



# Causeway

An annual publication  
by CUMSA

2024

# About us

CUMSA was founded in the Michaelmas term of 1948. Then known as the Cambridge University Malayan Association, it brought together a small community, worlds away from home.

CUMSA's founding committee included former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew (as President), and former Chief Justice Yong Pung How (as Secretary). Over 60 years since, many Malaysians and Singaporeans have contributed to the organisation in various ways, allowing us to grow into the society we are today.

When Singapore gained independence from Malaysia in 1965, CUMSA did not similarly divide. The association persevered as a common meeting place for people of both nationalities. Though relationships between the communities were sometimes fraught, the years of precedence spoke volumes when it came time to make those difficult decisions about remaining under one organisation. Though a separate Malaysian association was founded in 1994, we still proudly count a number of Malaysian members among our ranks, along with people of many other nationalities.

The organisation continues to bring together members of the Malaysian and Singaporean communities, albeit on a slightly larger scale. From 12 students at our founding, the organisation has grown to over 350 current students and thousands of alumni. With this, we have adapted, and our service to the Malaysian and Singaporean community is now multi-faceted.

We hold a number of events throughout the year with the intention of creating a social environment with a familiar South-east Asian air. Amongst others, there is the annual CUMSA Formal, Garden Party, Singapore Food Festival and Oxbridge Games (a sports competition involving the Oxford University Malaysian and Singaporean Students Association).

We also aim to serve the community as a platform for discussion, with access to – and the opportunity to share – informed opinions. Studying overseas so often changes perspectives regarding our place in the world and it is only prudent that we provide support for this through speakers' events and forums for discussion.

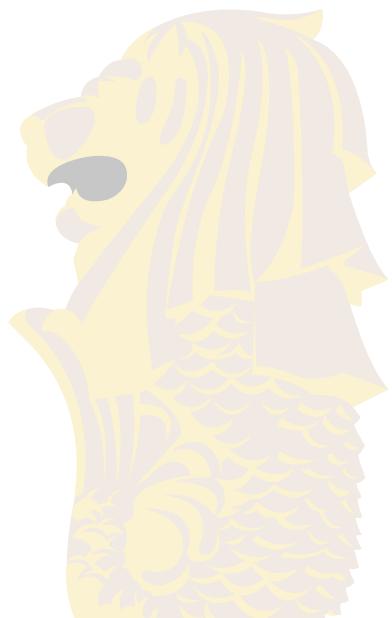
We not only aid incoming students in adjusting to their new environment, but also ensure there is a community to which one can turn throughout their time here – never always needed, but always there.

# Outgoing Committee's Message

Dear CUMSA,

On the surface, most people would say that CUMSA is just a place for you to meet and make new friends, get free dinner/Jack's, play badminton, and occasionally score vouchers during a giveaway. If this has been your experience, then we owe a huge debt to the outgoing committee, who kept all of these events running smoothly and ensured that all we as CUMSA members had to do was show up. The reality, of course, is that a huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes, and I want to give credit and highlight the work of the outgoing committee to thank them for their service over the past year.

Behind every event was hours of tireless planning and coordination with third parties, and Shih Yi, Xinshuo, and our current president Albert, as well as Zheng Wei, deserve all our thanks and much more for ensuring that all we had to do was turn up and be entertained. Our Treasurer, Xiang Yang, went far beyond his role of budgeting and balancing books and was a key contributor to events planning as well. For postgrads, this year we bade farewell to our long-serving Graduate Rep Claire Lim as well as Lydia Ng, who passed her duties on to Boyang; we wish Claire and Lydia all the best in their future endeavours. On the Sports side, we have Hazel to thank for planning not only our beloved badminton sessions, but also the 2024 Ski Trip, which saw a record number of attendees.



# **CAUSEWAY 2024**

Apart from just the events that we see in Cambridge, there's also the access events for prospective applicants - which some of you may yourselves have benefited from when you were applying - and these are only possible due to the hard work of our Access and Outreach Officer Alex Teng, as well as the many volunteers who selflessly spent their summer and even term time to help give application and admissions test talks. In particular, I want to thank Rajat Kale, Helen Cai, Wong Jun Xiang, Jordan Aw, and Brandon Lim for volunteering at our in-person talks in schools. This has always been a part of CUMSA which resonates strongly with me, and I hope we as a society can continue to help level a playing field which we all know is far too uneven.

None of these would be possible without the efforts of Joshua, our Publicity Officer, in creating and disseminating our pubs materials. Nor could we have done them without the resources that our Sponsorship team of Kai Zhen and Jun De pulled in, and the fact that we managed to keep events and membership fees relatively low is a huge testament to the effort they put in and the results they achieved. I am proud to report that the team pulled in over £12,000, which helped us to achieve a budget position of close to net zero. Finally, our Database team of Zeyu and Xinshuo were also instrumental in helping to keep back-end processes running smoothly.

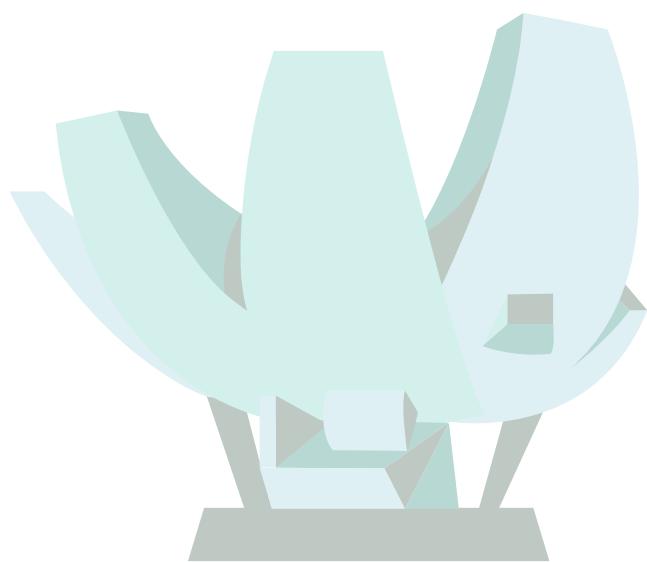
I count myself incredibly lucky to have been supported (and mostly carried) by this committee, and I want to emphasise that if any of you have ever enjoyed or benefitted in any way from an event hosted by CUMSA, these people are the ones whom you should thank. Looking forward, I am proud to have left CommSA in the capable hands of Albert, and I'm sure the incoming committee will do a fantastic job in the year ahead. Wishing them all the best for their tenure, and signing off on behalf of the 2024/25 Committee.

**– Keith Lee, President 2024/25, CUMSA**

# Committee

2024 – 2025

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	KEITH LEE
<b>VICE-PRESIDENT</b>	LIM JUN DE
<b>SECRETARY</b>	LIM ZHENG WEI
<b>TREASURER</b>	XIANG YANG
<b>PUBLICITY SEC.</b>	JOSHUA LOW
<b>SPORTS SEC.</b>	YEO GEK KAI
<b>ACCESS OFFICER</b>	ALEX TENG
<b>EVENTS OFFICERS</b>	ALBERT CHIENG HUANG XINSHUO TAN SHIH YI
<b>SPONSORSHIPS OFFR.</b>	TEK KAI ZHEN
<b>GRADUATE REPS</b>	CLAIRE LIM LYDIA NG



# Garden Party



This year, we bid farewell to our graduating class of students with our annual Garden Party on 18 June. Held at Churchill College, graduating members were treated to an afternoon of light food and desserts, milk tea, and card games, as well as card games and a polaroid photobooth. We also prepared an enamel pin as a graduation gift for our members. We wish the graduating class of 2024 all the best in their future endeavours!

# Freshers' Orientation



CUMSA this year inducted a whopping 94 undergraduates for our 2024 Orientation: Mirificus! Hosted once more at Civil Service Club @ Changi, our fledgling CUMSA members enjoyed an action-packed 3D2N, filled with good food, better games and the best company.

Our Year 1s were split into six OGs, with each helmed by 3 OGLs. Following from our ‘Alice in Wonderland’ theme, the OGs were respectively named after the characters of Mad Hatter, White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat, Tweedle Twins, Dormouse and Caterpillar.

On the evening of the 23rd, we were on hand at Changi to warmly welcome the OGLings into the CUMSA family with icebreakers over dinner. This was followed by our opening activity, a gameshow filled with dynamic challenges! Participants had the chance to showcase both brain and brawn, while getting to better know one another. Highlights included the fan-favourite charades, a quintessentially Singaporean pub quiz and ‘A Not-so-quiet Place’, a chaotic affair where blindfolded seekers attempted to seek out fellow OGLings who were condemned to wearing rubber chicken slippers.

The next day was nothing short of hectic. The OGs woke early for flag-making over breakfast, before heading out for a telematch on the shores of Changi Beach. OG2 emerged triumphant after a hard-fought battle, utilising a mixture of skill and luck to complete all 8 stations. Poetically, all the OGs finished just in time before the heavens opened up and drove everyone to refuge under nearby shelter.

# CAUSEWAY 2024



A quick pit-stop for lunch in White Sands Mall followed, before the OGs assembled under a HDB pavilion for their next challenge: an Amazing Race around Pasir Ris! OGs were flagged off with a signature ‘Red Light, Green Light’, before attaining a set of location clues which led them to 5 compulsory stations. Alongside these, OGs also received a Bingo Sheet of activities and a suite of additional side quests, occupying them through the afternoon.

Eventually, the OGs reconvened at Changi in time for a much-anticipated seniors’ sharing, where many got to meet CUMSA ‘elders’ from both subject and college. Seniors and juniors alike spent a fruitful hour chatting through useful tips and tricks over dinner. Once rested, regular scheduled programming continued in the form of a dynamic Murder Mystery activity taking place throughout the night.

For the third and final day, the CUMSA contingent swapped the hard floor of the chalet for the soft sand of East Coast Park. Over an entire afternoon, the OGs partook in a frenzied series of challenges—both dry and wet—in a last-ditch attempt to sway the Orientation standings. After a blockbuster 3-days, OG2 were crowned as champions of Orientation 2024, receiving a wide array of prizes including vouchers from Amazon (UK) and Foodline (SG), as well as Milo packets, Kaya bottles and other snacks.



# CUMSA Formal

## at Churchill College

In October, the Cambridge University Malaysian and Singaporean Association (CUMSA) hosted its annual Formal Dinner, a signature event designed to bring together members of the vibrant CUMSA community. Held at one of Cambridge's historic college halls, the dinner aimed to strengthen the bonds between CUMSA families—a longstanding tradition that pairs freshers with seniors to help them navigate the challenges and opportunities of life at Cambridge.

The evening began with a lively mingling session as attendees, dressed in their formal attire, exchanged greetings and laughter under the warm glow of the hall's chandeliers. For many freshers, it was an opportunity to meet their mentors in person, after weeks of virtual introductions and messages. Seniors shared anecdotes from their own early days in Cambridge, offering both reassurance and practical advice to help the newcomers settle in smoothly.

This tradition continues to be a cornerstone of CUMSA's mission to cultivate a home away from home for Malaysian and Singaporean students in Cambridge.

# CAUSEWAY 2024

## Visit by George Yeo Yong Boon



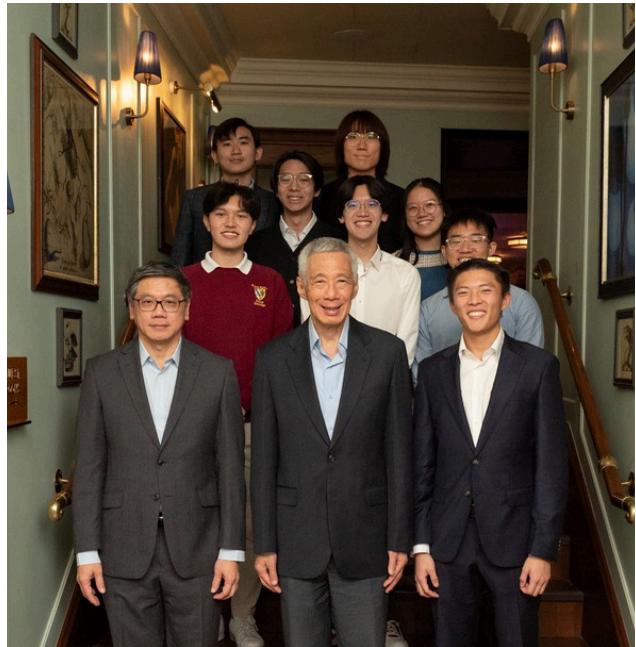
Over the years, Cambridge has been home to a host of budding Singaporean political figures. Last year, we were fortunate to be paid a visit by one of our most reputed alumni: former Cabinet Minister, Mr George Yeo! Mr Yeo, prior to his 23-year stint in Parliament, was a student of Christ's College, Cambridge, and even served consecutive one-year terms as Secretary and President of CUMSA. At the start of the academic year, Mr Yeo kindly offered to stop over in Cambridge during a working visit to the United Kingdom. In conjunction with the launch of his latest book 'George Yeo: Selected Musings' (Series Three), Mr Yeo delivered a talk at the Cambridge Union's Debating Chamber, and subsequently fielded questions from a host of attendees.

Mr Yeo spoke on a wide array of different issues, reflecting both on the state of Singaporean society and modern geopolitics, demonstrating the breadth of wisdom and statesmanship he had amassed over his impressive career. Following the conclusion of the talk, Mr Yeo and his wife also kindly hosted a dinner for a select few committee members for CUMSA and CUSEAS at The Tiffin Truck.

A recording of the talk and subsequent Q&A can be found on the Cambridge Union's YouTube channel. We would like to convey our thanks to World Scientific Publishing, the Cambridge University Southeast Asian Society and the Cambridge Union for their help in putting together this event. Of course, we are deeply indebted to Mr and Mrs George Yeo for their graciousness throughout their short layover in Cambridge, and look forward to seeing them again in the future.

## Visit by Lee Hsien Loong

Among the many distinguished figures we have had the privilege of meeting over the past year, one of the most memorable was undoubtedly Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong, a former student and Senior Wrangler at Trinity College. The year 2024 marked a significant moment in Singapore's political history, as then-Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong officially handed over leadership to Mr. Lawrence Wong. To commemorate this occasion, the Singapore Global Network graciously hosted an engagement session with Senior Minister Lee and the Singaporean High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Mr. Ng Teck Hean, at the University Arms Hotel on 16 November. The event was met with great enthusiasm, attracting approximately 85 students who attended the informal meet-and-greet despite the limited notice. The session commenced with a brief reflection by Senior Minister Lee on his time at Cambridge, including his reunions with former professors and supervisors, as well as his thoughts on the importance of staying connected to current affairs, both domestically and regionally. This was followed by an engaging Q&A session. While discussions covered serious topics such as the evolving global order and ASEAN affairs, we also seized the opportunity to ask about a well-known anecdote from his time in Cambridge studying Mathematics, which has been passed down through generations of students. The event concluded with a generous amount of time for photographs and informal exchanges.



This visit was especially meaningful to our society, not only due to Senior Minister Lee's considerable stature and immense contributions to Singapore, but also because of the historical significance of his father, the late Lee Kuan Yew, who founded the Cambridge University Malaysia and Singapore Association (CUMSA) in 1948 during his own time at Cambridge.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Senior Minister Lee for his time and willingness to engage with us, as well as to the staff from the Prime Minister's Office, Singapore Global Network, and the Economic Development Board—particularly Ms. Valerina and Ms. Caitlin—for their efforts in organising this memorable event. This occasion will undoubtedly remain one of the highlights of our time in Cambridge.

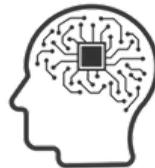
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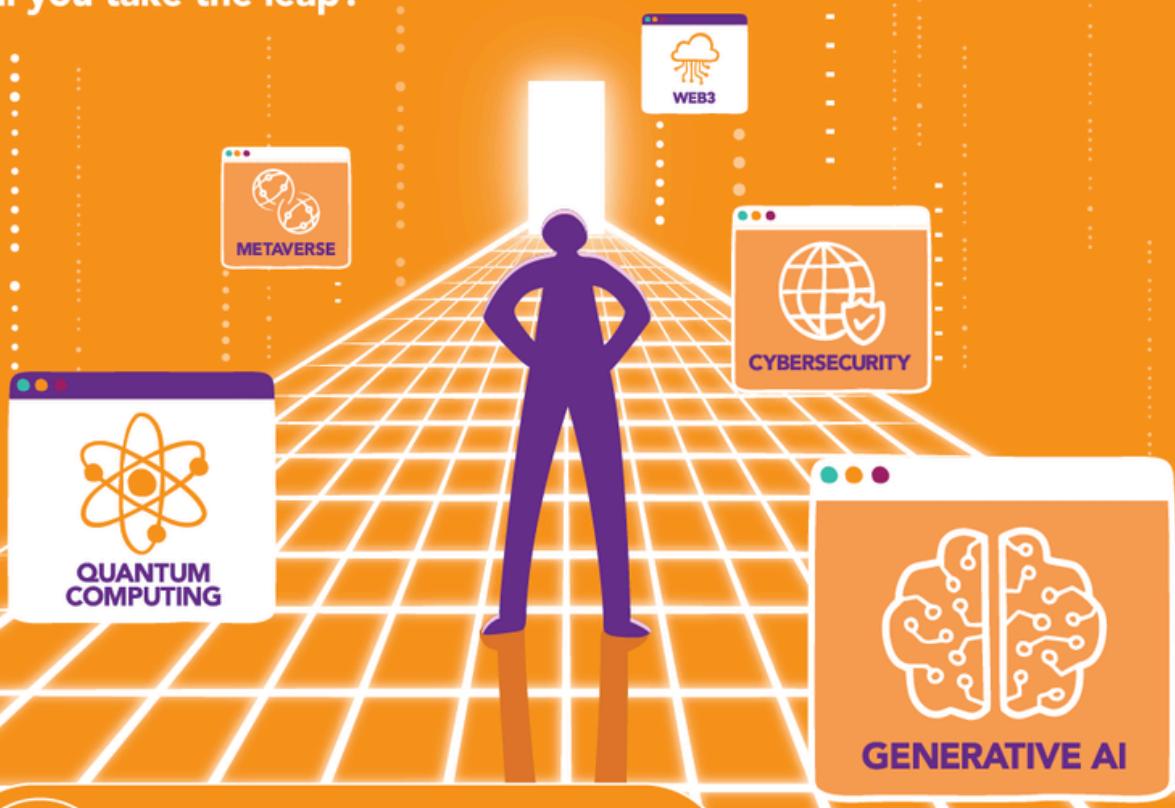


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## CUMSA x Mapletree Bridgemas

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Building upon the success of our inaugural Bridgemas Carnival in 2023, we were delighted to once again host our end-of-year festive celebrations at Kelsey Kerridge Sports Centre this past November.

This year's Carnival sought to surpass the previous edition, offering an array of attractions, including classic carnival games such as ring toss and darts, food stalls featuring a variety of treats including homemade tiramisu prepared by our Sports Officer, Hazel, as well as hot chocolate and mulled wine. Attendees also enjoyed a Polaroid photo booth, Christmas carol performances by buskers, and a delectable dinner from Golden House. The event concluded with a friendly Christmas-themed pub quiz, where participants formed teams of four to compete for prizes, including vouchers and mulled wine. We were thrilled to welcome a record 140 attendees, and we hope that the event continues to flourish in the years to come.

# CAUSEWAY 2024



In keeping with the festive spirit of giving, this year's Bridgemas Carnival was also hosted as a charity fundraising event for the first time, in support of Beyond Social Services, a charitable organisation based in Singapore. Participants were invited to contribute donations beyond the ticket price, support our Christmas carol buskers, or, for those who strictly preferred, receive live haircuts courtesy of our Access and Outreach Officer, Alex. We were heartened by the generous support from our student community for Beyond Social Services, an organisation that does invaluable work in empowering youth in Singapore to break the cycle of poverty.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd, a Gold sponsor of our society, for their generous contribution towards the event, which helped cover the costs of the carnival and enabled us to donate all ticketing revenue to the charity. We are pleased to announce that, through these collective efforts, we raised a total of £1,889.26 (SGD 3,226.80) for Beyond Social Services.

The success of this year's Bridgemas Carnival would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our sponsors, Mapletree and SGN. We extend our deepest thanks to the many CUMSA volunteers who dedicated their time to setting up and managing the various booths throughout the event, as well as to The Gins for their spirited busking performances. Your contributions were essential to the event's success, and Bridgemas would not have been the same without you. Finally, we would like to convey our heartfelt thanks to all attendees whose generous donations contributed to such a worthy cause.

## End-of-year fundraiser

*for Beyond Social Services*

Building upon our Access work over the past year, CUMSA sought to further our social impact goals by tackling educational inequality on a broader scale. This informed our decision to host an online charity fundraiser in conjunction with the Bridgemas carnival, to the benefit of Beyond Social Services. As mentioned above, Beyond is a Singapore-based charity which helps vulnerable families and youths through early childhood and community engagement programmes, dedicated to helping them break away from poverty. Beyond's shared emphasis on educational opportunities, in addition to their established reputation and collaborative spirit, made us keen to proceed with this collaboration.

An online fundraising link, hosted on give.asia, was publicised on our social media channels. We are proud to announce that in total, the combined funds from the Bridgemas carnival and the online fundraiser raised S\$11,442 which will directly benefit Beyond's programmes and day-to-day operations.

CUMSA would like to extend our deepest gratitude towards all who partook in this fundraiser, including CUMSA members—past and present—as well as family and friends. We would also like to reserve a special mention to the wonderfully accommodating Community Relations team at Beyond Social Services, including Pei Ling and Jolene, who aided us in putting this fundraiser together. We strongly encourage all readers to visit the Beyond website and learn more about their work, as well as to contribute to their efforts, be it as a volunteer or through donations. Learn more here ([link](#)).





# Ski Trip 2024

*La Plagne Le France, France*

by Yeo Gek Kai, Sports Secretary 24/25

CUMSA hits the slopes once again!

100 participants took a week-long trip to La Plagne, France to unwind over the snow after a frantic Michaelmas term. This marks our largest ski trip to date.

*Continued on next page*

# CAUSEWAY 2024



Beginner, intermediate and advanced skiers and snowboarders had the chance to explore over 100 pistes in the French Alps and take in the stunning mountain views. La Plagne also offered an immersive Après-ski experience throughout the day and especially at night. Games of poker and werewolf filled the accommodation lobbies each day, leaving participants with an unforgettable experience.

The annual ski trip is often one of the highlights of any CUMSA member. It does not matter whether you are a seasoned veteran or have never explored winter sports; if you enjoy the thrills of adventure and are seeking to forge new friendships, the ski trip is something to look forward to!



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# Dublin Trip

## *Dublin, Ireland*

This year marked the first occasion since the COVID-19 pandemic that we organised an overseas trip for our members. Building upon the success of our day trip to Ely last year, we decided to expand the scope of our excursion by embarking on a 3-day, 2-night trip to Dublin, Ireland. From 13 to 15 January, 11 of our members had the opportunity to explore some of Dublin's most iconic attractions, including Trinity College Dublin—alma mater of renowned figures such as George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde—Temple Bar, the Garden of Remembrance, and the Guinness Storehouse.

The trip was an immensely enjoyable experience for all involved, and we are considering the possibility of organising additional overseas trips in the future. We encourage our members to share any suggestions regarding potential destinations with the committee.



# Musical Trip

## *The Book of Mormon*

For this year's musical day trip, we selected a modern classic—*The Book of Mormon*. Winner of four Olivier Awards, including Best New Musical, this acclaimed production achieved historic success by selling out every performance and setting a record for the highest single-day ticket sales in West End history prior to the pandemic.

On 20 January, a group of 20 members had the privilege of attending the show at the Prince of Wales Theatre in London, benefiting from Band A seats at a significantly discounted rate. The performance proved to be an extraordinary experience, showcasing exceptional musical composition, sharp comedic brilliance, and outstanding execution.

The production's relentless wit, combined with its unforgettable and cleverly crafted play-within-a-play finale, highlighted why *The Book of Mormon* continues to receive widespread acclaim and recognition. We eagerly anticipate next year's musical day trip and the opportunity to experience another outstanding production.

# KopiTalks

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Following the positive feedback from previous years' editions, our trademark speakers' event, KopiTALKS, was once more jointly organised with our friends from Oxford (OUMSSA). In line with KopiTALKS' aims to encourage productive dialogue on critical issues of Singapore, this year's talk was anchored on the topic of social cohesion. The event, held at NTU@one-north in September, was attended by 100 past and present students of Oxford, Cambridge, and a select few London universities.

We were proud to be joined by ex-Christ's College alumnus Minister Chan Chun Sing, Minister of Education and Minister-in-Charge of Public Service, for a fireside chat. Minister Chan spoke elaborately on the need for continued vigilance in reinforcing Singapore's social compact amidst the social and geopolitical contestations of today's world.

A subsequent panel discussion also took place with Dr Janil Puthucheary (Senior Minister of State), Prof Mathew Mathews (Head, IPS Social Lab, NUS) and Mr Alfie Othman (CEO, raiSE Singapore). The panelists were respectively chosen for their diverse backgrounds in politics, academia and social entrepreneurship, contributing an array of different perspectives which helped to add nuance to the on-stage discussion.

We are grateful to all of the involved speakers, as well as OUMSSA, for their involvement in this event, and look forward to the equally fruitful runs of KopiTALKS in the coming years ahead.

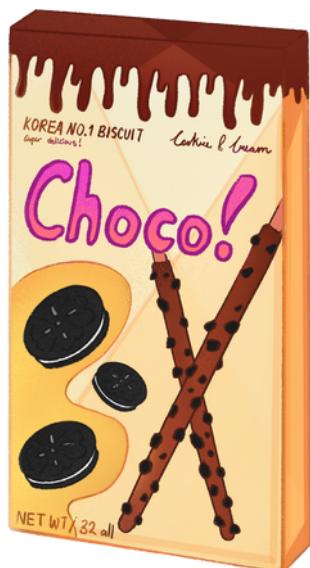


# CUMSA Welfare



This year, CUMSA's signature welfare offerings went bigger and better! Across each term, we delivered solace in the form of snacks and refreshments to every member's doorstep. This included nostalgic tastes imported directly from home (including Milo and Milk Tea sachets or FruitPlus sweets), and local favourites from established brands (biscuits and chocolates alike). As a special edition in Lent term, we continued our previous years' tradition of supporting our valuable CUMSA members' relationships via Valentines' themed welfare packs.

Across the year, we also bolstered our overall mental well-being efforts through our large suite of event prizes and occasional welfare drops. This included our giveaway of 100 scoops of unique Durian-flavoured gelato from Jack's Gelato in Easter.





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<sup>1</sup>As at 31 March 2025.

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In April 2024, Mapletree completed a ~S\$1.7 billion strategic acquisition of 31 student housing assets across the UK and Germany, along with the award-winning Student Castle operating platform. This deal catapulted Mapletree from the seventh to the fourth-largest student housing owner in the UK as at 31 March 2025, while establishing in-house operating capabilities essential for scaling the Group's student housing business. The Student Castle brand has successfully developed and refurbished 15 assets over 15 years, including two heritage-enhancing developments in Bath and Durham, and two award-winning projects in Oxford and York.

In the UK, Mapletree also owns offices such as 3 Hardman Street, iQ Building and One Glass Wharf, as well as mixed-use development Green Park, a leading business park. The Group recently entered the UK logistics sector by acquiring its first logistics facility in Derby Commercial Park in November 2024.



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## | UK assets



## | US assets



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mTower

mPlaza

FESTIVAL WALK

GreenPark

capitol  
students

StudentCastle

# Ice Skating Social

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On Sunday afternoon, 17 November, CUMSA hosted an exciting ice skating event at the Cambridge Ice Skating Arena. Over 40 participants, from beginners to advanced skaters, took to the ice for an afternoon of fun and camaraderie. The supportive atmosphere encouraged everyone to enjoy themselves, whether learning new skills or showing off impressive moves. It was a memorable event filled with laughter and shared moments.



# Oxbridge Games

On 2 November, about 60 students traveled to Oxford for the annual Oxbridge Games, a lively competition between the Cambridge and Oxford teams. The event featured three sports—football, badminton, and frisbee—bringing out the best of team spirit and friendly rivalry. After intense matches, Team Cambridge emerged victorious once again, retaining their title as champions. Beyond the games, participants spent the day exploring the historic charm of Oxford, making the event both competitive and enjoyable. It was a memorable day filled with sportsmanship, camaraderie, and adventure.

# Weekly Sports

CUMSA continues to promote an active and inclusive sporting culture through a range of recreational and competitive activities. These initiatives provide members with opportunities to stay active, foster friendships, and represent the association within the wider university community. The following summarises our ongoing sports programmes:

## **Weekly Badminton Sessions**

Weekly badminton sessions have consistently attracted strong participation, with attendance peaking at 32 players—the largest turnout this year. Held at Kelsey Kerridge Sports Centre, these sessions cater to players of varying skill levels, offering a mix of friendly matches and casual practice. The structured yet welcoming environment encourages members to engage in regular physical activity while developing their skills.

## **Football League Participation**

CUMSA has proudly fielded a team in the university's football league, competing against other college and society teams. This initiative provides members with the opportunity to participate in competitive sports, fostering teamwork and camaraderie while representing the association. Matches are held regularly, and the team continues to build its presence within the university sports scene.



## **Ad Hoc Basketball and Futsal Games**

In addition to scheduled activities, CUMSA organises ad hoc basketball and futsal games based on member interest and availability. These games are informal and flexible, providing a platform for members to engage in sports on a more casual basis. The spontaneity of these sessions allows for greater inclusivity and ensures that a variety of interests are accommodated.

These sports programmes reflect CUMSA's commitment to promoting a vibrant and active community, enhancing members' university experience through regular physical activity and social interaction. We look forward to expanding and diversifying our sports offerings in the future, ensuring that members continue to have access to opportunities that align with their interests and preferences.



# CUMSA × CUKS

## Formal Swap

Continuing our efforts to build relationships with other cultural societies in Cambridge, we held a formal swap with the Cambridge University Korean Society (CUKS) on 12 November 2024 at Robinson College. This unique collaboration brought together 20 students from each society for an evening of cultural exchange, delightful conversations, and a much-needed break from the rigours of academic life.

The night began with pre-dinner drinks, where attendees mingled and broke the ice over glasses of wine and soft beverages. Laughter and chatter filled the room as students from both societies discovered shared interests and forged new friendships. The atmosphere was warm and inviting, setting the tone for the rest of the evening.

Guests were then ushered into the dining hall for a sumptuous 3-course formal dinner consisting of a mushroom Arancini appetiser, roasted chicken with potato pancakes for mains and Bailey's creme brulee for dessert. Conversations flowed effortlessly over courses of delicious food, with students exchanging stories about their shared experiences from different cultural backgrounds at Cambridge.

The Formal Swap was more than just a dinner; it was a celebration of diversity and connection. It was an invaluable escape from the library grind, offering a chance to relax and enjoy the company of new friends. The event highlighted the beauty of cultural exchange and the power of shared experiences to bring people together. Here's to many more collaborations and exchanges with other cultural societies in Cambridge!

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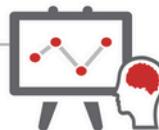


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Christopher Torrington  
Executive Director, Global Head of eFX  
Trading and Strategy



Christophe (middle)

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# CUMSA × CUCS

## Mahjong Social

On the evening of April 22, 2024, Newnham College's Iris Café transformed into a vibrant hub of activity as CUMSA and CUCS (Cambridge University Chinese Society) came together for a Mahjong Social. The event, attended by 20 students from each society, was a delightful fusion of strategy, cultural exchange, and camaraderie, offering something for everyone—from seasoned players to those picking up the tiles for the very first time.

The café buzzed with excitement as participants settled around tables, each set with a Mahjong set ready for action. The event catered to a wide range of skill levels, with experienced players showcasing their expertise while beginners eagerly learned the basics. What made the event particularly special was the exploration of the different Mahjong rules practised in Singapore and Hong Kong. This cultural exchange added an educational dimension to the social, as players compared strategies and rules, deepening their appreciation for the game's rich heritage.

Beyond the tiles and tactics, the Mahjong Social was a celebration of connection. Laughter and friendly banter filled the room as players bonded over their shared love for the game. For many, it was an opportunity to forge new friendships, united by a common interest that transcended cultural boundaries. Scrumptious Asian snacks and drinks provided the attendees with a familiar setting of home, making the event a welcome break from the demands of academic life.

As the afternoon drew to a close, participants left with not only a greater understanding of Mahjong but also cherished memories of an event that brought two societies closer together. The CUMSA x CUCS Mahjong Social was a testament to the power of shared traditions and the joy of learning and collaboration in a diverse yet shared experience at Cambridge.

# Access Workshops

In July and August 2024, over 800 aspiring students gathered online for two transformative workshops designed to equip them with the tools and knowledge needed to navigate the competitive landscape of the UCAS application. Hosted by our access team, the Personal Statement + Supercurriculars Workshop and the Admissions Tests Workshop provided invaluable guidance, inspiration, and practical advice to help students stand out in their applications.

The Personal Statement + Supercurriculars Workshop kicked off with a focus on crafting compelling personal statements that reflect individuality and intellectual passion. Attendees were introduced to key strategies for structuring their statements, highlighting their unique strengths, and demonstrating a genuine commitment to their chosen field of study. The workshop also delved into the importance of supercurricular activities, offering creative ideas to help students go beyond the curriculum and showcase their curiosity and initiative. From independent research projects to subject-related competitions, students left with a wealth of ideas to enhance their profiles. The session concluded with subject-specific breakout rooms, where participants had the opportunity to ask tailored questions and receive advice from CUMSA students specializing in their fields. This personalized touch ensured that every attendee left with actionable insights relevant to their academic aspirations.



The Cambridge Admissions Tests Workshop followed with a comprehensive exploration of four key tests: UCAT, LNAT, TMUA, and ESAT. Each session was led by Cambridge students with firsthand experience of these exams, alongside the Cambridge Engineering Society, which provided expert guidance for the ESAT. The workshops covered essential exam techniques, time management strategies, and detailed walkthroughs of model answers for actual test questions. Attendees gained a deeper understanding of what examiners are looking for and how to approach challenging questions with confidence. The interactive Q&A sessions allowed students to clarify doubts and receive personalized advice, making the workshops both informative and engaging.

Together, these workshops not only demystified the application process but also fostered a sense of community among participants. By bringing together the collective expertise of Cambridge students and societies, these workshops exemplified the spirit of mentorship and collaboration that lies at the heart of the university experience. It also served as a great opportunity for current CUMSA students to give back and make the Cambridge application process less daunting for prospective applicants.

# Mock Interviews

This year, CUMSA proudly hosted our flagship access event: the CUMSA Mock Interviews. It is designed to prepare prospective applicants for one of the most pivotal stages of the Cambridge admissions process. With the help of 55 dedicated CUMSA student volunteers across 17 subjects, we provided 204 aspiring students with an invaluable opportunity to experience a simulation of the Cambridge interview, equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to excel at the challenging interview process.

The mock interviews were meticulously structured to replicate the authentic Cambridge interview experience, emphasizing intellectual rigour, critical thinking, and the ability to engage deeply with academic questions. For many participants, the mock interviews were more than just practice; they were a chance to ask questions, address anxieties, and gain practical advice from current Cambridge students who had once been in their shoes. The supportive environment allowed applicants to refine their interview techniques, learn from their mistakes, and approach their actual interviews with greater confidence and clarity.



The event also held special significance for CUMSA's volunteers, who embraced the opportunity to give back to the community. By sharing their insights and experiences, they not only helped shape the next generation of Cambridge applicants but also reinforced the spirit of mentorship and solidarity that defines CUMSA's access programme. For many volunteers, it was a rewarding reminder of their own journeys and a chance to contribute to a tradition of support and encouragement.

The 2024 Mock Interviews were a resounding success, leaving participants feeling more prepared and inspired to tackle the challenges ahead. For CUMSA, the event was a testament to the power of community, collaboration, and the shared commitment to work towards benefitting future Cambridge students. As we look ahead, we are proud to have played a role in helping these talented students take one step closer to achieving their dreams and hope to continue working towards increasing the accessibility of the Cambridge application process.

# Mentorship

This year marked the launch of CUMSA's inaugural Mentorship Programme, a transformative initiative designed to support prospective students navigating the Cambridge application process. With a combined total of 72 participants—including both applicants and CUMSA student mentors—the programme provided a welcoming platform for open dialogue, personalized guidance, and invaluable insights into life at Cambridge.



Prospective students had the opportunity to ask questions about every aspect of the application process, from choosing the right college to understanding the unique supervision system and gaining deeper insights into their intended subjects of study. Mentors shared their experiences, offering practical advice on crafting compelling personal statements, preparing for admissions tests, and showcasing intellectual curiosity. Beyond the technicalities, the programme also highlighted the vibrant academic and social life at Cambridge, helping applicants envision themselves as part of the university community.



For CUMSA student volunteers, the mentorship programme was a chance to give back, drawing from their own journeys to inspire and empower the next generation of Cambridge applicants. The Mentorship Programme was a resounding success, leaving participants feeling informed, supported, and motivated to pursue their Cambridge dreams. We hope that this programme starts a precedent for deeper connections between CUMSA and prospective applicants and we look forward to seeing this developin the years ahead.

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# In-person Talks

CUMSA proudly resumed its in-person school talks during the summer break of 2024. This marked a significant milestone in re-engaging with schools and students across Singapore, as we visited a total of 11 institutions to share our experiences and insights about life at the University of Cambridge. These talks not only deepened connections with our partner schools but also provided a platform to inspire and inform a new generation of prospective applicants.

The school talks were designed to offer students a firsthand glimpse into the Cambridge experience, delivered by current Cambridge students who could speak authentically about the university's unique academic and social environment. We discussed the rigorous yet rewarding nature of the Cambridge education system, including the renowned supervision system, which fosters deep intellectual engagement and independent learning. Additionally, we highlighted the vibrant student life, from extracurricular activities to the rich cultural diversity that defines the Cambridge community.

A key focus of the talks was to raise awareness about the access programs and support initiatives that CUMSA was planning to run throughout the UCAS application cycle. These programs aim to demystify the application process, provide guidance on personal statements and admissions tests, and offer mentorship to students from underrepresented backgrounds. By publicizing these initiatives, we hoped to encourage a wider range of students to consider applying to Cambridge and to assure them that support was available every step of the way.

One of the most impactful aspects of the school visits was the interactive Q&A sessions. Students eagerly asked questions about their potential subjects of study, seeking advice on how to prepare for university-level academics and what to expect from their chosen disciplines. Our team of access helpers also shared personal stories about their journeys to Cambridge, including the challenges they faced and the factors that influenced their decisions when choosing subjects and universities. These candid discussions not only provided practical guidance but also humanised the application process, making it feel more accessible and achievable.

The 2024 in-person school talks were a resounding success, establishing CUMSA's presence and engagement with schools and students across Singapore. For many attendees, the talks were an eye-opening experience that sparked curiosity and ambition, while for CUMSA members, they were an opportunity to give back and inspire the next generation of Cambridge applicants. As we reflect on this fruitful summer, we are reminded of the power of in-person connections and the importance of sharing knowledge and experiences. We hope to continue this spirit of mentorship and giving back in the upcoming years ahead, and excited to see these connections flourish in future!

# CAUSEWAY 2024

## LNY Dinner and Games

Our Lunar New Year celebrations spanned 3 days with over 200 total attendees. From 31 January to 2 February, our members had the chance to enjoy the festivities with their friends over a 10-course dinner. On 1 February, students could also revel in an afternoon of traditional games like Mahjong, Dai Di and a variety of board games.



## Tangyuan Social

On 12 February, CUMSA collaborated with Cambridge University Malaysian Society (CUMaS) to celebrate the Lantern Festival (元宵节) by making tangyuan from scratch. Tangyuan is a glutinous rice ball typically filled with sweet red bean paste, sesame paste or peanut butter. This collaboration served as a way for Malaysians and Singaporeans to connect over shared traditions and customs.



## Chess Tournament

9 March saw over 15 participants blitzing it out (both literally and figuratively) in our inaugural chess tournament. Split across different skill levels, both seasoned players and beginners got to fight for glory and attractive prizes.



GFEST



# SingFest

Singfest marks the end of the Lent term and is one of the climaxes of CUMSA's calendar. For Singaporeans and Malaysians, it serves as a way to indulge in local delights far from home prepared by our own members. For those interested in Singaporean and Malaysian culture, what better way to learn more about our countries than through our food?

Singfest was held on 15 March this academic year, with over 30 volunteers manning 10 food stalls. Our chefs prepared their dishes for weeks, fine-tuning their recipes to ensure as authentic of an experience as possible. Live performances were also present throughout the food festival featuring our very own members as well. Overall, more than 170 students turned up for Singfest, with a significant population coming from non-Singaporean/Malaysian backgrounds.

# Graduate Events

## Pizza Social @ Downing JCR

The first CUMSA postgrad event of 2025 kicked off on a rainy February evening at Downing College, where everyone reunited over pizza and drinks after the winter break. Spirits remained high despite the weather, though the enthusiasm did result in the food disappearing quickly!



## Lent Term Dinner @ Baan Thai

For the second year running, the Lent term dinner was hosted at Baan Thai Restaurant, overlooking the scenic Parker's Piece. With 30 postgrads in attendance, the evening was filled with lively conversation, warm reunions, and the formation of new friendships—an excellent way to mark the end of term.

## Farewell Dinner @ Chinese Canteen

Much of CUMSA's postgrad community are MPhil students, who typically spend only a year in Cambridge. On 17 May, a farewell dinner was held as the final postgrad event of the academic year. The dinner took place at the Chinese Canteen restaurant on Bridge Street, another popular eatery for the CUMSA community. A group excursion to Jack's Gelato afterwards capped off another eventful year for CUMSA's postgrad members.





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# Causeway

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2024 edition

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