RHAGLEN RHYNGWLADOL CFFI CYMRU
WALES YFC INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

NAME OF TRIP: **European Rally 2011 – Slovenia**

Why did you apply for a trip with the Wales YFC international programme?

I travelled last year with the International programme and really enjoyed it. I also wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to go somewhere different, but with the protection of knowing it was part of Wales YFC's programme so that support was in place. Also, when travelling with YFC, you are guaranteed to meet new people and everyone who attends the rally says it is the best experience ever.

Where did you go?

Slovenia

What did you do? – include the highlights

It's hard to summarise what we did as we seemed to get a lot done. As a team, we travelled to Ljubljana (the capital of Slovenia) a few days early so that we could get to know one another. This was great and meant that we arrived very much as a team. During the week, I enjoyed all of it (although some of the early and bright sessions were a bit of a struggle) and I really enjoyed the closing dinner as by that stage we had made firm friends. We attended workshops for the majority of each day – there was little free time, but that was ok. The bar didn't open until 10pm as the evening sessions were packed, so we didn't get to bed very early each night. We learnt "shaky shaky" which I'm sure more members of Wales YFC will get to know very soon!

What personal benefits did you get from the trip?

Benefitted from the rally topic of "social capital" as it reinforced the need to use the contacts and resources that I have. I made some really good friends and contacts and also had an insight into the workings of RYE at the General Assembly as well as getting ideas for good practice that I hope can be applied in my club, county and Wales. I also learnt about being responsible, as team leader it was my job to get everyone to each session and try to keep the team happy.

Try to pack light and don't focus on taking too much to the International Buffet. Whilst it is good to show as much Welsh produce off as possible, there is a lot of waste – so don't take much with you. Expect to have to work hard and play hard – you have a timetable that you must stick to – it is not the AGM! And take a fluffy dragon with you as a mascot – speak to Gwennan Davies about Dai. Don't expect too much sleep!

How does the experience differ from a normal holiday

Vastly – you come away with a shared experience that you don't get on a holiday. I came away motivated and energised, and knowing that I have friends across Europe who I can stay with should I want to. Also, you are learning and there are workshops that you must attend so whilst it is a holiday in some respects, in many ways it isn't.

What was your most lasting memory

Gosh, there are lots… Lulu (aka Emyr Lloyd) becoming the star of the rally through his good humour and sense of fun (eg. putting up with being "customised", looking for the funny side of workshops), adopting the Norwegian team as honorary Welsh and gaining a member as our mascot, losing Dai Bach/Dai Lulu the miniature dragon to the English, laughing hard at the workshop presentations that had to be funny and finally the closing ceremony and the powerpoint of memories from the week showing the friends that we had all made.