the school was opened (pictured right).

Looking forward... In July the other exchange students and I will embark on a journey across the U.S.A, stretching from the East coast to the West.

I'm sure it is going to be great fun to hang out with the other exchange students and catch some much anticipated sun on the beaches of California.



Until we talk next  
**Josh**



**MEG LISTON. SWEDEN.**

Hej från Sverige!

5 months already!? You have got to be joking me! Everyone told me exchange would go fast, but I didn't think it would go this fast. Since the last RotaYak, I've been keeping busy, which is great because I get to do lots of activities and it also keeps the homesickness away.

I have been on a Rotary trip to Kiruna. Kiruna is pretty much at the top of Sweden (in the Arctic Circle). I went there with about 60 other exchange students for 4 days. It was a really really fun time. We visited the ice hotel, drove snowmobiles, saw the northern lights, went into the iron-ore mine, went to Norway for the day, played soccer/rugby in fresh knee-deep snow (which was mainly everyone pushing each other over and putting snow in their faces!), and lots of other little activities. It was great to meet many new friends, but it was also sad to say goodbye to the ones I wouldn't see again.

I went to Switzerland for a week with my host family to visit my host brother who is on exchange there. We visited Thun, Bern, Baden, Luzern and some smaller towns along the way. We also went to Schilthorn, the rotating restaurant 3000m up in the Alps where a 007 movie was filmed. Switzerland was really pretty, and I hope to go back there one day!

Easter was very different to Australian Easter. We boiled eggs, then painted them, then ate them later. They don't eat as much chocolate eggs as we do :( The weather was REAL warm, it was so so so nice. Sisita April is the 30th April, and it's when you 'welcome the spring'. We had dinner at another Australian girl's house, and



then went to a massive bonfire. It was huge, nothing like this would ever be allowed in Australia!  
 I have also done lots of smaller activities, like a kayaking/camping trip to Hudiksvall, midsommar has just been, and of course, I have been hanging out with my friends.  
 Its summer here now, and it's really warm (25<sup>0</sup>c). I don't know how I'm going to survive in Australian summer when I get back.  
 I am soon going on my Europe Ramble!! There are 78 exchange students travelling on a bus around Europe for about 3 weeks. FUN! We go to Germany, Poland, Austria, Czech, Italy, Paris, and Belgium. I am so excited!  
 Well, that's all from me!

**Hejdå! Meg**



**BRITTANY COOK. SWITZERLAND.** Hallo :)

Can't believe it's time again for another Rotayak! Time is flying. I have now travelled all over Switzerland, thanks to my much loved host family who took me on a week long tour (couldn't believe it was possible to travel all of Switzerland in a week!). It was a amazing to travel from one side to the other and magically swap languages. I actually found it difficult to say 'thank you' in French instead of German. I've now seen most of the Swiss Alps (including the Matterhorn and the highest point in Europe) and the changing culture in different parts of Switzerland.

Other travelling adventures were going to France for the weekend to visit Axel, who when I return home I will be his host sister. His family even got me to try a snail and I'm proud to admit I loved them. My Friends from school and I travelled into Germany to go to Europa Park. Sometimes we had to wait over an hour for a ride on something but in the end it was worth it. In all my other spare weekends I have travelled Switzerland (again), I can say I know my way around the cities now. It is literally, one week Zürich then one week Luzern. It's a crazy wonderful life I lead. In the time since I last wrote I have changed host Families. I now have to wake up every morning looking over the lake to Germany. It is beautiful! I love my old family but I was ready for a change and now I love my new family as well. I'm part of the family already and am being introduced as their beloved daughter. And my new family are helping me to keep off those few extra exchange student kilos by making me run the dog every night. I'm thankful for that. They always want to do something with me and are keeping me busy. They are also desperate for me to make a Pavola, which I will do soon.

My friends from school and I are even closer now, I love hanging out with them. We mostly do normal teenager things, like going to movies, music concerts and of course shopping. They make school much funnier. School is really good and it's helping improve my German so much, I'm starting to actually think in German! I can't believe I'm about to hit the Summer holidays too. I have almost completed a whole semester. Summer is going to be fantastic: Travel, music, swimming and friends.

I actually love going to Rotary meetings but I have the trouble of having school when the meetings are held. Instead, a lot of the Rotary members invite me to do something with them. I went to a cheese factory with a woman and I swear I have never seen so much cheese! I am also going sailing with another member and there is always the occasional brunch.

I've hit a mind blank! It is extremely hard to sum up this new life of mine. Again so much has happened. In France I learnt a saying about exchange.

'It's not just a year in my life, Its a life in a year' It sums up exchange exactly. I've experience so much new culture and different ways that it is exactly like a new life. And its a life I love completely. Untill next time

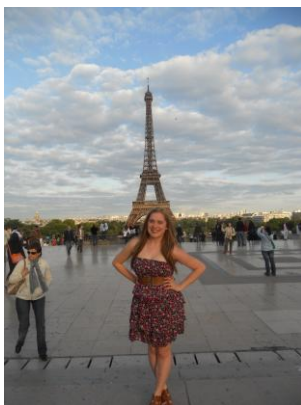
**Britt xxx**



## LAUREN SMITH. SEINAJOKI. FINLAND.

Well they say time flies when you're having fun! I guess they are correct. :D I have done so many things lately, it is quite surreal. Winter was extremely cold but i can say i survived haha, and it was alot of fun skiing, ice skating, riding on the snow scooter and ice fishing. The snow also looked pretty it most areas, the darkness was weird at first but became normal. It is finally summer and i no longer need thermals or big jackets, as i look outside the window it is currently raining. All of the snow has gone and it's quite a beautiful

country, i remember when i arrived i couldn't even imagine Finland without snow, but it's very nice. I ride my bike to and from School every day, in the morning's it's still a little fresh but in the afternoon i usually have to take my jacket off. On the 31st of March three buses full of exchange students from Finland travelled to St Petersburg, Russia to spend four days in the glorious city!! The history behind everything was extravagant, the language looked rather difficult and the letters hard to pronounce but it was so different from any where else in the world. We travelled to the Winter Palace, AMAZING! We watched a folk show, it was great and the costumes very Russian. The museums as you could imagine mind blowing with artworks and sculptures etc. The swan lake ballet was lovely, we got dressed up for that, in heels and a dress/skirt. Everyone was told not to drink or brush our teeth with the water in St. Petersburg as it's quite bad irrigation system so we bought bottled water with us. The memories, experiences photos and people are something that i will never forget. I arrived back in Seinäjoki and had one week of School before I was off with my School Seinäjoen Lukio to England. We traveled on British Airways and spent a marvellous six days in London travelling to various Gardens and Parks, London Zoo, Madame Tussauds, watching Phantom of the Opera the musical, it was also around the time of the royal wedding coming up so there was alot of buzz



going around, it did remind me of back home at times with people driving on the "right" side of the road, so people were driving on the left side and i was in the habit of looking in the wrong direction so i ended up looking everywhere before crossing the roads, that was a laugh and hearing the British accent was funny. My favourite sightseeings were the London eye and Big ben, i guess i'm such a tourist in that way! It was once again an experience never to be forgotten. Back to Finland and Seinäjoki, i'm really enjoying my time and taking each day as it comes, i am absolutely stoked with my town and my Finnish life at the moment, i'm enjoying the food alot, daily life at School and activities such as Volleyball (Lentopallo) and swimming. The Summer will bring a lot more new experiences to be had, i have changed host families and am now in the second, i have met all of my families and i am quite lucky to know them all. I am very suprised at

myself for how i have handled everything but i'm glad. Soon we will have the end of the School year holidays for Finland and that's when we can go to the beach/lake and relax and enjoy some sunshine.

Eurotour was absolutely amazing, there are few words to describe it! 86 Exchange students from Finland, two buses, travelling for 19 days around nine different countries! The people, cultures, life in general was amazing, eating different foods, doing tourist activities. Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, France, Monaco, Belgium, Austria and Netherlands. I enjoyed Italy, pizza, pasta and Gelato! Paris, the land of love and Eiffel tower, we climbed all the way and the view was magnificent. Holland had great cheese. I loved Denmark a lot, everyone was so European looking and Tivoli was lots of fun! At my current host family i live near a beach which i have been going to almost everyday, it is hot and a fair amount of ice cream!



Yummmmmo. Now i am on Summer holidays until August, going into town with Finnish friends and enjoying my time with host family, my host sister is going to Australia on Exchange this month, it'll be sad to see her off, but a wonderful opportunity for her. To top it all off, i am enjoying every moment and loving life.

**Lauren Smith!**

