

Commonwealth house

Commonwealth House News

Special points of interest:

- New warden appointed
- Resident reflection on time in CWH
- Alice in House II

Retirement
& 50th
anniversary
party
on Saturday
9th April 2016



House II Christmas
decorations and desserts



Group photo on the stairs of
House II

New warden appointed - Matthias Ogi

Dear Commonwealth House friends,

We are very happy to be joining Commonwealth House history by taking the Warden role. The Ogis are a truly international family. We (Matthias, from Switzerland and Laura, from Brazil) met in London in a school with a setting very similar to Commonwealth House. This year we will be celebrating our silver anniversary and we have been truly blessed in our marriage, and although English has taken over a bit, we still speak three languages at home. I, Matthias, have been involved with building management and church ministry for many years, and Laura is a Clinical Psychologist with over 25 years of clinical and teaching experience. Besides our secular jobs, we have also served our local church as mission coordinators and in pastoral teams.

We have three children, who have blessed our lives with their presence, friendship and love. All our children were born in Switzerland, and as a matter of fact, all the men in our family were born in the same ward of the same hospital in the beautiful city of Thun. Matthäus, our eldest is 22 years old, a student in his final year at the University of Nottingham where he studies Russian and German. Our second child and only girl, Carolyn is 19, and is a second year student of Law with German Law at the University of Nottingham. Joshua, our youngest child is 15 years old and in his final GCSE year. When he is not busy revising for exams you can be sure to find him playing basketball, going jogging or doing something with sports.

We all love travelling, getting to know new places, new foods, new people. We all have travelled extensively and lately we have enjoyed some road trips across Europe. We are always looking forward to new adventures and ideas. When we are home, we love to have people around our dinner table from different parts of the world and listen to their stories and experiences.

Laura and I are looking forward to joining the Commonwealth House Team and be hosts to people from around the world. We hope to promote interesting intercultural exchanges, where stereotypes can be broken and new alliances formed. Being away from home also offers an opportunity to reflect upon life and the choices we make, see things from a different perspective. We hope to encourage people to use their time abroad to also think about spiritual needs and find the answers that are so important to living a fulfilled life. Of course we also hope that the positive environment at Commonwealth House will be a key element in people's academic success.

We look forward to being a part of people's journey, as their lives take them to Oxford and we are truly excited about what is to come.

Matthias and Laura



A reflection of my time in Commonwealth House, by Larissa

'Since the very first evening, I have been welcomed as a proper member of the House, spontaneously invited to share meals with other residents, chatting as if we knew each other from long ago. I love the way this community living forces one to open one's mind and sometimes to recognize that one is not as open-minded as one thought one was... Even in my lab, I have never seen so many different nationalities united together each morning as for the shared breakfast.

This time has also been a wonderful opportunity to discuss with people completely outside of my area of knowledge. As a student graduating in Genetics, it has been wonderful to regularly meet psychologists, linguists, theologians, bioinformatics and



Christmas banquet in St Aldates church



Christmas banquet in front of the tree

biomathematicians, philosophers, designers, etc. I had so many interesting, enriching and inspiring talks - and some true fun, too!

I loved seeing families and kids around the house - it reminded me that nothing is impossible, that I shouldn't get scared of leading both an academic career and a family life, and that there are places welcoming such amazing families! This House is a home for the ones who have left theirs. It offers the most human and healthy environment one needs to accomplish and fulfil the (great ;)) work He came for.

I had a long think about why I feel so good and optimistic about the future of humanity after living in CWH. The most concise way to put my answer is this: CWH is a house of the United Nations, and the bonds knitted here between all people are a promise to our future. People can be good towards each other, and can construct a better place to live in'.



CWH meal on Christmas Day

When Alice went to Commonwealth House!

'It is a Thursday at the end of a long week. The 3rd of December 2015, the end of a tough year. As usual, early in the morning the alarm is on 6:30 am again to prepare breakfast for Commonwealth House residents. Boring boring boring! I inserted my yellow key onto the House 11's front door. Everything is just as usual, normal daily routine, hmpfffff...

What? Hohoho? Tingling and mingling within the house that I have known for so long. Wait, wait, wait! This is neither the place I knew, nor a house, at least not the "House 11"! It is back to life. It is a home. It is a colourful Christmasy place. I spent time playing with the Christmas tree, put its lights on... and off, on and off. Look, look, look! Brown cookies, biscuits! Oh gosh, Santa was here last night! Yes, his hats are there. I put one red hat on my head and ate, ate, ate. Opps, I totally forgot about my long-lasting diet. Who cares? Santa was here!'



Michael explaining UK Christmas traditions

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