



COMMONWEALTH
SCHOLARSHIPS

COMMONWEALTH KNOWLEDGE

ISSUE #3 DECEMBER 2016

PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Urban heritage conservation in India

CONTENTS

4 The first word

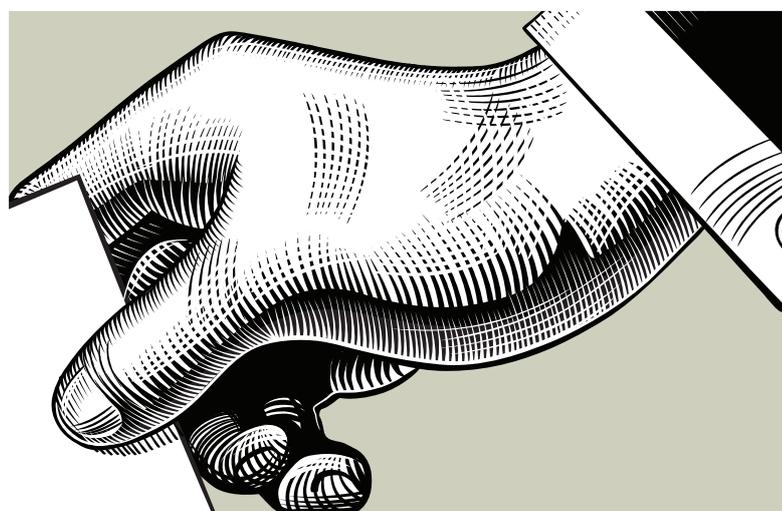
5 The battle against Ebola in Sierra Leone

How Prince Tommy Williams joined the fightback



6 Already forgotten?

Boghuma Titanji on the lessons that must be learnt from the recent Ebola crisis

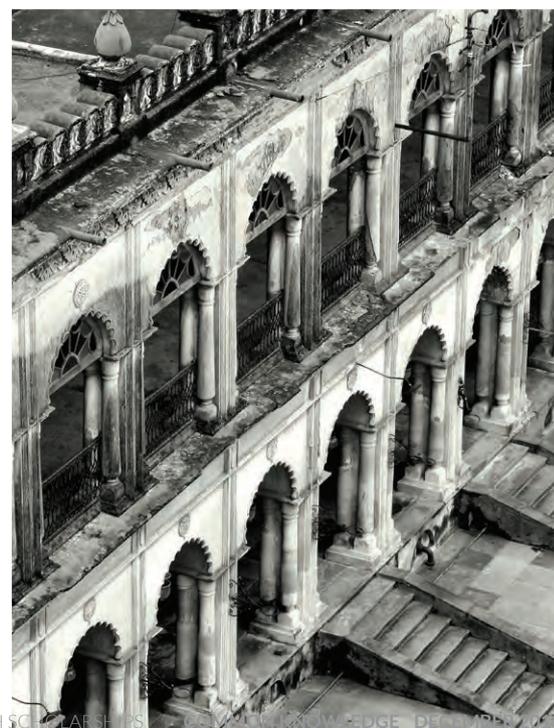
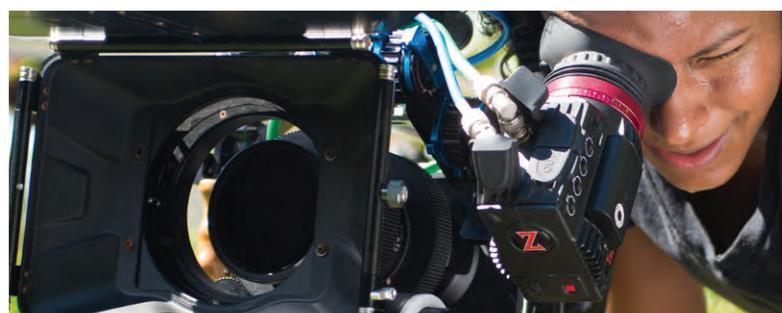


8 The reluctant politician

An interview with Winston DaCosta Jordan, Guyana's Minister of Finance

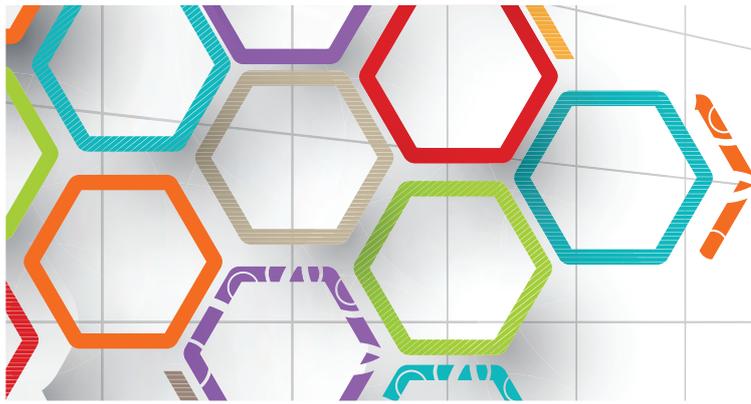
10 Looking beyond

Aishwarya Tipnis explains the impact of her work in urban conservation



12 Dreaming big

Gabrielle Blackwood reflects on her path to filmmaking



15 New research, new knowledge

Pioneering research recognised by the 2016 Taylor & Francis Commonwealth Scholar Best Journal Article Prize

18 Events

22 Alumni news



25 Thoughts into action

Lou Marinoff: academic, philosopher, and table hockey champion



28 Turning challenges into opportunities

Herine Otieno and Dieudonné Che on the proceedings and outcomes of a recent Scholar conference

31 School of Rock

Daniella Tilbury, the first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Gibraltar



32 Global problem, local impact

Ahnivar Peralta considers the impact of climate change on small island states



34 The CSC in numbers

35 Get involved!

THE FIRST WORD

Welcome to the third issue of *Common Knowledge*! This edition contains articles from current Commonwealth Scholars and alumni from 13 different countries - representing every Commonwealth region - about their work to improve their local communities. Examples range from using leadership skills gained during a Commonwealth Professional Fellowship to raise awareness of Ebola prevention in Sierra Leone, to researching and investigating the effects of climate change on small island states, to returning home to improve higher education opportunities in Gibraltar.



2016 has seen national or regional elections in over 16 Commonwealth countries. We will look back on this year as one characterised by considerable change, the effects of which we all continue to navigate and will no doubt do so for some time ahead. It is in this climate of change that I believe current and former Commonwealth Scholars need to be heard more than ever. Your contributions towards the common good - whether in education, health, science, politics, or any other field - are essential. The CSC will continue to showcase your achievements, but we cannot do this without you, so please do keep us informed of your news and successes, as well as your current contact details.

Change is also a key element in the CSC's work. Most of our 2016 cohort of Scholars and Fellows have arrived in the UK, and I hope that they are

starting to settle in to their new environment. I also hope that all of our recently returned alumni, who left the UK a few months ago, are adjusting well to life back home and finding that the skills and knowledge they acquired are being put to good use.

As we move into 2017, on behalf of everyone at the CSC, I wish all our readers and supporters a happy festive season and best wishes for the new year ahead.

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Common Knowledge

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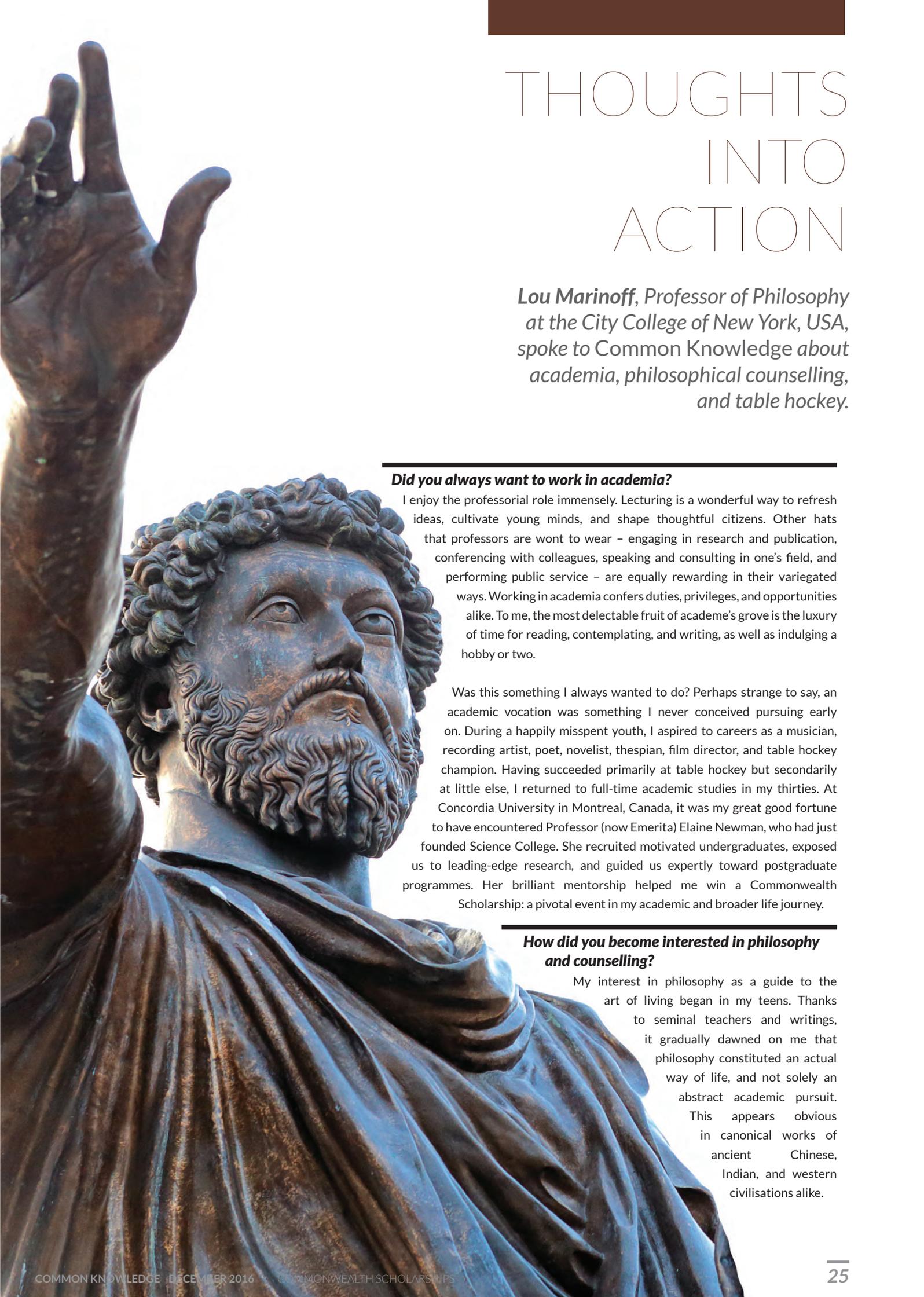
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THOUGHTS INTO ACTION

Lou Marinoff, Professor of Philosophy at the City College of New York, USA, spoke to Common Knowledge about academia, philosophical counselling, and table hockey.

Did you always want to work in academia?

I enjoy the professorial role immensely. Lecturing is a wonderful way to refresh ideas, cultivate young minds, and shape thoughtful citizens. Other hats that professors are wont to wear – engaging in research and publication, conferencing with colleagues, speaking and consulting in one’s field, and performing public service – are equally rewarding in their variegated ways. Working in academia confers duties, privileges, and opportunities alike. To me, the most delectable fruit of academe’s grove is the luxury of time for reading, contemplating, and writing, as well as indulging a hobby or two.

Was this something I always wanted to do? Perhaps strange to say, an academic vocation was something I never conceived pursuing early on. During a happily misspent youth, I aspired to careers as a musician, recording artist, poet, novelist, thespian, film director, and table hockey champion. Having succeeded primarily at table hockey but secondarily at little else, I returned to full-time academic studies in my thirties. At Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, it was my great good fortune to have encountered Professor (now Emerita) Elaine Newman, who had just founded Science College. She recruited motivated undergraduates, exposed us to leading-edge research, and guided us expertly toward postgraduate programmes. Her brilliant mentorship helped me win a Commonwealth Scholarship: a pivotal event in my academic and broader life journey.

How did you become interested in philosophy and counselling?

My interest in philosophy as a guide to the art of living began in my teens. Thanks to seminal teachers and writings, it gradually dawned on me that philosophy constituted an actual way of life, and not solely an abstract academic pursuit. This appears obvious in canonical works of ancient Chinese, Indian, and western civilisations alike.

Professor Lou Marinoff
is a 1984 Commonwealth
Scholar from Canada –
he studied for a PhD in
Philosophy of Science at
the University of London.



For several decades, along with a number of close friends, I used philosophy instrumentally in my own life only, as they did in theirs, chiefly as a sagacious guide during times of puzzlement or tribulation. This in itself is an ancient practice. For example, Emperor Marcus Aurelius penned his *Meditations* as a daily dose of philosophical self-counsel, to calibrate his moral compass and fortify his virtue. The importance of wholesome states of mind attained through virtuous ‘self-talk’ is also well known to even more ancient Hindu and Buddhist schools. All these teachings are used today across a global spectrum. But, during the 1960s and 1970s, we aficionados of applied philosophy never dreamed of delivering it as a counselling service for others.

That changed for me in the early 1990s, at the Centre for Applied Ethics at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Local and national news media regularly called on applied ethicists to offer insights into pertinent ethical issues of the day, from environmental to medical, commercial to political. At some point, ordinary citizens began to make a vital connection: if applied ethicists could engage with *abstract issues*, then perhaps they could also counsel *real persons* grappling with those very issues. Out of the blue, people began phoning the centre, asking to speak

with a philosopher. Some even walked in off the street, asking to see a philosopher. That’s how my first two clients materialised.

It then dawned on me that, even in Canada’s socially democratic ethos of national healthcare, there were no service providers explicitly trained to help people address their ethical quandaries or moral dilemmas, as well as perennial questions of meaning, purpose, and value at various junctures in life, from a secular philosophical standpoint. So I developed protocols to provide such services, and wrote up case studies. By stages this brought me in contact with the burgeoning international community of philosophical practitioners, which has since coalesced into a movement.

My interests in philosophical counselling are spurred by several factors. These include a fascination with the power of dialogue to facilitate positive change, the ability of abstract ideas to make concrete differences, the uniqueness of each client and his or her particular situation, and the unfailing applicability of a maxim shared by Buddhists, Taoists, and Stoics alike: that felicity and fulfilment depend largely upon the quality of one’s thoughts.

You are a three-time Canadian Table Hockey Open Champion. What is table hockey, and how did you get into it?

Table hockey is basically a miniaturisation of ice hockey, just as table tennis is a miniaturisation of lawn tennis. One salient difference is that table hockey captures most of the essential features of ice hockey, whereas not all miniaturisations retain that much essence of their respective models. Table hockey is much more compressed and intense: a five-minute game on the table is equivalent, score-wise, to a 60-minute game on the ice. Success and failure are measured in millimetres and tenths of a second. Table hockey players develop laser-like powers of concentration, and lightning-fast eye-hand coordination, along with the usual virtues of sportsmanship. Since table hockey neither requires nor rewards brute strength – rather, it favours speed, accuracy, dexterity, intensity, and

Felicity and fulfilment depend largely upon the quality of one's thoughts

time management – girls and boys and adults of all ages can play competitively, or just for fun. The game has remarkable allure.

How did I get into it? Well, it got into me first. Hockey is far more than a sport in Canada; it's really more akin to a religion. I grew up in Canada during table hockey's 'golden age' (1955-1985), when virtually every family had at least one board in their basement, and kids and adults played regularly. My parents bought me a table at the age of five. It was fun, and fascinating. As soon as he was old enough, my (late) younger brother Sidney and I became lifelong sparring partners on the table, and later co-organisers of the Montreal Table Hockey League (MTHL). Against a very tough field, I managed to dominate the MTHL for six years (1978-1983) and won three consecutive Canadian Open titles (1978, 1979, and 1980).

Nowadays, the sport is enjoying a tremendous resurgence, with a new generation of evolved tables and amazing talents on the scene. I made a comeback in 2006, and have since battled my way back into Canada's top ten. In 2014, a triumvirate of Quebec City Champion Burt Brassard, Montreal and World Champion Carlo Bossio, and I founded the National Table Hockey League (NTHL). In April 2015, I won the New York City and Tri-State Championships, and in July won the US Open title in Chicago, in my fourth trip to the finals. Clearly, table hockey is a sport for life. This is my best year so far since coming back, and thanks for asking.

I aspire to become an ambassador for the sport, to encourage more young people to play. Unlike video games, whose minute control pads can trigger repetitive stress disorders, table hockey employs the larger muscle groups in addition to the fine ones, promoting healthy breathing and movement. Also, unlike video games, table hockey pits flesh-and-blood opponents in real time, thus promoting wholesome socialisation and good sportsmanship. Significantly, it also boosts attention span, and is therefore an antidote to the epidemic of ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) that plagues tens of millions of overly-digitised and gratuitously-medicated children in the west. The NTHL

recently introduced table hockey to a middle school in Saint-Sophie, Quebec, and the teachers told us that it put a swift end to bullying and bickering in the schoolyard. That's a lot of merit for a little game.

Has your Commonwealth Scholarship contributed to your work?

Absolutely, yes. Mostly, it was the learning that has both informed and supported lifelong work and academic interests. Beyond attending lectures by wonderfully knowledgeable professors, I spent the majority of my three years in London reading in the British Library (BL), with forays to its several annexes, as well as to nearby libraries at Senate House, King's College London, the London School of Economics, and University College London. I also made expeditions to libraries at the Imperial War Museum, the Institute of Strategic Studies, the Ministry of Defence, and the Peace Studies Institute at Bradford. I met fascinating scholars and luminaries galore, including Sir Karl Popper and David Bohm, as well as Tibetan Buddhist teacher Sogyal Rinpoche. But most of the time you'd find me reading under that magnificent blue-vaulted dome in the British Museum, which then housed the BL.

One day, Mikhail Gorbachev happened by the British Library with the then UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. He was on a state visit, and apparently had asked to see the actual seat in the British Library at which Karl Marx had written *Das Kapital*. Of course, no one had the foggiest notion where Marx had sat, so they pointed to a chair, and Gorbachev seemed satisfied. I jotted a note to the effect that Marx's writings had left a far more enduring imprint.

But in all seriousness, I still keep in my study an oversized leather satchel that I trundled daily to and from the British Library. It is stuffed with thousands of pages of handwritten notes, which formed not only the foundation of a doctoral dissertation, but also of many subsequent book chapters, scholarly articles, and other publications on a variety of topics. Even 30 years later, I still peruse those well-

worn pages from time to time, and never fail to glean a *bon mot*.

In retrospect, it is fair to say that my Commonwealth Scholarship was a mind-opening, horizon-broadening, and life-changing opportunity, which still pays handsome noetic dividends to this day, and for which I shall always remain profoundly grateful.

What advice would you give to our new cohort of Commonwealth Scholars?

Philosophers are full of free advice, and rarely chary of dispensing it. Here are three pieces for new Commonwealth Scholars.

First: You are embarked on a life-changing journey, a magnificent opportunity of which you'd do well to make the most. I'd enjoin you to sustain that high level of motivation, throughout your research and writing-up.

Second: Do not expect smooth sailing throughout. You will be adapting to a new country, immersing yourself in its novel ethos, discovering new English idioms, and adjusting to myriad differences in the minutiae of daily life. You must find a place to live, fathom novel academic depths, establish productive relationships with your professors, enjoy supportive friendships with your colleagues, develop a viable research programme with your supervisor, and eventually write up a credible thesis.

Third: Remember the common bond that unites us all. You are entrusted with keys to the cultural treasure house of a Commonwealth of great nations. You are invited to explore it, learn from it, and ultimately make your own unique contribution to its vast collections. Relish this season of studious seeding and scholarly cultivation, for it will pass swiftly. The nourishing fruits of its abundant harvest, however, may persist for a lifetime. You will always be a Commonwealth Scholar. Ponder, then, the overarching duty of continuing lifelong to uphold those principles upon which commonwealths – along with free and reasoned inquiry itself – are founded and preserved.

GET INVOLVED!

There are several ways to get involved with the CSC's activities, through events across the Commonwealth, promoting our scholarships and fellowships to potential applicants, and joining our alumni associations.

REGIONAL NETWORKS

Connect with Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows in the same university or region in the UK

Scotland

North West

North East

Wales and Northern Ireland

Midlands and Oxford

South West

South East

For full details, visit

bit.ly/cscuk-regional-networks

ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

Meet and network with former and future Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows

Australia

Lesotho

Bangladesh

Malaysia

Barbados

Mauritius

Cameroon

New Zealand

Canada

Nigeria

Ghana

Sierra Leone

Gibraltar

Tanzania

Guyana

Trinidad and Tobago

India

Uganda

Jamaica

Zambia

Kenya

For full details, visit

bit.ly/cscuk-associations-alumni

CALENDAR

2017

9 January

Applications open for Commonwealth Scholarships in low and middle income countries supported by the CSFP endowment fund (Round 1)

14 January

Welcome home reception
Dhaka, Bangladesh

16 January

Entries open for the 2016 Taylor & Francis Commonwealth Scholar Best Journal Article Prize

January

Alumni reintegration workshop
Kumasi, Ghana

February

Applications open for Commonwealth Professional Fellowships

18 February

Indian Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows event
Kolkata, India

March

Alumni breakfast meeting
Maputo, Mozambique

March

Welcome home reception
Delhi, India

March

Applications open for Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships

29 March

Final deadline for applications for Commonwealth Shared Scholarships

10 April

Applications open for Commonwealth Scholarships in low and middle income countries supported by the CSFP endowment fund (Round 2)

July

Applications open for Commonwealth:

- PhD Scholarships
- Master's Scholarships
- Split-site Scholarships
- Academic Fellowships
- Medical Fellowships



The Commonwealth Secretariat is calling for experts to join their Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) Talent Bank. The CFTC provides technical expertise to the public sector by employing professionals on specialist assignments in Commonwealth member countries. More than 350 experts are deployed each year on assignments that range from a few days to two or three years in length.

Assignments typically involve a mix of policy advice and guidance, strategy development and implementation, institutional capacity development, and mentoring and skills training for senior level officials.

For more information on how to register with the CFTC Talent Bank and other jobs offered by the Commonwealth Secretariat, visit thecommonwealth.org/jobs

Key programmatic areas of focus for the Commonwealth are currently:

- Democracy
- Public institutions
- Special development
- Youth
- Economic growth and sustainable development
- Small states and vulnerable states

For further details about these activities and more, visit www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk

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▲ 2015 Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholars studying MSc Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health at the Royal Veterinary College visited Boltons Park Farm as part of their orientation workshop in the UK in June 2016



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