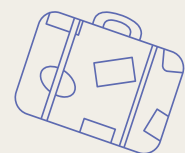
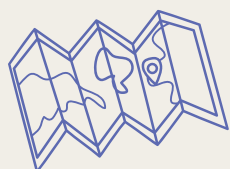


## Between the In-Between Spaces:

# On Travelling Places



## early Summer '22

**DENTAL DINNER**  
23rd July 2022  
annual gathering for dental students and alumni.

**PEG INFO SESSION**  
25th June 2022  
advice for prospective applicants to MOHH's Pre-Employment Grant (PEG), hosted by current PEG holders.

**RESIDENCY OPEN HOUSES**  
July 2022  
information sessions hosted by SingHealth, National Healthcare Group and National University Health Systems.

**CHINESE & CANTONESE LANGUAGE CLASSES**

July & August 2022  
equipping students with clinically-oriented conversational language skills.

**PRE-UNIVERSITY TALKS**  
6th August 2022  
advice for prospective medical and dental students considering applying to the UK.

SMSUK events overview

Text by Gabriel Kwok

It is a lovely afternoon in Singapore as I write this, even if my suprachiasmatic nucleus still fancies itself somewhere over the Hindu Kush, those fabled mountains separating the ancient Oxus and Indus rivers, glimpsed only on the flight from London. Humans too observe the seasonal movements, though our migratory flyways touch off in summer rather than spring or autumn. For three months a year, then, the Singapore Medical Society of the United Kingdom (SMSUK) moves its base of operations to an even smaller island, as work begins in earnest for the upcoming summer events.

The life of an international student is marked by constant change, and the holidays find us even more interestingly placed in the world as a result. Many of our members will be using this time to travel before returning home, setting off from the UK to myriad corners of the world. SMSUK, too, exists between these transitory moments; based across

different cities, our team typically meets through the mysterious aether, an arcane thaumaturgy anchored to Earth by the Zoom meeting room. Transcending the limits of distance, these modern marvels keep us connected while allowing us to plan events across national borders. Truly, our lives are lived in the liminal spaces, constantly moving in-between places.

Now, all this is very exciting, as Wildon can attest in this month's letter, *germanely* recalling the tantalising discoveries of his time abroad – but this is also why the summer is such a precious time for us. Caught between the in-between spaces, it is immensely comforting to be welcomed back home, recalibrating perspectives shaped by the time spent away and reconnecting with dearly missed loved ones. For SMSUK, the summer also presents a rare opportunity to have our members gathered in a single city, and

we have an exciting array of in-person events lined up over the coming months. Not that we have left the aether behind entirely, of course, with tentative plans afoot for our first hybrid events, enabling guests to join in from potentially anywhere in the world.

The summer, then, promises to be an exciting time for both enterprise and rejuvenation. Truly, it is good to be home. Let's catch up over *kopi*!

Gabriel Kwok reads medicine at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry and is the 28th Editor at SMSUK.





Text and photos by Tan Wei Loong Wildon

At the time of this writing, I believe most of my colleagues in medical/dental school are busy preparing for, have already started, or have finished their examinations. What I am sure remains constant among all students is the long-awaited summer holiday, which for most Singaporean students like myself means that we can finally travel back to Singapore. This year, being my first year studying abroad, has been tough both mentally and physically. Being away from my family was bad enough, but being away from my favourite carrot cake stall has been even worse! No Asian food store in the UK comes close to the hawker centres back in Singapore in terms of price and quality.

I did not have the opportunity to fly back to Singapore during the previous Christmas and Easter breaks. However, with COVID-19 restrictions easing, it was much easier to travel and enjoy the activities outside of my coursework, so I did have the time to do what I enjoyed and explored Europe. Being an avid football fan, I spent most of my breaks immersing myself in anything football related (I had once gone to Plymouth over the weekend just to watch a football game).

During the Christmas break, I was fortunate to have a friend host me at her home in London. The biggest shock was the food. After five months of poorly made university food, I was spoiled with British homemade dishes. During this time, I had the revelation

that fish and chips could be paired with curry sauce (it tastes better than it sounds), and I was also fortunate to share a Christmas dinner with the classic “pigs in blanket” and “yule log”. Having only visited as a tourist before, it was also very eye-opening to travel outside of central London to immerse myself in the local culture there. It challenged my impression that London was just a bustling city full of fancily dressed people. This was far from it; it was what locals may call “the ends”.<sup>a</sup> Just crossing the road taught me much about social inequality. You could be surrounded by posh houses and just a short walk would take you into a poorer neighbourhood.

During the Easter break, I went to support the local football club, the Bristol Rovers, against Bradford City at the Memorial Stadium. After going down shortly at the start of the second half, a long-range strike from Sam Finley sent the Memorial Stadium crazy, and the continued support inspired defender Connor Taylor to head in the second goal, giving Bristol Rovers an important win, vital to their league promotion this season. The following weekend, I went to Ashton Gate to watch Bristol City play against Peterborough, which saw a sending off in the second half. However, the ten-man Peterborough team was able to fight for an equaliser and see out the game for a 1-1 draw.

I then headed to Munich, Germany for a week where I struggled to communicate in the little German I had learnt off

YouTube (thankfully most Germans do speak English as well), and pampered myself with German delicacies such as bratwursts and schnitzels.

Looking ahead, I will be spending my summer holiday back in Singapore pursuing a research internship, as research is what interests me about medicine. My advice to anyone is to find a balance between work and breaks, and to do something that you are passionate about. Also, while you are studying in this part of the world, use this opportunity to explore it! One thing I did was to buy a railcard, and it saved me a lot of money when travelling in the UK.

Medical/dental school can be overwhelming at times, but making the most of these breaks has helped me stay grounded so that I will be recharged when the term restarts. ♦

#### Note

a. “The ends” is Londoner slang for a person’s neighbourhood or place of origin.

Wildon is an incoming second-year medical student at the University of Bristol. He has a keen interest in research and believes that research plays a key role in improving our understanding of medicine and clinical practice. Outside of medicine, Wildon enjoys various sports, mainly football and karate.



Bristol City Football Club goalkeepers warming up at Ashton Gate



Outside the Allianz Arena in Munich

