



# THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

## Victoria Branch

## Commonwealth News

*We will take a leading role in achieving a fairer world for Commonwealth citizens by connecting, convening and equipping people to advance the values of the Commonwealth.*



Welcome to the December 2020 edition of the RCS Victoria Commonwealth News. As we emerge from our long period of restrictions we are pleased to announce that some of our events will return to normal. At the same time we need to be mindful that the pandemic is not over for all and our thoughts and hopes are with other nations throughout our Commonwealth who are still struggling.

On behalf of everyone at the RCS Victoria Branch, we wish you all a very merry Christmas and happy and safe New Year.

### Patrons

Worldwide: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Victoria: Her Excellency The Honourable Linda Dessau AC Governor of Victoria

## A history in common, a future in progress

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Through youth empowerment, education and high-level advocacy, the Society champions the importance of literacy, equality and inclusion, the environment and connected communities across the Commonwealth's 54 member nations. The

Society's unique position within the Commonwealth family allows it to play a pivotal role in convening and connecting the Commonwealth's political and diplomatic representatives, as well as industry, civil society, academic and business leaders, on a wide range of issues. Founded in 1868, the RCS is non-partisan, independent of governments and relies on public generosity to achieve its mission.

## DECEMBER 2020

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*We want to improve the lives and prospects of all Commonwealth citizens*

# Presidents Report

Fellows, Members and friends, as we begin to emerge from the pandemic in Victoria, there are still many hurdles and challenges many of us will experience. We are finally able to meet in person. Timely given the season we are entering. Our December dinner will be going ahead and we look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible. This year we will have Christmas Cakes made by Elisabeth Bettoni for auction and a hamper prepared by Loretta Simmons as our major raffle prize. Please see the announcement page for details.

We have booked our events in advance for 2021. The dates will be announced in our January newsletter. Please keep an eye out for the details.

Recently we conducted the 99<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting for the Royal Commonwealth Society Victoria Branch. Our AGM was conducted online via Zoom, a first for the RCS Vic. We were able to present and approve our Annual Report and Financial Accounts for the year, these will be available for those who could not attend at the December dinner. We also held the election of our Councilors. The results were as follows:

President: Mr Lloyd Byrne  
Vice-President: Mr James McCarthy OAM  
Treasurer: Mr Ken Spargo  
Councilors: Mrs Elisabeth Newman AM  
Mr Chales Hulson  
Ms Claudelle Shaw

Congratulations to the new Council. Thank you for putting your trust in me for another year and I look forward to working with you over the next year.

Finally, I would like acknowledge the challenges we have had this year and thank everyone for their ongoing support. I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

Lloyd Byrne  
President  
RCS Victoria

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### DECEMBER DINNER

Christmas and end of year Dinner Celebration  
DATE: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
TIME: 6:30pm – Drinks & Canapés on arrival,  
Dinner & Dessert  
RSVP: by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
COST: \$75 Members \$85 Guests

### FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

Celebratory Luncheon  
DATE: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
TIME: 12:00 for 12:30 start  
RSVP: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
COST: \$45 Members \$55 Guests

Our full list of events for 2021 will be announced on this page in the January Newsletter.

### Memberships for 2021

It's now that time of year when memberships fall due. Memberships are for the calendar year and need to be renewed by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January each year. Payments can be made directly in to our account, by mail or at the next events.

EFTPOS and Credit Card facilities are available at all events.



## Women's Group Message

Members of the Women's Group send Season's Greetings to all Members of the Society. Although the Festive Season will be a little different this year, we wish you a safe, joyous time with family and friends as restrictions allow. We wish you a peaceful 2021 with good health. Following the restrictions of this year we look forward welcoming you back at the Gables and to hosting the four luncheons of 2021 hopefully restrictions free. The first luncheon is set for 11<sup>th</sup> February which will be a special celebratory event. Further details in the January newsletter. We were disappointed not to be able to hold the Festive luncheon in November.

If any of you are suffering from the effects of the restrictions and the resulting crises and wish to talk to somebody, please feel free to contact me, Elisabeth Newman. Ph. 9699 9170 email; [elisabeth\\_mn@hotmail.com](mailto:elisabeth_mn@hotmail.com) 2020 has been quite traumatic for some people.

## New Regional Coordinator



AUSTRALIA: Nick de Bres

[australia@royalcwsociety.org](mailto:australia@royalcwsociety.org)

Nick is an Associate Fellow of the Society and strongly believes that if you see something worth doing, you should do it. This ethos has seen him be particularly active in recent years in disability care, youth mental health, fundraising and anti-cyberbullying. Selected by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as a New Colombo Plan Scholar and Fellow, he has studied, volunteered and worked in a number of Commonwealth countries and has most recently been appointed a New Colombo Plan Ambassador.

## Chocolate fruit cake by Nigella Lawson

### Ingredients

350g/12oz dried soft prunes, chopped  
250g/9oz raisins  
125g/4oz currants  
175g/6oz unsalted butter, softened  
175g/6oz dark muscovado sugar  
175ml/6fl oz honey  
125ml/4fl oz coffee liqueur  
2 oranges, juice and zest only  
1 tsp mixed spice  
2 tbsp good quality cocoa  
3 free-range eggs, beaten  
150g/5¼oz plain flour  
75g/2½oz ground almonds  
½ tsp baking powder  
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

### For decoration

25g/1oz dark chocolate covered coffee beans, Disco Gold hologram glitter, 2mm gold mini balls, approx. 10 gold stars

### Method

Preheat the oven to 150C/130C Fan/Gas mark 2.  
Line the sides and bottom of a 20cm/8in, 9cm/3½in deep, round loose-bottomed cake tin with a layer of bake-o-glide or other reusable silicon-baking parchment. When lining the tin with the bake-o-glide, cut the material into strips that are twice as high as the tin itself (it's easier to use two shorter strips of bake-o-glide, than one long strip); the height of the strips protects the cake from catching on the outside of the cake tin.



Place the fruit, butter, sugar, honey, coffee liqueur, orange juice and zest, mixed spice and cocoa into a large wide saucepan. Heat the mixture until it reaches a gentle boil, stirring the mixture as the butter melts. Let the mixture simmer for ten minutes. Then remove the saucepan from the heat and leave to stand for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, the mixture will have cooled a little. Add the eggs, flour, ground almonds, baking powder and bicarbonate soda, and mix well with a wooden spoon or spatula until the ingredients have combined.

Carefully pour the fruit cake mixture into the bake-o-glide lined cake tin. Transfer the cake tin to the oven and bake for 1¾-2 hours, or until the top of the cake is firm but will have a shiny and sticky look. At this point, if you insert a cake tester into the middle of the cake, the cake should still be a little uncooked in the middle.

Place the cake on a cooling rack. Once the cake has cooled, remove it from the tin.

To decorate, place the chocolate covered coffee beans in the centre of the cake and arrange the gold stars around the perimeter of the top of the cake. Then sprinkle some gold mini-balls over the whole of the cake. Sprinkle the Disco Gold Hologram Glitter over the top of the cake.

# News from around the Commonwealth



## 13,000 REASONS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

We are excited to announce that judging is now complete. Congratulations to all who entered. With nearly 13,000 entries from across the Commonwealth, our judges and Final Panel were greatly impressed by the calibre of entries. Our Senior Panel this year consisted of author Anthony Horowitz, poet and author Sia Figiel, and author Wendy Holden; chaired by Dr. Paul Edmondson.

"I read over eighty essays and I was struck by the extraordinary variety, the high quality of the writing (there wasn't a single weak entry) [...] There was a sense that these young writers, inspired by Greta Thunberg, are not only aware of the global challenges that they face but are more prepared to tackle them than my own generation. With everything that 2020 has thrown at us, it's hard to be forward-looking and positive. The joy of these essays was that so many of them were." Anthony Horowitz

"Each entry was engaging and showed a strong sense of awareness of our collective responsibility towards the environment...Powerful, moving, inspiring these works reflected not only a confidence in the possibilities of change but an advent hope for humanity." Sia Figiel

Our Junior Panel this year consisted of author and poet Suli Breaks, journalist and former MP Matthew Parris, and author Zalika Reid-Benta; chaired by Vicky Weinand.

"I was astonished at the eloquence, the passion and the anxiety in this year's essays. Anyone who doubts whether the message on climate change has got through to the young can be assured: juniors across the Commonwealth are worried stiff." Matthew Parris

Both panels convened at the end of September to decide the winner and runner-up in each category from the Gold Finalist awarded entries. Thank you for your continued interest in the Competition.

If you would like to view this year's Awards Ceremony you can watch it on our website at: <https://www.royalcwsociety.org/Pages/Category/literacy>

Congratulations to everyone who took part! We look forward to announcing details of the 2021 Competition shortly. #QCEC2020 #literacy #creativewriting #Commonwealth

## CONTACT DETAILS



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## Banking details

### General and function banking

CBA, BSB no: 063 -301  
Acc no: 10483586

### Donations and charitable giving

CBA, BSB no: 063 -301  
Acc no: 10486533

EFTPOS is now available at  
all functions