



# Royal College of Science Union

## End of year report

### 2019-2020 Committee

**Alex Auyang**  
*President*

**Michaela Flegrová**  
*Vice-President of Education*

**Peter Hull**  
*Vice-President of Welfare*

**Francesca d' Agnese**  
*Vice-President of Operations*

**Marine Coispeau**  
*Vice-President of Activities*

**Keri Dalton**  
*Secretary*

**Cameron Mills**  
*Treasurer*

**Gabriel Michaels**  
*Events Officer*

**Zoe Stamoulis**  
*Publicity Officer*

**Karl Lee**  
*RAG Officer*

**Sung Soo Moon**  
*Broadsheet Editor*

**Aishwarya Chidambaram**  
*Sponsorship & Alumni Officer*

**Isabelle Zhang**  
*Science Challenge Chair*

**Anca Ciona**  
*Webmaster*

**Mareya Saba**  
*Welfare Events Officer*

**Isabelle Zhang & Ruben Colindres Zuehlke**  
*Biochemistry Dep. Representatives*

**Stephanie Cheng & Angharad Smith**  
*Chemistry Dep. Representatives*

**David Ni & Danitza Iniesta**  
*Biology Dep. Representatives*

**Aparna Pillai & Anna Mossop**  
*Physics Dep. Representatives*

**Lorenz Wolf & Arvind Narayan**  
*Maths Dep. Representatives*



# President's message

**Alex Auyang**

I cannot take credit for the successes of the RCSU this year. The committee (and quite a few people who aren't on committee) have worked their asses off to make the RCSU what is today. Their dedication, creativity, and compassion go far beyond anything that I have experienced. They have made this year truly special, and I cannot thank them enough.

Overall, the RCSU has taken major strides this year. Our principal issues, lack of engagement and knowledge regarding the RCSU, have been improving through increased outreach. An update from each subcommittee of the RCSU is detailed in this report.

## **Recent activity**

The work of the RCSU has slowed since the lockdown, especially with everyone's deadlines fast approaching. However, we have organized RCSU colours and selected our award winners. The announcement of the results is still pending, but we hope to do so in the next few weeks. On the administrative side, most of our committee positions for next year either have been filled in the Leadership Elections or are about to be filled in the Summer Elections. This is a major improvement over last year, which experienced multiple vacant positions over summer.

## **Looking forward**

Since the year is coming to a close, I would like to wish the committee of 2020-2021 the best of luck. They will have a lot of crap to deal with, given the whole COVID crisis, but I'm sure they'll pull through. I am urging my committee to create comprehensive handover documents, which should help smooth the transition.



# Activities

## Axe throwing (RAG)

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, we hosted our first RAG event of the year, axe throwing. Due the generosity of the people at Whistle Punks Axe Throwing, we acquired 50 free tickets for the RCSU. Soon, we were sold out of tickets, and had generated over £500 for ICU RAG.



## Roaring Revel

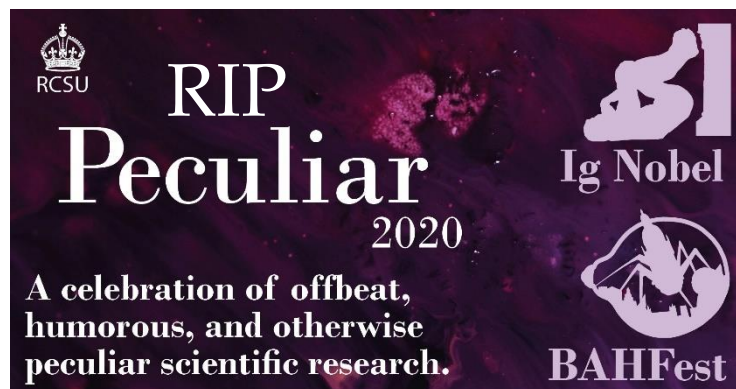
The RCSU's premiere social event, Revel, occurred on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March. Luckily, we got it in there before any effects of SARS-CoV-2. Unlike in previous years, this year's Revel did not feature unlimited drinks, which was a good move, as it allowed everyone to access the bar equally. In all, Revel went tremendously and was certainly the best iteration of the event in recent years.





## **Peculiar (Bahfest + Ig Nobel)**

The annual Bahfest + Ig Nobel event hosted by the RCSU (now rebranded as Peculiar) was scheduled for the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. Unfortunately, due to the campus shutdown, and subsequent lockdown, the event has been postponed indefinitely. However, we were able to receive our money back on the Great Hall booking, and other costs, so there was not a tremendous financial loss. Despite this, we typically expect to receive around, £1500 net profit from the event, which we unfortunately missed out on this year. RIP



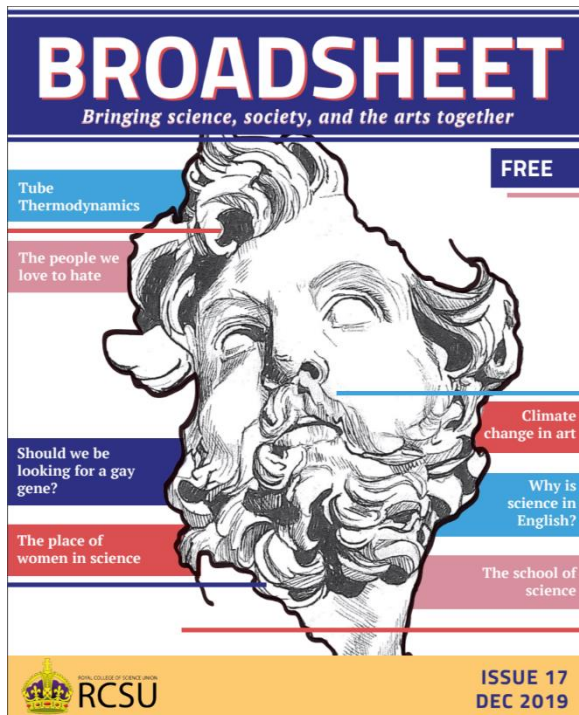
## **Operations**

### **Broadsheet**

In the second term, our Broadsheet team finished up the second issue of the year. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of SARS-CoV-2, we were unable to distribute the magazines. They are currently sitting in my flat in big boxes, and given the current outlook, we won't distribute them anytime soon. However, during this year's Welcome Fair, we realized that there was a significant demand for copies of Broadsheet. Therefore, we plan on urging next year's committee to distribute this second issue early next year to build interest in Broadsheet, and hopefully find some new writers.



Overall, Broadsheet has been very successful this year. The quality of the issues has been astounding. We have also seen increased engaged from students, particularly through the Broadsheet socials held in the RCSU office (with pizza). However, it has been difficult to create more than 2 issues of Broadsheet each year with only a single editor. Therefore, we are electing a 'Deputy Broadsheet Editor' for next year, which should help even out the workload on committee.



## Alumni and Sponsorship

In term 2, we hosted an Interview Skills Workshop, organized members of the RCSA. It was well attended, and the individuals who came seemed to have benefited from the interaction. The RCSA has recently launched a 'Young Professionals' initiative, to bring younger alumni from the RCSU into the RCSA. The alumni network for the RCSU is currently lacking, so perhaps this move will encourage more students to engage with the RCSA.

On the sponsorship front, we plan on contacting potential sponsors soon, and organizing the finer details over summer.



## Science Challenge

This year's Science Challenge final took place at the Royal Society of Chemistry on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March. Again, luckily it took place before all the COVID business really hit the UK. Despite a few hiccups, with some guest judges unable to make the final, the event went very well. We had more entrants this year than the last, and the website/submission process has been streamlined, paving the way for future successes with the Science Challenge.



## Academic representation

**Michaela Flegrová**

The academic representation team this year has been focusing on building the rep community and working on communication with students across the Faculty.

Several events have been organised to engage year reps in the RCSU and enhance communication across the departments. Two well-attended evening socials took place in the Union Bar, one following a Faculty-level rep introduction talk and another one following an election Q&A session, which itself was attended by some of the year reps as well. This event was crucial in securing successors for some of the roles.



Following the successful refurbishment of the RCSU office over the summer, additional smaller-scale socials could be held for the year reps, such as a Christmas drop-in tea and cake session. All of the year reps were shown where the RCSU office is and were encouraged to visit it and use it as needed. To further show support, the SSC meetings in all departments were attended by the VPE to support the departmental teams in their work and to flag up any issues within the departments that would need to be raised at Faculty level. This year the RCSU academic and welfare boards have decided against running a Faculty-wide student satisfaction survey, as had been done in the years before. It was concluded that this survey does not show much additional information to the NSS, and the results do not change significantly from one year to another.

The intention was to instead run a series of townhall-style meetings in each department, but those unfortunately could not take place due to the COVID-19 situation and early shut-down of campus. The departmental rep teams were however encouraged to set up rep hot desks in their department to increase their visibility and encourage students to talk to them throughout the year. This was very successful in Term 1 when we ran a Meet Your Reps Week across the faculty.

The recent months have been occupied mainly by dealing with problems arising from remote assessments, the implementation of the safety net policy, remote teaching in Term 3 and preparations for mixed-mode delivery next academic year. The dep reps and year reps alike have been doing a great job at flagging up potential problems, communicating with the students and cooperating with the departments.



## Welfare representation

This year, we saw a rebranding of the RCSU's welfare week into 'RCSYou'. We ran 5 events back-to-back on the week of February 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>. The events are as follows:

- **RCS-You: Your Community** – A chance to ask any questions, just have a chat or collect leaflets with information regarding the rest of RCS-You Welfare Week. We also distributed some goodie bags with treats and other welfare related goods.
- **RCS-You: Yoga and meditation** – Our second yoga session of the year, with provided yoga mats and instruction.
- **RCS-You: Art therapy** – A drop-in art session we ran in the RCSU office, with provided paper, colouring pencils, pens and printed colouring pages that people could use.
- **RCS-You: Gardening and plant-potting** – An event we ran in cooperation with the environmental society, bringing students to the secret garden and teaching them about relaxation through gardening.
- **RCS-You: Dog therapy** – Our very first dog petting event. Slots filled very quickly, and everyone had a good time petting and cuddling the dogs. However, some people complained due to demand far exceeding the limit on the number of people that could attend the event.







## Finance and societies

Aside from the usual panic and hysteria surrounding budgeting, not much of note has occurred on the finance and societies end. Our societies have been great this year, showing continued growth and support of the students within the RCSU. However, BioSoc's financial situation has not improved since the beginning of this year. We need to continue to look for solution to this issue, particularly by speaking with the Life Science department to determine their stance.

If you made it this far, thank you for reading.