

CAUSEWAY

2021



AN ANNUAL PUBLICATION BY THE CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION

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Outgoing President's Letter

Rachel Tan

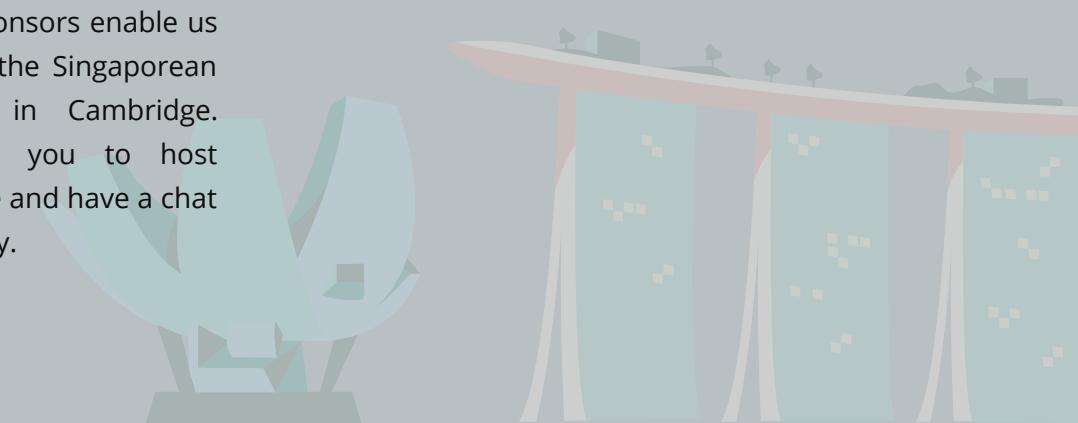
It has been a wonderful (albeit unconventional) year for CUMSA, as we had to navigate the constantly changing restrictions and adapt to the pandemic. From an online orientation to many CUMSA family-oriented events in smaller groups, to a Masterchef event to replicate Singapore dishes instead of the usual Singfest, we tried to adapt the usual CUMSA events to make it safe but still enjoyable for everyone.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members – Ryan, Keene, Ragavi, Daryl, Jerroy, Jason, AJ, Emma, and Chris, as well as our graduate representative Ming Li, for being adaptable and creative in your continued efforts to make CUMSA a home away from home for all our members. All our events and initiatives would not have been possible without your hard work and dedication.

I would also like to thank our sponsors – Overseas Singapore Unit, NUS Graduate School for Integrative Sciences and Engineering, Duke NUS, Rajah & Tann Asia, Shopee and Citadel – for their continued support. Our sponsors enable us to host a variety of events for the Singaporean and Malaysian communities in Cambridge. CUMSA will always welcome you to host recruitment events in Cambridge and have a chat with the people in the community.

The new CUMSA committee has held a series of wonderful initiatives, and I trust that they will continue to come up with innovative ways to keep in touch with the community and ensure the welfare of the Singaporean and Malaysian communities in Cambridge. As restrictions continue to change, I have faith that we can look forward to amazing and fun events and initiatives from them. All the best to Donovan and his committee!

For our graduates, I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Do continue to stay in touch with CUMSA, and I hope that this magazine will help you relieve some of your memories in your time here at Cambridge. For continuing students, do continue to support CUMSA initiatives, and let us look forward to a wonderful year ahead.



Incoming President's Letter

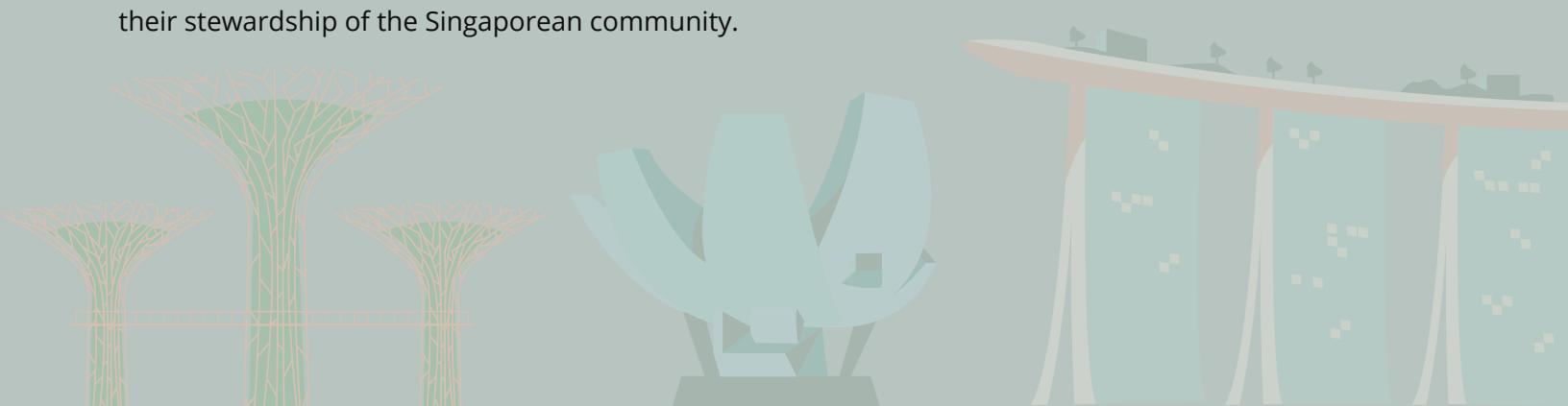
Donovan Sih

CUMSA is a proud society with over 300 members. Even though the world is slowly approaching the light at the end of the tunnel, the vicissitudes of the COVID-19 pandemic still casts a great shadow over our community. Nonetheless, the CUMSA committee is doing its level best to make the most of the present situation. We have a good chance of being able to resume Oxbridge Games, the CUMSA Ski Trip, CUMSA Dinner and Dance, and other beloved traditions. Let's look forward to an exciting 2021/2022 academic year together!

None of this could happen, of course, without my capable committee members. I thank all of them for always taking ownership and initiative in their work, and demonstrating the highest levels of professionalism despite their busy schedules. I also thank Rachel and her committee who had the misfortune of taking over the reins at what could possibly be the most discouraging, stressful, and chaotic period of CUMSA's history. Nonetheless, they did not relent. I am grateful for their stewardship of the Singaporean community.

I also thank all CUMSA's generous sponsor: Rajah & Tann, Singapore Global Network, NUS Graduate School for Integrative Sciences and Engineering, Duke-NUS Medical School and Shopee for continuing to extend their support. Their support has been significant in enabling us to hold many of our events. We sincerely hope to continue our relationship with all our sponsors!

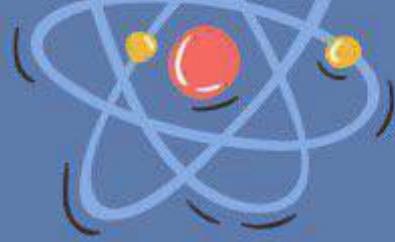
This year's publication of Causeway will certainly be one for the history books. It chronicles how we adapted to the worst that COVID-19 has thrown at our community. It will be a testament to the resilience of our family spirit!



CUMSA PRESENTS PUB QUIZ 2020

(POST) BLUES CLUES

14 NOVEMBER 2020 | 8PM – 10PM GMT



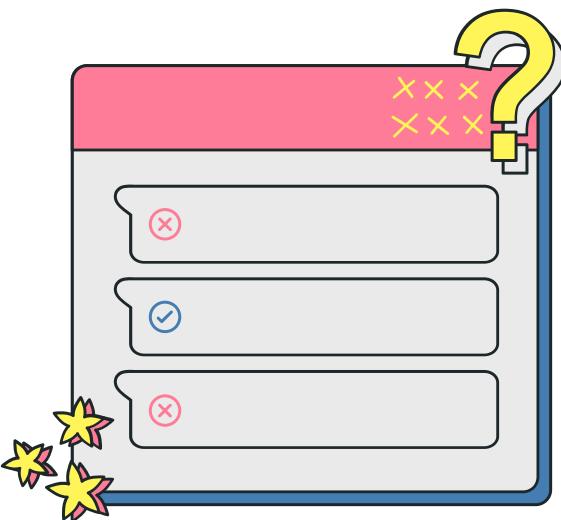
Pub Quiz

BY JASON KIT

It was that time of the year again when you have 5 supervisions in a week and lab work piling up. What better way to relax after the Week 5 blues than an entertaining pub quiz? I could think of many, but for 8 lucky teams, they were stuck listening to quiz master Jason for three hours. Thankfully the quiz was held online to avoid the throwing of rotten fruit and loud boos, and over Facebook live, these teams battled it out over 60 or so brain-bending questions, including classic categories like "Take a little trip around Singapore town".

It was a very close fight, with our first team, the floor just cracked (sic), earning 62 points, and second place, BamBooRat getting 58, and third place "Thanks Jedidiah" getting 52 points! The winners walked away with £10 Amazon gift cards, and the runner-ups won vouchers to Granny Ma's.

The entire quiz is kept on CUMSA's Facebook page for posterity, where Jason's talented hosting abilities will live on through the ages, in the archives of the internet



Family Picnic

BY DARYL LEE

CUMSA's socially distanced picnic was our first event in Michaelmas. While Freshers' Week this year was a toned-down affair compared to previous years, it was still a hectic time for freshers who have just made their first trip away from home! A trip that was made no easier by the mandatory self-isolation for some. The picnic served to allow CUMSA families to gather in a covid-safe and socially distanced manner where families were encouraged to have a picnic in one of the many green spaces around in Cambridge and CUMSA would reimburse a small amount for their food and beverages. More importantly, it allowed freshers to mingle with fellow Singaporeans in their new environment.

Unfortunately, our initial plan to have it outdoors was foiled by the grim and wet weather that was forecasted for that weekend. We decided to improvise and provided families the option to dine in at any restaurant! All they needed to do was to submit a receipt and a family photo and we would reimburse 10 pounds.

Throughout the weekend, the familiar Singaporean accent could be heard in various food establishments where families excitedly caught up with one another or met each other for the first time! Freshers queried their parents for the best places to buy essentials, where to find the best Asian food and parents were hopefully able to impart their knowledge and wisdom.

All in all, the picnic sought to bring families together for a nice and casual meal and to dispel any homesickness that the freshers might be feeling. At the end of the day, family members went their separate ways but knowing that they have each other for support.



Continued on next page



CUMSA

FRESHERS' TEA 2020

Freshers' Tea

BY KEENE LEE

On August 15th 2020, CUMSA welcomed the incoming batch of freshers at our annual fresher's tea event. While the usual buzz of excited new freshers gathering outside the auditorium waiting to attend the annual fresher's tea event was not heard, the all too familiar zoom meeting started filling up with eager faces excited to start their studies in Cambridge. Moving to a completely new country for the first time can be a daunting and overwhelming experience for the freshers. The annual fresher's tea is the first of a series of orientation events that CUMSA organizes each year to get freshers well-acquainted with fellow Singaporeans starting their journey in Cambridge and also providing them with useful tips from seniors about things ranging from societies to academic advice and even just food recommendations and packing tips.

The event started off with the president's welcome address and a short introduction to CUMSA and the current committee members. It was quickly followed by a short presentation of the various pre-departure administration matters that freshers need to complete before they begin their studies in Cambridge. This was followed by a comprehensive guide to life in Cambridge, including useful tips such as locations of asian supermarkets, bank matters and available phone plans.

In the next segment of the event, many current CUMSA members kindly volunteered to share their experiences from specific societies within Cambridge, including ABACUS, Hackbridge and Ultimate frisbee. This was a time for freshers to understand the diversity of societies that accommodates virtually all interests outside of academic work, and the various kinds of things that they could get involved with outside of their academic life. The presentations were detailed and I am sure the freshers walked away feeling more excited to start their new life in Cambridge.

After the main presentations were over, the freshers were divided into breakout rooms based on their subject, where they can meet their fellow coursemates and interact with enthusiastic seniors eager to share more about their experiences in Cambridge. This was a time to get more personal and to clarify any doubts and ease any worries that freshers may have about the big move. How the lectures would run; how to get around Cambridge; how social life is in Cambridge, freshers were asking important questions that seniors promptly answered from their personal experiences.

As the event drew to a close, freshers walked away feeling more prepared and ready to embark on their new adventure at Cambridge.



Fresher's Orientation

BY RACHEL TAN

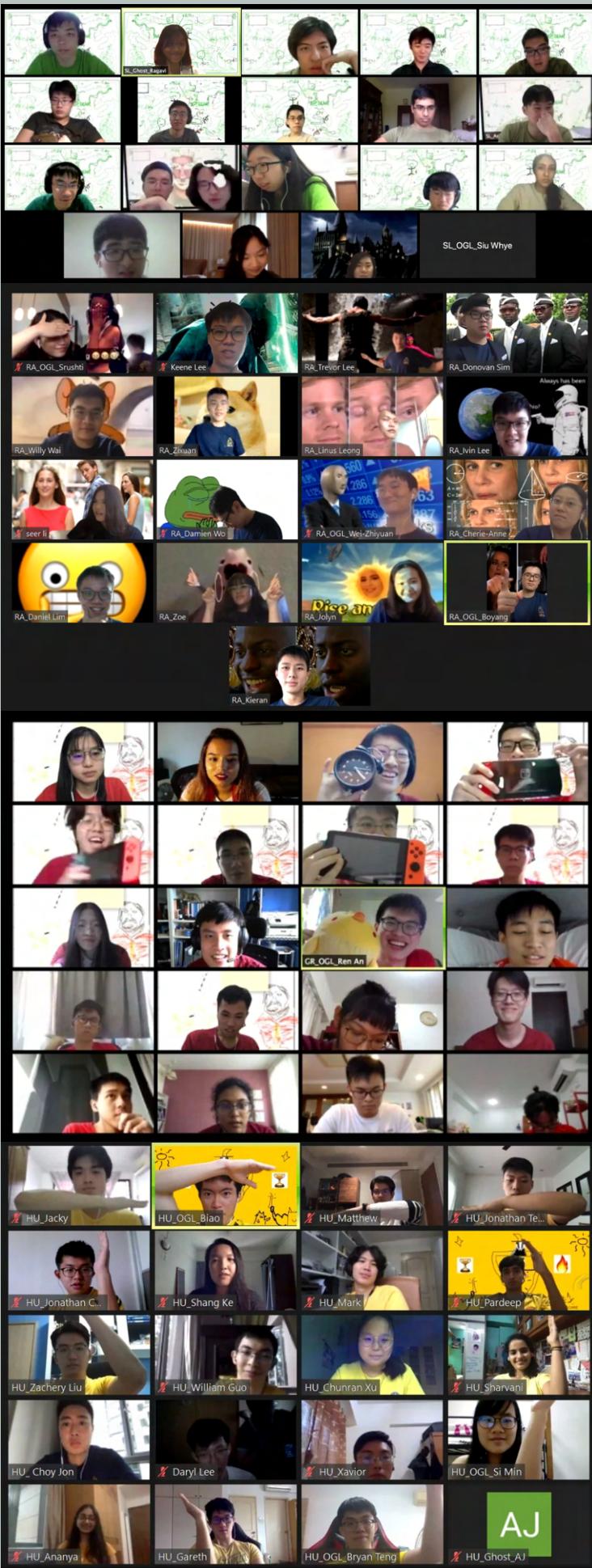
The (virtual) orientation camp kicked off with an introduction to the overall theme of the event, with the four houses in the Cambridge School of Witchcraft and Wizardry gathered together to fight the greatest evil of all time - Lord Voldemort. The four houses proceeded to initiate themselves and design their house flags, resulting in chaotic-yet-somehow-aesthetic flags that were the Zoom wallpapers of the freshers for the next two days.

The series of games kicked off with *Accio* - a Prop Hunt where the freshers had to find random objects around their house that fit a certain phrase (apple of my eye) or compound word (pony-tail). Things got really creative here, with 'time flies when you're having fun' represented by the following items - clock, chick plushie and a Nintendo Switch.

The fun then continued with History of Magic. The OGLs gave a crash course to our freshers on Cambridge life, and the freshers were tested using skribbl.io (ah, a classic lockdown game) on their knowledge of this terminology. It was funny watching From bops, porters to blues, the freshers tried to draw (and guess) these Cambridge words to the best of their abilities.

In the Triwizard Tournament, they were given a series of puzzles and riddles, ranging from Dingbats to complicated math puzzles (search: Suko puzzle) that the freshers blazed through rapidly. To my surprise, they were more confident of solving the Suko puzzle than the riddles. Try this riddle as a teaser - when is a door not a door?





Day 2 started with *Korean Potions Class*, where the freshers were tasked to make yet another lockdown classic - Dalgona coffee (it was 2pm, not the best time for coffee but oh well). They had to handwhisk the coffee, which proved to be an arm workout for most. While some failed (it's okay), some managed to produce outstanding results worthy of being on the menu of a hipster cafe.

To introduce them to pubquizzes, a common activity in Cambridge, the freshers were taken through a pub quiz, wittily titled *TRIPOWLs*, to uphold our tradition of academic rigour. My personal favourite was *The Price is Right* section, where the freshers had to guess the price (in pounds) of certain items such as Sainsbury's Easy Peelers or Chatime's Bubble Milk Tea.

Scattered throughout the days were a series of forfeits and penalties. Some highlights include a 'if you give me 5 minutes of your time'-style pitch and TikTok dances. The House Ghosts and OGLs made sure not to spare anyone of embarrassment, with some groups being made to sing 'Home' or mimic animal sounds.

To end off the orientation, the freshers were finally tasked to *Defeat Voldemort*. The puzzles were particularly ingenious and creative, and our freshers blazed through them, albeit with a bit of assistance from the OGLs and House Ghosts. Overall, we hope everyone had fun at the orientation, and that it helped the freshers to break the ice with each other despite the circumstances (not forgetting the amazing orientation tee). We certainly had a lot of fun planning the orientation!



Scavenger Hunt

BY JERROY CHANG

The CUMSA Scavenger Hunt was held over the weekend of 24 to 25 October. Previously, the freshers had gotten to know each other through events such as the CUMSA Picnic, and the Scavenger Hunt was a great opportunity for freshers to get to work with each other, and learn more about famous places around the city centre of Cambridge. On Saturday morning, all enthusiastic participants, assembled in teams of up to 5 (as per COVID restrictions in the UK) received a document in their emails, containing a list of clues detailing specific locations in Cambridge, and the Scavenger Hunt began!

Each task had varying levels of difficulty, with more points awarded to increasingly challenging tasks. Some of the easier tasks include finding the Chronophage (the bug which sits atop the Corpus Clock), whereas some of the harder tasks include unscrambling anagrams and going to places such as Girton College and the Cavendish Laboratory. Some teams attempted unique challenges, such as to recreate the picture of Lee Kuan Yew along The Backs.

It wouldn't be a successful Scavenger Hunt without a reward! All participants put their best foot forward to complete as many of the tasks as possible, and were awarded vouchers to Granny Ma's (which sells refreshing bubble tea in Market Square, the heart of the city centre), courtesy of CUMSA's collaboration with them. The top team completed nearly all of the 30 given challenges, and were awarded £30 in cash for their outstanding performance



EJC Webinar

BY RYAN YEAP

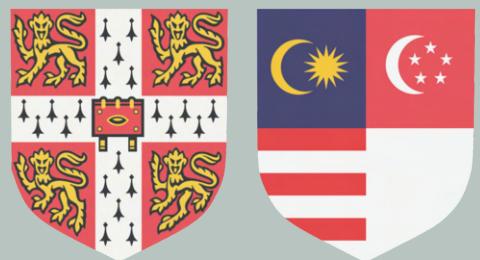
It was July in the summer of 2020, and a newly elected, fresh-faced CUMSA committee was preparing to host its debut event. Singapore had just exited its dreaded Circuit Breaker, inching towards some semblance of normalcy – and yet the committee was due to face an academic year that was anything but. Indeed, it was probably this first event that best captured the zeitgeist of the coronavirus pandemic: a webinar to speak to aspiring applicants from Eunoia Junior College about our Cambridge journeys, with a premium Zoom chatroom to boot. How apt.

From the comforts of home, the committee gathered virtually, socially distanced and eager to share. We welcomed the attendees with enthusiastic waves from behind our cameras as we proceeded to introduce ourselves in turn. Rachel was the first to kick us off, with a warm introduction and welcome to the CUMSA family. Pictures of formals and reunion dinners graced the screen, poignantly reminding us of a time that once was. Nevertheless, it represented the spirit of the everlasting Singaporean community kept alive and thriving in Cambridge – and this was something we could all reminisce fondly.

As Ragavi and Daryl were up next, here to walk the attendees through our unique way of life in Cambridge. The oft-repeated explanations of our peculiar “Collegiate” system (not the same as a junior college) made a bold return, complete with an unapologetic collage of 31 colourful coats-of-arms. The lauded Cambridge “Supervisions” and their impeccable teacher-to-student ratios were once again praised – I mean, who doesn’t love intense and personalised learning? But Cambridge is not complete without its extracurricular student life, though I can’t say I was surprised when formals and rowing were showcased – unmistakable icons of the Cambridge experience. As icing on the cake, the attendees were also showered with some fun trivia, like how Lee Kuan Yew and his wife met (and studied) in Cambridge and dated when they were there (not forgetting the Bridge of Sighs picture to top it all off).

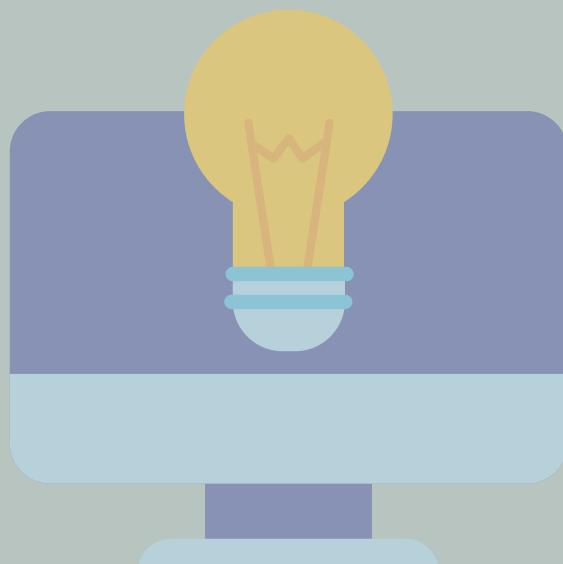


X



Admin matters followed and Jason was, not unexpectedly, our MVP of the day, brightening up the drier aspects of our presentation with his characteristic charm. Ushering the attendees through the UCAS system with aplomb, he details information about registration, application fees, deadlines, and the dreaded personal statement effortlessly. To round it off, he touches on the Supplementary Answer Questions and Cambridge Online Preliminary Application, offering attention to detail that was second-to-none, not least since these two relics had long been forgotten by the rest of the committee.

Finally, it was down to Chris and I to pick up the remaining pieces. Harking back to earlier points, we explained how interviews were all but proper Supervisions - simulations of the actual teaching process. We reminded them how mistakes were purely normal, that no Cambridge student possessed superhuman intellect, and that the denominators for success simply boiled down to hard work, steadfast passion, and unbridled academic potential. Admissions tests were, of course, a whole other beast, but nothing too insurmountable without a few tips and tricks.



Access and outreach remain an important part of CUMSA's philosophy, and this event marked the first of many to come. After all, CUMSA is, and always will be, a home away from home, for Singaporeans from all walks of life. This webinar also represents the resolve that our committee possessed, for not even a global pandemic could stop us from organising something like this. Sure, it was to be a tricky year ahead, but at the end of the day, it was nothing that we couldn't face together.

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Random Fun Facts!

- Both Lee Kuan Yew and his wife went to Cambridge and dated when they were there!



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Masterchef

BY EMMA CHOO

They say it is food that brings us together - and yet, the average Cantabrigian's gastronomic choices are severely limited. For Singaporeans, a people with such immense love of food, the dubiously "pan-Asian" fare on offer in our quaint British town surely doesn't manage to hit the spot. Indeed, there is no betrayal quite like an order of "Singapore noodles" which, despite its promising title, bears no passing resemblance to actual Singaporean noodles.

Enter CUMSA Masterchef. Equipped with just \$10 and a janky gyp microwave*, how will these young, aspiring home cooks concoct a taste of home in these strange and turbulent times?



THE CONTENDERS

Exhibit A: Kaya Toast (Set A).

Kaya, bread, and eggs, how hard can it be? Famous last words...

Exhibit B: Roti prata and curry.

A well-loved Singaporean staple, this tender, flaky bread is the optimum vehicle for curry consumption. Very promising entries from our contestants.

Exhibit 3: BKT

What's not to like about BKT? Wholesome and hearty, this meaty tea is packed full of nutritious herbs to help us through those lonely winter nights. A time-consuming process, this one is a true labor of love.

Exhibit 4: Steamed fish

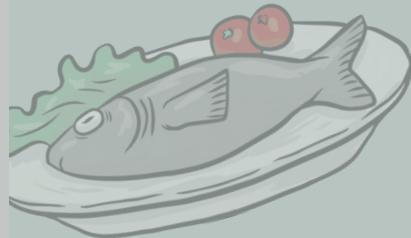
Contestant Christel's masterful rendition of a household staple is sure to garner the seal of approval from both her ancestors and any future in-laws waiting in the wings. Extra points for technical skill and execution, spring onions were a nice touch.



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The road to culinary excellence is a thorny one. Yet, as Pixar's Ratatouille (2007) advises, you must not let anyone define your limits. True to form, our contestants gamely overcame each challenge facing them to produce a spread of dearly loved Singaporean classics. From sourcing fine ingredients of passable authenticity in a foreign land, to overcoming the kitchen's resource and manpower constraints in a time of great societal anxiety - while not quite Gordon Ramsay approved, real great work was done here.

*all gyps are equal, but some are more equal than others.





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Welfare!

BY RAGAVI VIJAYAKUMAR

How to get through a year in Cambridge without some snacks and drinks which remind everyone of home? This year, due to the nature of social interactions, CUMSA organized and gave away multiple welfare packs per term, and also Indian snacks to celebrate Deepavali away from home. Similarly, we also had a "Pidge-A-Wang Wang" event where CUMSA members could fill in a form to request a cracker that reminded everyone of home to be placed in their own/friend's pidge! For those who received Wang Wangs or Balti Mixes in their pidge, it was a nice little surprise for them during term to keep them going!

As difficult as it is, to be so far away from home during term time normally, restricted physical social interactions made it difficult for most of us and these welfare packs kept us far from being homesick all the time. :)

If there is one thing that can universally cheer someone up, it most definitely is food!





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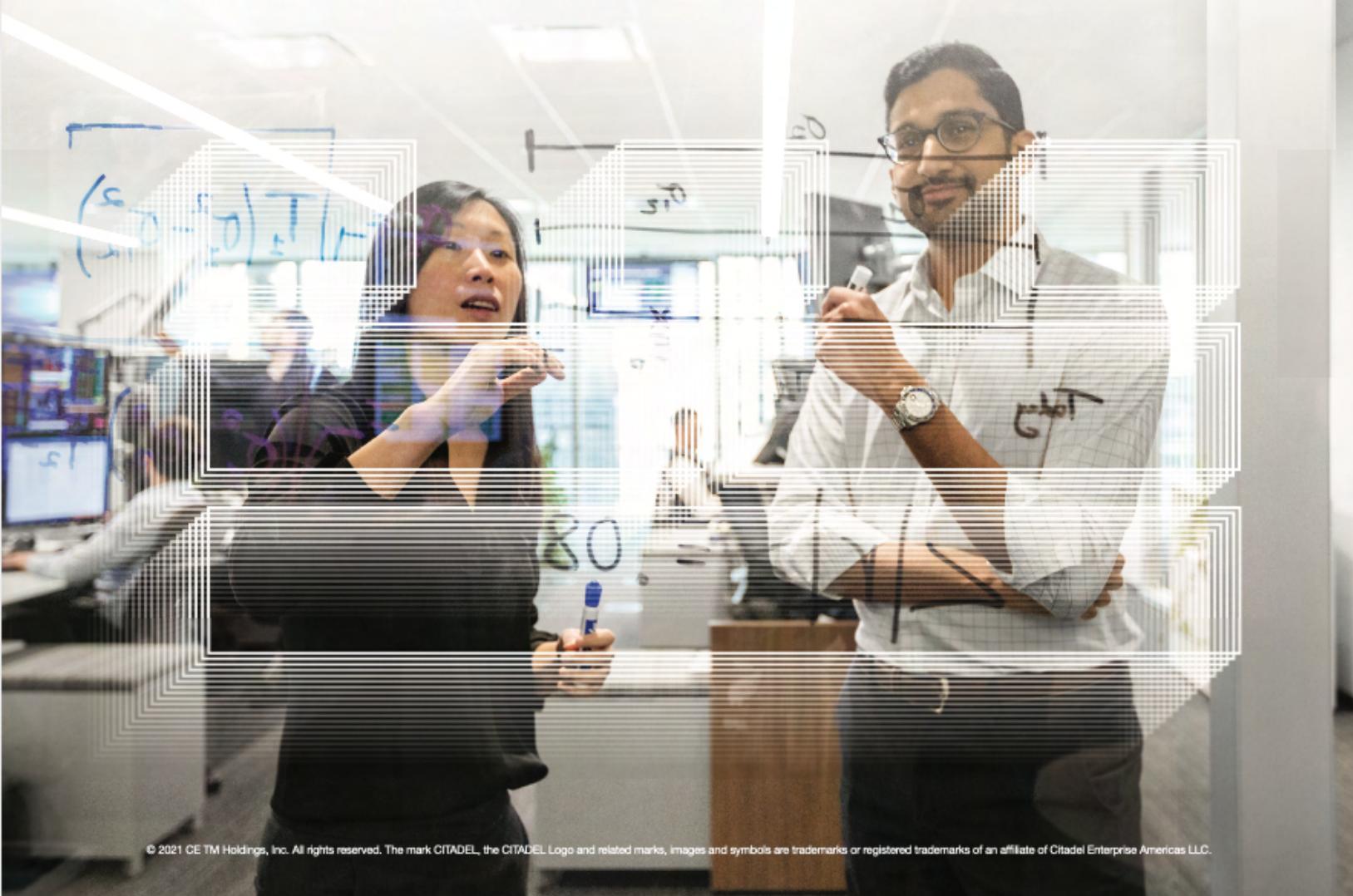
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