

THE OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE SOCIETY OF MALAYSIA

PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE OF 2004-2005

It is my pleasure to report on behalf of the Committee of 2004-2005 on our various endeavours and activities, for the benefit of the members of The Oxford & Cambridge Society of Malaysia.

In our efforts to achieve the objects of the Society outlined in the Constitution, one of which being to hold a dinner in conjunction with the Boat Race, the Committee organized 'The Oxford & Cambridge Gala Boat Race Ball 2005' in April, This was graced by HRH Raja Nazrin Shah, our Guest-of-Honour. The Organising Chairperson, Datin Shalini Ganendra, saw to all it that we celebrated all that is blue, in style, at the Le Meridien Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

We also fulfilled our commitment to social events by organizing the 3rd Annual English Language Event, chaired by Margaret Hall this year, as a public service to encourage, promote and enhance the use of the English Language in schools. This year's event was attended by around one thousand 4th and 5th formers from the Malaysian secondary schools who listened to our alumni inspire them with Talks on how to improve their Speaking and Writing Skills and to encourage them to aspire to apply to Oxford and Cambridge. The 4th Oxford and Cambridge Essay Competition was also held during the same event and a panel of Oxbridge judges from within the Oxford & Cambridge Society membership, came together to adjudicate the best English Language essay/s written during the day.

Following feedback gathered from members in the form of a survey carried out in May 2004 and at the AGM in June 2004, the duly-elected committee for 2004-2005 aspired to cater to the diverse preferences expressed. This resulted in four new initiatives over the year, since July 2004 to-date:

1. Informal Monthly Social Events
2. Talks by prominent Individuals
3. Boat Race in Kuala Lumpur
4. Improved Communications with Members

Upon coming on to the new Committee, Wong Pooi Lam organized an instantly popular series of Third Wednesday Monthly Informal Events, which featured a variety of activities ranging from happy hour drinks, to lunches and dinners, as well as a wine-tasting session. These were attended by around 10 to 25 members & guests each occasion, with many new faces to be welcomed at each event. The feedbacks received have been mostly positive and encouraging. Members found that in such smaller groups, they were able to socialise and network more and it was an easier way to get to know other members.

The main Talk-of-the-Year was organised by Rizal Kahar, featuring our Rt Honorable Minister of Education, Dato Sri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, on June 24th 2005. The over-subscribed Oxbridge Dinner Forum 2005 was attended by around 170 members and guests at the Royal Lake Club and was covered by the Straits Times and The Star. Over the year, we established strong ties with the

Harvard Club, who invited our members to a series of Lectures by prominent academics, such as the Colloquium featuring Prof Quinn Mills, jointly organized with the Harvard Club of Malaysia in March 2005, and other Talks in conjunction with Sunway University College. In return, the Society invited Harvard Club to some of our own events, such as the OSEAN Project Benefit Dinner at The British High Commissioner's Residence, where the Harvard Club donated USD5,000. The President of the Harvard Club, Tan Sri Dr Lin See Yan, as well as their patron, HRH Raja Nazrin Shah expressed their wish to see the two clubs working together more closely in the future.

Our third initiative was one of the most enjoyable of events of the year, this being our very own Inaugural Boat Race held at Lake Garden, Kuala Lumpur on 3rd April 2005. Chook Yuh Yng must be credited for the wonderful initiative, which aimed to capture the great Oxbridge tradition of the Battle of the Blues by taking it on to the waters! Yuh Yng's imagination, enthusiasm, dedication and great organizational skills ensured an eventful occasion, which filled three pages in the New Straits Times in media coverage. This Committee hopes that the Malaysian Oxbridge Boat Race may be an annual affair, especially since Cambridge will need to challenge Oxford to a re-match for the great upset caused this year!

Improving communication with members has been an on-going initiative for years. But this year we took on a special emphasis on timeliness of information and to ensure the website contains the most up-to-date information. We outsourced this task to a member, Sharon Saw aka our Webmaster, who has done a marvelous job.

The Society was invited to the Cambridge & Oxford Society of Japan Centenary Celebrations in Tokyo in March 2005. The President, Vice-President (Oxon) and past-President, Tristan Russell, with our respective spouses, represented the Society and attended the celebrations. In reciprocity, it is hoped that the Oxford & Cambridge Society of Malaysia may invite the other Oxbridge Societies in the region to our upcoming 50th Anniversary of the Society in 7 years' time. In view of this, the Committee has asked for a separate sub-Committee to be established solely to look into the organizing of this momentous occasion.

A special note of thanks must be accorded to HE Bruce Cleghorn, the British High Commissioner, for graciously hosting and sponsoring a number of the Society's events at his residence. The "Summer Reception of 2004", targeted at attracting younger members' awareness of the Oxford & Cambridge Society of Malaysia, enjoyed overwhelming response with a spectacular attendance of more than 100! A special fund-raising dinner was also hosted for the benefit of the OSEAN Project, promoting development of the Bario in Sarawak. Members of the project, including team leader, Mike Khaw, and Poline Bala, (a Kelabit from Bario, pursuing her PhD in Anthropology at Christ's College, Cambridge) gave short presentations and answered questions about their worthwhile project. The Committee also voted in favour of supporting the Project with a donation of the remaining USD1,500 (up to RM6,000) required for the project. Last but certainly not least, I wish to accord my personal thanks to both the High Commissioner and Mrs. Cleghorn for hosting this very AGM and the President's Cocktail to follow. Needless to say, we are all looking forward to listen to the High Commissioner speak later at a special Talk he has consented to give in conjunction with our AGM.

On the membership front, it is my pleasure to report that our membership strength continues with more than 40 new members having joined during this Committee's term of office. The funds of the society at the start of this committee term was at RM185,104.95, and it closed at RM198,242.71 and I wish to credit this to the great efforts and prudence of the Committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank each and every member of our Committee for 2004-2005, both past and present, who selflessly gave of their personal time and energies to serve the Society. Our two Vice-Presidents, Prof John Zinkin for Oxford and Tan Sri Abdullah Ahmad for Cambridge, personally hosted two very generous receptions at their respective residences for the enjoyment of the members. The Hon. Secretaries, Ngooi Chiu-Ing (in the 1st three-quarters of term) and Wong Pooi Lam (in the last quarter) sacrificed much personal time to provide invaluable secretarial services to the Society. The Hon. Treasurer, Dr Gue See Sew, ensured the proper accounting and handling of Society funds. The Committee members, HE Bruce Cleghorn, Datin Shalini Ganendra & Gurgit Singh, representing Cambridge, and Rizal Kahar, Margaret Hall, Justin Leong and Terence Mahony (earlier part of the term only), representing Oxford, gave of themselves to serve the Society in so many ways and capacities which are simply unquantifiable. Last but not least, we need to pay tribute to Rahman Ahmad, who has faithfully continued to act as Hon. Auditor for the Society safeguarding members' interest, especially with regard to the responsible and professional management of our Society funds. To them all I offer my sincere gratitude and I wish to add that it has been an honour working with a team whose energies and dynamism have been just tremendous, to say the least.

To the members of the Oxford & Cambridge Society of Malaysia, it has been a pleasure serving the Society this past year and we hope to continue working with our members to further the objectives of the Society and to benefit the members at large.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Lee
President

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2004-2005

- July 10, '04 English Language Event, Sunway College: 9am-1pm
- July 21, '04 3rd Wednesday Lunch at Etoile, Hotel Equatorial KL: 12.30pm
- Aug 14, '04 Summer Reception 2004 - Residence of H.E. Bruce Cleghorn: 7-11pm
- Aug 18, '04 3rd Wednesday Happy Hour at Flo, Hotel Equatorial KL: 6-8pm
- Sept 15, '04 3rd Wednesday Lunch at Etoile, Hotel Equatorial KL, 12.30pm
- Oct 20, '04 Buka Puasa Buffet, Sheraton Imperial Hotel, 7.15pm
- Nov 24, '04 3rd Wednesday Happy Hour + Pool, The Pub, Shangri-La KL, 6-8pm
- Dec 15, '04 3rd Wednesday Lunch at Kafe Ceylon Hill, KL, 12.30pm
- Jan 19, '05 Wine Tasting at The Private Gallery, PJ, 7.30-9pm.
- Feb 19, '05 3rd Wednesday Drinks & Salsa at Qba, Westin Hotel, KL, 7-10pm
- Feb 24, '05 Vice-President (Oxon) Reception, KL, 7pm
- Feb 26, '05 Invitation by ICAAM: Megasteel Plant visit, Banting, 11am-2pm
- March 20, '05 Second Boat Race Practice, Lake Gardens, KL, 9am
- March 14-16, Invitation by Sunway University College: Annual Sterling Group Lecture '05 Series 2005, Sunway University, PJ
- March 15, '05 Joint Harvard Club & Oxbridge Society Colloquium: "Charismatic Leaders and Superstar CEOs: Do we need them?" by Prof Quinn Mills Banquet Hall, KLGCC, KL, 8pm
- March 17, '05 "The Function of English Today": a talk by Professor Edwin Thumboo at Sunway University College, PJ, 3.30-5pm
- March 23, '05 OSEAN Project Benefit Dinner at the British High Commissioner's Residence, KL, 7.30pm
- March 23, '05 "Crises Management in Singapore since Independence": a talk by Professor Lim Chong at Sunway University College, PJ, 10am-12pm

- March 25-27, The Cambridge & Oxford Society of Japan Centenary Celebrations in '05 Tokyo
- March 27, '05 Third Boat Race Practice, Lake Gardens, KL, 9am
- March 30, '05 3rd Wednesday becomes Last Wednesday Drinks, Luna Bar, KL, 7.30pm
- April 3, '05 The Oxbridge M'sia Inaugural Boat Race 2005, Lake Gardens, KL, 9am
- April 15, '05 Gala Boat Race Ball, Le Meridien Hotel, KL, 8pm
- May 4, '05 "Management Map", a Talk by Dr. Daniel L. Axelrod, Sunway University College 10-11.30am
- May 5, '05 Harvard Club Invite: Dinner with PM, Sunway Lagoon Hotel, 7.30pm
- May 11, '05 3rd Wednesday Lunch, Cafe Ceylon, KL, 12.30pm
- May 18, '05 3rd Wednesday Dinner, La Risata, KL, 7.30pm
- May 27, '05 Vice-President (Cantab) Reception, KL, 7.30pm
- June 15, '05 3rd Wednesday Dinner, Cafe Cafe, KL, 7.30pm
- June 21, '05 Invitation from Harvard Club: Case discussion on Jeepers! Inc. in 2000 by Professor Nabil N. El-Hage, Sunway University College, 6.30pm
- June 22, '05 Invitation from the Harvard Club: Lecture by Professor George P. Baker III, Learning objective: To explore how to restructure the debt and equity of a small company, Sunway University College, 4.30-5.30pm
- June 24, '05 Dinner Forum with the Rt. Honourable Minister of Education, Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein Onn, Royal Lake Club, KL, 7.45pm
- June 25, '05 English Language Event, Sunway University College, 9 am-1 pm
- June 29, '05 AGM, President's Cocktails, and a talk by the British High Commissioner, H.E. Bruce Cleghorn, on "UK Government priorities as it takes over the EU Presidency" at the British High Commissioner's Residence, 7pm