



RCS members at the unveiling of the Plaque at Glenthorne, the RCS –Co-Opera event and Rediscovering Adelaide event at Dunluce Castle, Brighton



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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May 2025 – July 2025 Newsletter



"planting" the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Plaque
Unveiling the plaque by the Minister of the Environment, the Hon Susan Close

PATRONS

World Wide Patron His Majesty King Charles III
World Wide Vice Patron Her Majesty Queen Camilla
South Australian Patron: The Governor of South Australia
 Her Excellency, the Honourable Frances Adamson AC

DIARY DATES

June Rediscovering Adelaide Details to forwarded by email

RCS Asia Pacific Regional Meeting 2-5 October in Melbourne

Proposed lunch and guest speaker late August
 Details will be forwarded by email

For further details regarding the above functions please contact
 Libby 0412 820 121 or Julie 0407203035

The website for the Royal Commonwealth Society in London has changed. www.royalcwsociety.org
Find more information about The Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth.

www.royalcwsociety.org www.thecommonwealth.org
www.thercssa.com.au

2025 Subscriptions are due

The subscription to the RCS entitles all members to offer to be a member of the RCS Council, vote at the Annual General Meeting and other Special meetings, quarterly newsletters and to attend the Christmas reception in December at subsidised cost.

Single membership \$50

Double (same postage address) \$75

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Secretary General continued

Third, calling climate change “the greatest challenge of our time,” she pledged to mobilise stronger action and advocate for reforms of the international financial system to help small and other vulnerable Commonwealth states access the support they need.

The Secretary-General also committed to accelerating the Commonwealth’s modernisation by delivering faster and smarter partnerships to meet the needs of all its people.

Reflecting on her own historic journey, she said:

“It is a great honour to be the first African woman to serve as Secretary-General. No matter where in the Commonwealth you come from, this path is open to you.”

The Secretary-General concluded her address with a message of shared resolve, adding: “Let’s move forward with purpose, with courage, and with an unshakable commitment to a Commonwealth that truly thrives together.”

Born in Accra, Shirley Botchwey was appointed by leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa on 25 October 2024.

The Commonwealth continues in Working together for prosperity, democracy and peace

The **Commonwealth Charter** expresses the commitment of member countries to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all Commonwealth citizens.

Photos in this newsletter have been taken by Julie Gameau, Libby Ellis and William Comley

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Hon Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, former Ghanaian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, assumed office as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, pledging to advance the values of the Commonwealth Charter at a time of growing global tensions and shifting alliances.

Botchwey succeeds Patricia Scotland, whose nine-year term ended in March. She is the first African woman – the second African overall – to lead the association of 56 countries, which make up a third of the world's population and more than a quarter of the United Nations membership.

Speaking at the Commonwealth Secretariat's headquarters in London on 1 April 2025, the Secretary-General acknowledged the scale of the challenges confronting the world.

She said:

"The world we woke up to today is unlike any we have seen in our lifetimes. The consequences of lower economic growth, increased defence expenditures, and a frayed multilateralism will affect our pockets directly, increase unemployment and poverty, reduce social protection and weaken our resilience to shocks.

"The value of our Commonwealth stands in bold relief, in a time like this. For over 75 years, the Commonwealth has been a unique and powerful force for good. Now we must seize the moment to realise the transformation our societies seek."

The Secretary-General highlighted the power of Commonwealth unity in uncertain times. "The challenges we face are real and serious," she said, "but together, we are more than equal to them."

Drawing on Commonwealth values, Secretary-General Shirley Botchwey added:

"Sustained by the values that bind us - democracy, good governance, peace, human rights, and equal opportunity - we will build a future in which dignity, opportunity, and prosperity are within reach for all."

The Secretary-General outlined three strategic priorities for her leadership, calling them the foundation for a "Commonwealth built on all talents".

First, she pledged to equip women and young people with the skills, tools and opportunities they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Second, the Secretary-General vowed to revitalise trade, investment and connectivity across the Commonwealth, describing it as a pathway to industrial development, productivity and inclusive growth. No country, she stressed, should be left behind, regardless of its size or income level.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, 2025

General meetings. In June we held a Special General Meeting to propose a change of name. The idea that we are a branch of an organisation headquartered in London has been inaccurate for a decade. Following the SGM, about 15 members participated in a lively discussion about where our Society might be headed and what the members wanted from the Council. The idea emerged that a smaller number of projects be supported, but with larger amounts, to enable us to build ongoing relationships with the recipients.

Glenthorne. Our involvement with Glenthorne has continued throughout the year. Judy continues to be an active member of the Friends of Glenthorne and is working on the creation of a plaque to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Our original idea of a statue of a war horse has been superseded by a suggestion to create a story wall of Corten panels. We also assisted when Judy opened her garden for Open Gardens, with the money raised going to Glenthorne.

QCC. Any plan we may have had to continue the legacy of the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy has not come to fruition. Both RCS London and the Commonwealth Forestry Association have moved on. Even our offer to co-ordinate a book about the project was rejected at this stage. In London, HM the King planted a tree in the grounds of Buckingham Palace to finalise the project.

Southern Ocean Marine Discovery Centre. When we visited this facility, it was known as Marine Discovery Centre and housed in a classroom in Henly Beach. We have supported them to change their name, become a company limited by guarantee and work towards funding for a purpose-built facility on the coast. John Shepherd, in particular, has been liaising with Professor Chris Daniels.

The Adelaide Hills Chamber Orchestra/Wind Song/Co-Opera. Our support of these groups continued through the year, thus keeping alive our links to both the RCS Ensemble and Co-Opera. As well as a concert we supported in January, with pizza afterwards with the cast, we also supported pocket productions of *Mozart's Journey* and *Tosca* and a series of small concerts by Windsong, the wind quintet section of the RCS Ensemble. We look forward to more events of this kind.

President's report continued

Interstate interactions. In March I was invited to address the ACT Branch AGM, as part of that trip, I detoured to Melbourne to meet the Executive of RCS Victoria. The suggestion has been raised that Victoria and South Australia combine to form RCS Australia; a company limited by guarantee. This would enable us to work more closely together, and also to approach the Federal government for assistance with some of our larger possible future projects. Other branches could join if they wish. I had another visit to Melbourne in September and arranged that they present a performance of *Tosca* when Co-Opera took it to Victoria. They are also interested in supporting the Southern Ocean Marine Discovery Centre.

International interactions.

London. I visited London in May. I was not able to visit either RCS London or the Forestry Association Chair but did spend a day in Woolwich at the former Arsenal site where a group are establishing a Commonwealth Hub. It was officially opened by the King, with Commonwealth Secretary General Baroness Scotland in attendance. As RCS London becomes more inward looking, I think this area will become more important in the future. They have hosted a couple of Zoom meetings for the network.

Kuala Lumpur. The RCS regional meeting was held in June. Australia was well represented with 9 delegates from SA and Vic. London did not attend but Libby van Der Valk sent a 5 minute video during which she informed us that HM King Charles III would continue as RCS Patron, with HM Queen Camilla as Vice Patron.

Samoa. Several RCS members attended CHOGM in Samoa and South Australia hosted an informal networking event for about 35 people. Among the guests were Libby and William and Helen Jones from London attended as well as Pater Mann and Ben Delo from Hong Kong and Blackston from Nigeria. Libby said that although she offered to host an international meeting in London in 2025, she had subsequently been told this was not possible. During the course of the evening, it was agreed that a more formal RCS event coinciding with CHOGM was a possible way forward as RCS London would always attend CHOGM.

2026. Following Samoa, I have been involved with a number of WhatsApp meetings to try to coordinate the various functions scheduled for 2026. These include an International Meeting RCS (AsPac) meeting in Melbourne, subsequently brought forward to October 2025, the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in July, an International RCS (AmPac) meeting in Edmonton in September, and CHOGM in Antigua sometime..

Commonwealth Business Summit

The inaugural **Commonwealth Business Summit** will be hosted by the Government of Namibia and is taking place in Windhoek, Namibia, from 18–20 June 2025, on the sidelines of the **2025 Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting**.

Branch Council Members

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Please contact the above members for any information regarding the activities and news of the Royal Commonwealth Society South Australia

MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The following Countries are members of the Commonwealth

United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria, Cyprus, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Malta, Zambia, Singapore, Guyana, Botswana, Barbados, Lesotho, Nauru, Mauritius, Swaziland, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji Islands, Bangladesh, The Bahamas, Grenada, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Dominica, St Lucia, Kiribati, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Vanuatu, Belize, Antigua & Barbuda, St Christopher & Nevis, Brunei, Namibia, Cameroon, Mozambique, Rwanda, Maldives, The Gambia, Togo and Gabon

These diverse nations representing one quarter of the world's population over every continent, include Republics, National Monarchies and a number of Nations that recognise Queen Elizabeth II as their own Head of State

THE KING'S SPEECH

COMMONWEALTH DAY 10 March 2025

Last October, leaders from across the Commonwealth came together in Samoa to reaffirm their “belief in the value of the Commonwealth as a trusted forum where diverse voices of our member states, the large and the small, the young and the old, come together as one family.”

These gatherings are important for helping all Commonwealth nations to tackle the challenges of the day, yet they also play another vital role.

In these uncertain times, where it is all too easy to believe that our differences are problems instead of a source of strength and an opportunity for learning, the Commonwealth's remarkable collection of nations and peoples come together in the spirit of support and, crucially, friendship.

This year, the world reflects on the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War 2.

More than one-and-a-half million men and women who served during the War came from across the Commonwealth to support the United Kingdom and its allies.

On this special anniversary, we remember with particular pride and everlasting gratitude the untold sacrifice and selflessness of so many from around our Family of Nations who gave their lives in that dreadful conflict.

The Commonwealth's ability to bring together people from all over the world has stood the test of time and remains as ever-important today.

Leaders recently reiterated the importance of collaboration for peace and human rights, as well as for the restoration of Nature both on land and in the oceans.

As we mark this Commonwealth Day together, there is no more important task than to restore the disrupted harmony of our entire planet. For the sake of our younger generations' threatened future, I can only hope that the Commonwealth will continue its vital work to restore that harmony.

Charles R

President's report continued

Rediscovering Adelaide. This very successful project continued throughout the year with visits including to Government House, the Army Museum, S.A. Museum, Chihuly Exhibition, Marine Discovery Centre and SAMRI.

Commonwealth Week. Again, this year, there was a lack of leadership from the JCSC and no major events to mark the occasion, just a simple lunch with Matthew Neuhaus invited as guest speaker.

PESA: One of our major sponsorships, the State Finals of PESA was in recession this year.

AGM. March saw our AGM, and our new Council was appointed. I would like to publicly thank the team: Judy Clarke, Vice President, Julie Gameau, Hon Sec and Treasurer, and councillors Chris Ashton, Christine Cundell, Barbara Mayfield and Brenda Wallis who were all returned, and welcome Patsy Beckett and John Shepherd to the team. Barbara and Patsy resigned throughout the year, and we co-opted William Comley onto the Council. However, I am delighted to say that Barbara has been able to rearrange her time and is standing again at this meeting. I would like to thank them all for their wonderful contribution as well as Suzanne Kellett who is responsible for our web page.

I would also like to thank Public Schools Club for hosting us through the year, including today, and ask Chris to pass our thanks on to the PSC committee.

And special thanks to Julie for her continuing hard work behind the scenes. It was only when I became President that I realized just how much work Julie did on our behalf.

Libby Ellis President

NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome is extended to new members

Deborah Johnson

James Nicholson

Nicky Gameau

Martin Schumaker

Douglass Potts

We wish all of you a long and happy association with the Society and look forward to seeing you at future functions

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

Since the Special General Meeting we held at St John's Halifax Street last year your Council has been very busy.

We all realize that in today's world clubs (other than sporting clubs) that require monthly meetings and ongoing administration are becoming less popular.

If there comes a time in the future, when it becomes impracticable for the RCS (SA) to continue, we want our assets to have been used as we wish, rather than handed to another organisation as the regulations require.

To this end we have been working on identifying and growing partnerships with a small group (maybe 4 or 5 max.) of organisations that we hope will become our legacy moving forward. The first three of these are:-

GLENTHORNE NATIONAL PARK

Our involvement with Glenthorne grew out of our desire to be involved with the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy and Cleland, an ancient sustainable forest. Through this relationship we became more aware of the newest National Park in the southern suburbs and have been working with the Dept of Environment and Water, the Rangers and the Friends of Glenthorne (FoG) ever since. During Commonwealth Week this year the Minister unveiled a plaque in the Queen's pod commemorating her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. Now we are working towards creating a tribute to the War Horses that passed through this area. Already trees have been planted for the Commonwealth grove behind the heritage munitions huts, Next, we will commission a landscape designer to assist with the placement of the artwork we are commissioning. Stay tuned. Judy Clarke has become an active member of the FoG and she and John Shepherd are the primary contacts for this partnership. Martin Schumaker, President of the FoG, has recently joined the RCS (SA).

MARINE DISCOVERY CENTRE

One of our Rediscovering Adelaide excursions was to this wonderful facility. It is currently housed in a couple of classrooms in a school, but they need to move and expand to reach their full potential. Our Council members agreed that we wished to show much more support, and we have assisted them with some of the costs to create a feasibility study towards a purpose-built facility on the coast. This project also fits very nicely with RCS London's push for a greater awareness of the problems with plastics in the oceans.

CO-OPERA INC

Many current members of RCS (SA), myself included, joined because of the support given to Co-Opera. This ceased because the new team at Co-Opera advised us they didn't require our assistance any further.

Glenthorne continued

Alan Burns, a founding member of Friends of Glenthorne welcomed us all to the Park and the Queen's Pod, then Our Master of Ceremonies, John Shepherd, introduced Libby Ellis, our President. Libby gave a very interesting, but also an important speech, about what the RCS stands for and why we had decided to set up this Plaque to the Queen's 70th Jubilee, at Glenthorne. As she said, it focussed our attention on the extraordinary work the Queen had achieved during her reign, but also on her care and awareness for the importance of the natural environments, found throughout the Commonwealth, and her wish to see a "Green Canopy" over the lands.

The Deputy Premier was next to speak, and her words were warm and powerful. She acknowledged that the Queen had been born into her position, and might seem not to have earned the right to her powerful status. However, The Deputy Premier said that she could not envisage another person who could have firstly, crafted her role as Head of The Commonwealth, and then filled it with such quiet awareness, intelligence, warmth and strength, for the length of her very long reign. As she said, we were indeed blessed to have had her example and quiet, effective leadership.

After a thank you to everyone attending, many of us took the time to walk to a nearby Lookout, which gave us a view over much of the Park, and the Munitions Huts, which are to be the focus of the next RCS enterprise. A memorial to the men and horses that were sent overseas to the various front lines during World War 1. We all walked back down through the Nature Play Ground to a much appreciated afternoon tea, and some catching up with friends and colleagues. It was a very happy and satisfactory finish to a long held RCS vision to acknowledge the Queen in a quiet and meaningful way.

Judy Clarke

Objects of the Royal Commonwealth Society

The objects of the society are to promote the increase and diffusion of knowledge respecting the people and Countries of the Commonwealth, to maintain the best traditions of the Commonwealth and to foster unity of thought and action to matters of common interest

Glenthorne National Park
Unveiling The Queen's Pod Plaque
Friday 21 March 2025

It was a gorgeous day, warm, sunny with a whisper of wind, just the way all good stories should start!

The 2 Plaques, after much wrangling and worrying delays, were in place on a beautiful big rock, in front of the happily growing and very tidy Queen's Pod, covered in our big Commonwealth Flag, in our new and very special Glenthorne National Park.

The Friends of Glenthorne had worked for nearly a month to have The Pod and its surroundings looking their very best; the marque was up and chairs set in there, for those who wanted them.

Acceptances were received from The Deputy Premier, Hon Susan Close MP; Alex Dighton MP, Member for Black; Erin Tompson MP, Member for Davenport; Prof. Chris Daniels, Green Adelaide and much more; Marcus Gehrig, CEO RSPCA;

Chris Hanna, Mayor of Marion; The President of Birds SA; a number of members of the Department of Environment and Water; Rangers from the Department; RCS and Friends of Glenthorne members, and as it turned out, some interested visitors walking through the Park. The Deputy Premier had agreed to unveil the Plaque, which was set up by the RCS, to acknowledge the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, her 70 years on the Throne. We had planted the first planting in the Pod, with help from Friends of Glenthorne and the Rangers, and the final planting was organised for 8th September 2022....it was the day the Queen died. It was a surreal experience for us all, but we decided to go ahead and finish the planting. We went back to the Rangers' Station, after the planting to have our customary cake and coffee, but this time we also shared a toast, with a bottle of wine and some small plastic cups – to King Charles the Third – it was a moment out of time.



Unfortunately, and change of government and Covid-19 meant that Co-Opera almost ceased to exist, and they reached out again to the RCS (SA) for assistance. After a lot of discussion, that I was not involved with, as I had once again become Chair of the Co-Opera Board, it was decided by the Council to recommend to the wider membership that very substantial assistance be given to enable Co-Opera to once again be able to seek other major funding, including government grants. This Special General meeting was held straight after the AGM last month and was agreed by a substantial majority. This sponsorship of \$40,000 per year for three years is the largest sponsorship we have made and is arguably one of the largest ever private sponsorships of a second-tier arts organisation. Co-Opera has been around for 30 years and with our help they can now not only regain their role as the “district cricket team” of the arts world, but they can keep our legacy of supporting the Arts world alive. We will hear more about past and present artists and their accomplishments in future News-letters.

Libby Ellis OAM

CO-OPERA FUTURE DATES 2025

October 2025

Ranz Lehar

The Merry Widow

This staging of Lehar's masterpiece accentuates the comedy and glamour in its unforgettable melodies, including The Merry Widow Waltz, Vija, I'm of to Chez Mazim's and the number made famous by a young Maurice Chevalier, Girl, Girls, Girls.

Check the web site or the many dates and venues in October and November.

December 2025

Sir Authur Sullivan: The Zoo a musical Folly

A farcical story about two pairs of lovers: one involving a nobleman, who goes to the Zoo to woo the girl who sells snacks there and tries to impress her by buying all of the food, the other couple is a young chemist who believes he has poisoned his beloved by mixing up her father's prescription with peppermint.

It is a light heated tale staged at the Fig Tree Function Centre , Adelaide Zoo on 1,2,3 December

Co-Opera have published a prospectus for the next three years of activities. Please look at the web page www.Co-pera.com.au for further details.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

THE AGM was held on Sunday 23rd March at The Public Schools Club.

20 members attended to hear of the activities of the Society, to adopt the audited financial report and elect officers for the next twelve months.

Libby Ellis OAM was elected as President, and Chris Ashton, Barbara Mayfield, John Shepherd AM and Brenda Wallis as Branch Councillors.

The President listed the many activities of the Society in the last 12 months.

The meeting concluded within a half an hour and was followed by a Special General meeting and then a delicious afternoon tea and much chatter

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The Special General Meeting was held on Sunday March 23rd 2025 at the conclusion of the AGM.

Vice President, Judy Clarke, took the chair and 20 RCS members attended the meeting.

Barbara Mayfield moved and second by Bette Hardy "That the Royal Commonwealth South Australia Incorporated (RCS SA) recommends to the RCS SA members in the Special General Meeting that the RCS SA sponsors Co-Opera Incorporated for the amount of \$40,000 (forty Thousand Dollars) each year for the next three calendar years (2025,2026,2027)".

This motion was discussed by the members present

The motion was passed by the meeting

As this was the only business on the Special General Meeting agenda the meeting closed at 3.18pm

The Ode

We of the Royal Commonwealth Society shall continue to foster goodwill and affection between peoples of the Commonwealth, so that all may live together in peace, sympathy and understanding

REDISCOVERING ADELAIDE

Dunluce Castle Brighton

RCS members enjoyed a day out to Dunluce Castle at Brighton on March 6th with morning tea served in the Dining Room amongst the reminders of a bygone era.

The owner of Dunluce Castle Sarah Tinney has delved deeply into the history of Dunluce Castle, the early families and the wider history of Brighton.

Commenced in 1904 the castle was originally part of a 12 acre site in the sand hills of Brighton. The Macully family took up residence in 1910. Sarah's enthusiasm for the past provided an intimate look at the life of the Macully family, their friends and Brighton before and during the war years, the legend of the smuggler's tunnels and the first recorded shark fatality.

Dunluce Castle is an excellent example of the commitment and confidence in South Australia shown by our early families and it is a privilege to be able to share its history with Sarah and her family who have committed to finding out and recording our heritage, the big stories and the snippets of daily life.

The photographs Sarah shared of Brighton before it was subdivided, the sand dunes in their natural state provided a look back at our coast line, hard to imagine today.

Our heritage is so easily lost it was a privilege to share Sarah Tinney's enthusiasm and passion for South Australia's history.

Beryl Price

