

# BEST NEWCOMER, SAM MACGREGOR



The feeling of my first shows on Xpress Radio were incredible - it felt as if I was given the genuine opportunity to create the live radio I'd always wanted to. Jumping from recording podcasts in my friends living room, to presenting both Monday 'Almost Drivetime' and 'Thursday Breakfast'; this year I have strived to take all opportunities to really get stuck in with student radio.

Since joining in September 2017, I have loved seeing my shows mature and develop into their present forms. I love the personal connections that radio allows you to grow between the show and audience. In Thursday Breakfast, interactive games and competitions with the student body of Cardiff was crucial to its success. Features such as the "Ten Teabag Toss" and "Breakfast Treat, Breakfast Tweet" involved myself and the co-presenter going head to head in live action, social media challenges. The use of interactive polls and audience participation have also been beneficial, working to illicit reaction with the audience. As a result of this, I have been appointed as the new Social Media Coordinator for the 2018/19 cohort.

The highlight of my year was taking over an hour slot of Xpress Radio's 24 hour fundraiser. Each hour of the day a specialist show would take over the station and play a new genre of music. Not having an overtly passionate specialism, in my first month of presenting I invited 2 of my flat mates and the whole executive team, into the studio at 2am to take part in 'The Dad Music Takeover!'. It involved our Dad's curating the playlist and having face to face 'Dad joke off's'. It commonly involved crying with laughter and deliciousness - all for a good cause.

I have also got stuck in with the speech department, helping me to develop a more serious style of presenting, away from entertainment shows. At Easter time, I helped provide a panel commentary for our student election campaigns, broadcasting a 'post-question time analysis' of the events, helping to raise awareness of the candidates and the student voice in university. This also led me on to writing and presenting daily news bulletins, not only for our network but also for Radio Cardiff, another local station to Xpress.

Being in Cardiff has let me get involved with both local and national music scenes. As part of Xpress Radio I have been able to visit venues around the city, interviewing artists on their European and UK tours. I also helped support 'The Forte Project' a scheme designed to provide a greater platform for up and coming singer songwriters in the South Wales area. I invited artists in for live sessions and interviews. As a lover of live music, being asked to compère our own music festival was wicked! I would have a quick chat and introduce each band on stage before they played to the crowd.

Outside of the studio, Welsh Varsity, our biggest OB of the year was yet another highlight! Setting up the station in a marquee before presenting on and off for 6 hours was such an experience. With little preparation due to the nature of the project I relished in creating quick features, games and audience interaction with crowds. I would introduce a song, run off to a sports pitch record an interview with a competitor and then jump back on air and play it out - an incredible day!

Personally, I have been constantly searching for networking opportunities in the radio industry. This has resulted in me helping out at an OB with Europe's biggest breakfast show (Chris Evans BBC R2), visiting and sitting in on live shows (BBC R1/R2 and Capital South Wales) and attending SRA training days. As a result of this, I have seen my links and anecdotes tighten up, features becoming more succinct and ensured I strive to create more audience specific orientated content.

I have loved my time at Xpress Radio and cannot wait to get stuck in with year two, as part of the management team. Having my shows all noted as highly commended and winning Cardiff Student Media's 'Best Newcomer' award was a perfect end to a perfect year. Let's see where the next takes me...!

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WORDS BY MEG SHARMA, STATION MANAGER 2018/19



The minute I met Sam, I knew that this is someone we'd be entering for this award. Sam came to Xpress with pure excitement, a willingness to learn and sheer passion. Three qualities that have only grown. Throughout his first year at Xpress, Sam has consistently presented incredible shows, tried his hand at every opportunity we could offer, and has been someone we could rely on.

It is very rare for someone to have such a huge impression on so many people. Sam's approach to radio is incredibly fresh, and he has inspired many members (even our oldest members) to try new things, and adopt a new perspective on not only their presenting and producing, but also their show ideas, and why we do what we do. His confidence and charisma is infectious, inspiring even myself to try new things with my shows. Sam is constantly battling the boundaries that can be set in student radio.

Sam joined us at the beginning of the year, and first made an impression when he stayed an hour after our taster session had finished, chatting about Xpress Radio and his passion for radio. It sounds cheesy, but you could tell that that is when the fire was born. Sam has presented consistent shows. Since starting his drivetime and breakfast shows, I cannot recall a show he has missed. Even if his team can't make it, he'll be in the studio, trying something new. He regularly pre-prepares content for his show, and embraces visualisation, filming segments of his show for our Twitter, which making huge impressions.

A jack of all trades, Sam has embraced all aspects of Xpress Radio. At 1am on the 22nd of November, he presented the most nostalgic and hilarious hour of our specialist takeover, his 'Dad music takeover'. Sam has also assisted with every aspect of our station including our broadcasts interviewing candidates for Union elections, and Varsity. With each of these he learnt extremely quickly, and made the broadcasts engaging and informative. Without Sam, none of these broadcasts would have been as successful, effective or efficient as they were, some may not have broadcasted at all. He regularly presents the news, and does all of these things with excitement and passion parallel to his first show.

He has also assisted our music team in interviews and sessions, doing incredible interviews with Greta Isaac, Rae Morris, and Sasha, and many local artists for the Forte project. His versatility and talent in presenting and producing makes it hard to believe he has only been doing radio for less than a year.

He is an ambassador for Xpress Radio in many ways. This was made clear when he visited Capital and BBC studios, and even went to the Royal Wedding to get coverage for Xpress. Sam has also attended every training opportunity we have had to offer, which has lead to his proficiency in audio editing, enabling to help with podcasting and OBs to a further degree.

He's clearly caught the student media bug, and it shows in his reliability. We can easily trust him to make other members feel welcome, to represent Xpress truthfully, and to take the lead in broadcasts. Everyone who has met Sam for even five-minutes can see his passion for Xpress and broadcast media. I am very glad he decided to come to Cardiff so we could have on Xpress, and I cannot wait to see him revolutionise the stations' social media next year and cannot wait to see where he is in five years. I can guarantee that everyone will know his name.

