



**THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY**  
Bath and District

Dear Members and Friends

First of all, can I in these strange times wish you all a Happy New Year on behalf of the RCS Bath Council.

In spite of Covid-19 restrictions, the branch has been very active during the past few months. The Christmas Zoom Party was a great success thanks to Alan (our Secretary), who organised the party, a quiz and Zoom links, The Mayor, our Patron sent a message of support to the branch and Annie Maw (our President, the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset) joined us during the evening. The very inventive quiz, which included a section on recognising signed Christmas songs, went extremely well and was won by two of our Commonwealth student members, who received their prizes from Alan later in the week. During the interval, Millfield School Music Department provided carols specially recorded for us at Wells Cathedral. Thanks also goes to all the people who joined us for the quiz. We are hoping to arrange a similar event in the near future and will be in touch once we have details.

Before Christmas, the University of Bath contacted us about providing support to students who were having to stay on campus. This led to several of us taking small groups of students around Bath on a Covid-safe walking tour. My group included students from India and Zambia. Further details of the tours can be found by going to the news section of our website. [www.rcsbath.org](http://www.rcsbath.org).

At this point, I would like to welcome Lotte Veale member to our Branch Council. Lotte, who is an alumna of Bath Spa University was one of our Commonwealth students invited to lunch with the Queen last year.

A short time ago, we received a communication from RCS in London concerning a proposed licensing agreement for branches. Andrew (our Treasurer) has gone through this and we have submitted a number of questions to Head Office regarding the content. Once these have been addressed, we will be back in touch with you with further details.

The next RCS Bath Art Competition is underway and our subcommittee, under the excellent leadership of Anita St John Gray, has met on Zoom several times. We have already received a generous donation offer from Norland College and have had positive responses from several other interested parties. It is hoped to run this, Covid-19 regulations permitting, during 2021-2022 with a prize giving on the Sunday before Commonwealth Day 2022. We will keep you informed as we progress. Once again, we will be getting the excellent support of Katie at the 44AD Art Space.

A short time ago, we were made aware of the possible closure of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London. The Branch Council then prepared a response letter expressing our concern at the closure and requesting reconsideration, which was further supported by our Branch President and also by the Principal of Norland College, by the Chair of the West Country Branch of Britain- Australia Society and by several senior members of staff at Bath Spa University. The letter was sent off and we have since had an individual response from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London (Professor Wendy Thomson). She informed us that there has been a committee set up to conduct an enquiry into the future of the institute under the leadership of Sir Malcolm Rifkind, which is due to report back in June 2021. Once this has happened, we will let you know the result.

I would also like to thank Commonwealth scholars at both Bath universities and those within the city who have recently joined the society. If you are an existing member and have still to pay your annual membership (£5.00 per person/ £1.00 per student) or wish to join, then please contact Alan Howe our secretary via our website.

You can also keep abreast of developments by going to our website

[www.rcsbath.org](http://www.rcsbath.org).

Best wishes and keep safe

Godfrey Hall

Chair