



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY



THE QUEEN'S
COMMONWEALTH ESSAY
COMPETITION

MOOMIN

****Under strict embargo until 01:00 GMT on Friday 22nd November 2019****

THE QUEEN'S COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2020 LAUNCHED BY THE DUCHESS OF CORNWALL

- 'Climate Action in the Commonwealth' announced as 2020 theme
- Moomin Characters appointed principal sponsor of the Competition

Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, Vice-Patron of the Royal Commonwealth Society, has today launched The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2020 at Tūranga library in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The 2020 theme, 'Climate Action in the Commonwealth', encourages young writers from across the globe to explore the many facets of this critical issue, which will dramatically shape the future of the Commonwealth's 1.6 billion citizens under the age of 30.

The selection of this environmental theme is particularly welcomed by the Competition's new principal sponsor, Moomin Characters, which has a long history of charitable work, particularly championing causes that align with the values of friendship, tolerance, open-mindedness, respect for nature and the power of storytelling. The Moomins, created by the Finnish artist Tove Jansson, are a family of friendly, round trolls who live in Moominvalley with their diverse group of friends and acquaintances. Featured as a comic strip in 1954 in the world's largest newspaper at the time - London's The Evening News – the Moomins are much loved characters across the Commonwealth and beyond.

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition aims to challenge young people's thinking and the means by which they can express their views, using creative forms of writing such as essays, poems, stories or scripts. Since 2010, it has received nearly 100,000 entries, from hundreds of schools across almost every Commonwealth country. Entries are judged by 150 pan-Commonwealth volunteers. The winners are selected by an expert panel, including poets, publishers, scriptwriters and journalists.

The Competition has been run by the Royal Commonwealth Society since 1883, and culminates with winners and runners-up traveling to London for a week-long series of educational and cultural events, typically including an Awards Ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

The theme was launched during an assembly of local school children, who had earlier participated in a writing workshop at the library involving local authors, educators and New Zealand's Poet Laureate, David Eggleton. During the assembly, Her Royal Highness took the opportunity to present a number of certificates to high-level winners from the 2019 Competition.

Sophia Jansson, creative director of Moomin Characters and niece of Tove Jansson, said: "The power of reading and writing and the importance of working together to protect our planet are both very important to us, and they come together in such a beautiful way in The Queen's

Commonwealth Essay Competition 2020. Each year, the themes of the Competition are around community and collaboration. We're very proud that in the first year of our sponsorship this is applied to the environment. The passion and intelligence of young people will be crucial in tackling the climate crisis, so we are very excited to see what entrants have to say in response to the topics that have been set for 2020."

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition was founded by the Royal Commonwealth Society in 1883 and is the world's oldest international schools' writing contest. The Junior category is open to entrants aged under 14 and the Senior category is open to entrants aged 14-18. For more information about the Competition, including the entry rules and essay topics, visit www.thercs.org/competition

For more information about The Duchess of Cornwall, visit www.princeofwales.gov.uk/

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, the environment and connected communities across the Commonwealth's 53 member nations. Founded in 1868, the RCS is non-partisan, independent of governments and relies on public generosity to achieve its mission. For more information about the RCS, visit www.thercs.org/

The Moomins were created by the Finnish artist and writer Tove Jansson, who wrote and illustrated nine Moomin books, five picture books and a comic strip that was syndicated worldwide.

Moomin Characters Ltd is the owner, originator and official company responsible for supervising and managing the Moomin brand, copyright and registrations. The company was started in 1958 by Tove Jansson and her brother Lars Jansson and is still run by family members. Sophia Jansson, Lars's daughter and Tove's niece, is Chairman of the Board and Creative Director at Moomin Characters. All characters from Moominvalley are registered trademarks. In celebration of the Moomin 75 anniversary, the company has recently announced its #OURSEA campaign, which aims to protect the Baltic Sea and its cultural heritage. The Baltic Sea suffers from eutrophication, harmful algae growth induced by excessive nutrients. This leads to oxygen depletion, resulting in a multitude of negative effects such as dead sea-bottoms, hampering living conditions for important parts of marine life. For more information about the Moomins, visit <https://www.moomin.com/en/>

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