Postgraduates elect Ronnie Guthrie as next MCR President
Friday, 18 May 2018

Congratulations to Ronnie Guthrie who has just been elected by his fellow postgraduate students at St Edmund Hall to be their next MCR (Middle Common Room) President. Ronnie is a second-year DPhil Student in Earth Sciences, who is part of the NERC DTP (Natural Environment Research Council Doctoral Training Partnerships) in Environmental Research, based in the Department of Earth Sciences. We asked Ronnie to answer a few questions to help introduce himself to the wider Teddy Hall community.

Can you tell us a little about yourself and what you’re studying?

My main research interests focus on a sedimentological and geochemical approach to understanding weathering changes and intensity during the Devonian, in particular the Late Devonian (Frasnian-Famennian) mass extinction. I am currently focussing on the use of lithium isotopes as a proxy for weathering intensity, along with clay mineral assemblages, of Late Devonian carbonates.

I grew up on the family farm outside of Perth, Scotland, and I graduated in 2014 from the
University of St Andrews with an MGeol in Earth Sciences. I then helped lead a six-week expedition crossing the Skeleton Coast and Namib Desert in Namibia, before working for a renewable energy firm and later in science communication for a medical research advocacy group.

**Why did you decide to run for MCR President?**

Having never applied to Oxbridge for my undergraduate degree, I didn't know exactly what to expect when I first arrived but I found the MCR to be immediately welcoming with a very healthy and comprehensive social scene, and I've tried to maintain that atmosphere this past year though my work as Steward. My main motivation for running was that I'd now like to move beyond just organising events for the MCR and actually represent the viewpoints of our members, building on the excellent work done by Linde Wester and Kusal Lokuge to make the MCR the inclusive, friendly environment that it is.

**What are you hoping to achieve?**

During my tenure I'd like to make sure that we don't forget about the students in their final years, who are less likely to be active in the more social side of the MCR life but still have the opportunity to make use of College facilities. One of my plans is to make sure there are rooms booked each week where you can write your thesis up in peace without having to fight through the library to get a spot or be distracted by conversations in your department office. I also aim to make sure that we're more transparent to our members with the decisions we make as a committee, so they can be confident that we're working for them.

**What do you think are the current strengths of Teddy Hall's MCR?**

I've had a fantastic time over the past year as Steward and one thing that has shone through is that it is the diversity of our student body that really drives the inclusivity of the MCR, which means we're quite enthusiastic and active as a community. So when you first arrive in the Hall, you immediately feel right at home and are part of the MCR family.

**In what ways have you already been involved in College life?**

This past year I've been on the committee as Steward, meaning I organise many of the more social events for the MCR, which includes everything from organising Wine and Cheese Exchanges with other colleges to ordering a bouncy castle for our summer garden party. I also wrote the first article for the new MCR Research Journal, Ex Aula, when it was launched in 2017 and I've continued to play "shinty" here in Oxford, which can be described as a more aggressive, Scottish version of hockey. I'm also lucky enough that my DPhil allows me several opportunities to travel internationally, either for fieldwork or for conferences, so I've enjoyed spending time in Italy, Germany, Poland and Austria this year, whilst I'm hoping to add America to the list over the summer.

**What's been your personal highlight of your time at Teddy Hall so far?**

The MCR is a great meeting place of people and ideas, so I've really enjoyed getting to know lots of people who are all at different stages of their course. Teddy Hall really has a lot to offer to its students, particularly in terms of the facilities and the support available for the MCR, so
the opportunity to work with College staff and members of the SCR to help make this happen has been a great privilege. My personal highlight over the past two years has been raising the profile of the MCR Burns Supper to turn it into a proper Burns Night experience, complete with speeches, haggis and a piper. Unique events like this really bring the MCR community together, as it's always enjoyable to see how people react to tasting haggis for the first time! This year MCR members were able to enjoy the after dinner speeches in our beautiful Old Dining Hall, complete with a spectacular single malt whisky selection that would rival many a household back home in Scotland.

The following committee members were also elected at this election:

**Vice President:** Tereza Pusca  
**Treasurer:** Oliver Chen  
**IT:** Jack Mills  
**Stewards:** Hannah Sharpe and Frederick Sorenson  
**Welfare:** Agata Rumianek and Charlie Clark-Williams

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