

A TIME FOR Renewal

In the month of April, the air warms as spring arrives in the UK. Golden fields of daffodils carpet the ground and pink buds of cherry blossoms grow on what was once bare branches. Spring is a time of rejuvenation and renewal. As vaccines continue to be rolled out across the nation and the number of COVID-19 cases fall, life in the UK is slowly regaining a sense of normalcy. Before the UK eased out of lockdown on 12 April, the Singapore Medical Society of the United Kingdom (SMSUK) organised a slew of springtime events to engage our members and enhance their learning. Below are some of our highlights since the last column.

On the last Saturday of February, SMSUK members and alumni from all over the UK and Singapore came together to celebrate the month of love and friendship in our online social event "Crazy Rich Palentine's". Inspired by the massive box office hit romance *Crazy Rich Asians*, participants were encouraged to come dressed in their fanciest first-date outfits for the session. The event featured our popular "speed-friending" sessions facilitated in Zoom breakout rooms, a short Valentine's Day trivia quiz and a segment where participants had fun creating and presenting "Palentine's Profiles" for their friends. It was an event filled with warmth, laughter and banter.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about much disruption to clinical teaching for medical and dental students in the UK. To address this, SMSUK got creative and spearheaded events such as our first ever hands-on virtual dental composite class in March. Over 50 participants were tutored on various composite filling techniques by volunteer mentors and alumni. The hugely successful event was also joined by members of our affiliated societies from Malaysia and Hong Kong.



Dental composite class

SMSUK also launched our new "Grassroots Events" initiative, where members had the opportunity to organise events together with the SMSUK committee. We kicked off with a talk on "Shaping the Future of General Practice in Singapore", organised by SMSUK member Cornelius Tan in collaboration with the Singapore Medical Societies of Australia and New Zealand, and Ireland. The talk was attended by over 50 members from the three societies who listened to insights from Prof Doris Young, Dr Wong Tien Hua and Dr Ruth Lim, three prominent figures in Singapore's general practice scene.

As the above events were the first of their kind in our society, we are heartened by the strong support from our alumni and mentors who volunteered to organise and conduct the sessions, enthusiastic participation from our members and overwhelmingly positive feedback we have received.

For this month's prompt, we asked our members to share how they have spent their Easter break.

— Chin Sue-Kay, Editor, SMSUK



Text and photo by Ryan Chen

Ryan is a Year 1 medical student at University of Leicester.

Spring was here. Since I would be spending Easter in the UK this year, I decided on visiting Cambridge and London.

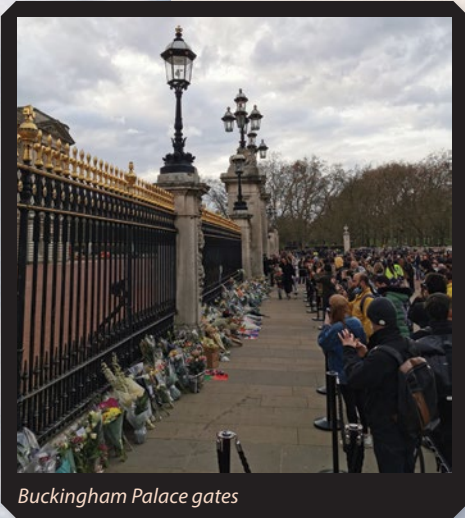
Cambridge was charming. The solemn, overcast clouds that greeted me there soon gave way to clear, spotless skies that rained generous pockets of sunshine onto those hallowed, ancient streets and college buildings. Punting down the River Cam, passing various landmarks like King's College Chapel and the Wren Library, under the famed Mathematical Bridge and the Bridge of Sighs, I couldn't help but marvel at this Eden that spoke of eras of grace and academic prowess.

London – where do I start? My two day trips down South would not do justice to the beauty of this

British icon! Together with some friends from junior college (JC), I let my mind wander on the stroll down Southbank, tracing the Thames as it unveiled various landmarks – the Tower Bridge, St Paul's Cathedral, Big Ben and the London Eye. The day I visited coincided with His Royal Highness The Prince Philip's passing. As I witnessed the crowds gracing Buckingham Palace's stately gates, laying flowers and paying their respects, I couldn't help but be reminded of the spirit of British unity amid trying times, especially during COVID-19.

On my second trip to London, I met with an old JC friend. We visited Portobello Road Market before adjourning to Notting Hill, which was adorned with colourful houses and bespoke luxury cars. In contrast, Chinatown toyed with my senses with the smell of Asian cuisine, the sight of red everywhere and the pockets of spoken Mandarin I overheard in various conversations. It really did not feel like I was in Europe!

Despite spending Easter abroad with trips and activities, I still miss Singapore dearly; the occasional tinge of homesickness is real.



Buckingham Palace gates



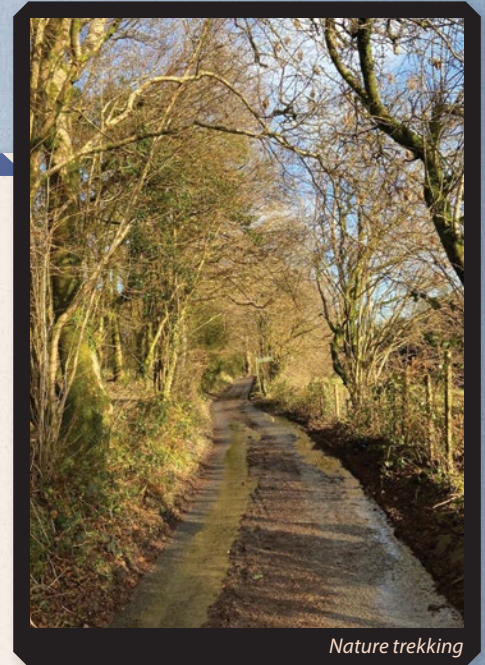
Text and photo by Ravanth Baskaran

Ravanth is a Year 3 medical student at Cardiff University.

A long Easter break is not something that exists for us at Cardiff University, as we carry on with our Student Selected Component (SSC) block during this period. Due to the nature of my SSC, I spent my bank holiday doing night shifts, helping the surgical registrars with their duties while learning a whole lot. Through this Easter period, I also embarked on many new projects – one of which was founding the online Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) teaching platform, OSCEazy. With help from my fellow SMSUK friends, we gained an outreach of over 4,000 medical professionals across all platforms! I embarked on this project with the aim of providing a quality online OSCE teaching tool to address the difficulties in learning brought about by the pandemic. With the success of OSCEazy, we have branched out to include finals and Membership of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons examination teaching as well.

Easter has also served as a time to recuperate and relax from the stress of being a medical student.

I have attempted to explore the beautiful land of Wales as quarantine was slowly being lifted. From mountains to beaches, my housemates and I have trekked mountains, swam in the sea, ran (or walked) a marathon for charity, and much more. As we look ahead, apart from the looming examinations, we hope to be able to follow local guidelines and explore the country – something that we have not been able to do for the past year. We hope to be able to travel back during summer to our respective home countries in order to spend time with our families and friends and enjoy the good home-cooked meals that come along with being back home. ♦



Nature trekking