

THE CISS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE CISS ALUMNI COMMITTEE



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WELCOME!



Welcome to our Spring Festival issue of the CISS Alumni newsletter! We hope you all have a wonderful time celebrating. Happy year of the tiger! 春节快乐! 虎年贺岁!

In our newsletter this month, you will find:

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UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello and happy new year from the CISS Alumni! As this is our first newsletter of 2022, I thought I would give a little a round-up of what we achieved in 2021 and give you some insight into our goals for 2022!

In August 2021 we elected a new committee and began working with a new team at CISS, Calum and Wendy. In November, we hosted our first event of the new semester which was an Introduction to LinkedIn careers event, which proved to be very popular. We spoke at the SCEN conference in November, promoting Chinese studies to young people and sharing what we do. Perhaps most excitingly, we put out our very first CISS Alumni newsletter in December: I'd like to thank everyone who contributed and, special thanks to Ailsa for driving it and putting it all together! During this time, we also had many discussions in the background about how we can carry CISS alumni sustainably into the future when we are all so busy. Ultimately, our goal is to create a network of CISS scholars who will continue to support each other and others who follow us for many years to come.

We have an ambitious year coming up, in which we hope to continue hosting events. For example, we have part two of our LinkedIn Skills webinar series coming up in the next few weeks, we are hosting a Chinese New Year event for our scholars online, and we plan to launch a series of language exchange events in the future - so keep an eye out! We also hope to host some more in-person events in Glasgow and Edinburgh this year, which will be kicked off with a bubble tea crawl in Edinburgh in March! Of course, we will continue to publish our bi-monthly newsletter, and we also hope to post some more resources and share more on our social media pages. Please continue to follow us, support us, and keep in touch - we really appreciate it.

In the meantime, 祝你们新年快乐! 恭贺发财。 - Erin Duffy

FAVOURITE CNY MEMORIES

As the year of the tiger approaches, we thought we would ask the CISS Alumni what their favourite CNY memories and traditions are. If you are a CISS alumnus and would like to take part in future activities like this, make sure you are following us on Instagram (@cissalumni)!



What is your favourite CNY memory?

When we were in the first lockdown, my mum, who has never made Chinese food before, made a massive banquet with all my favourite Chinese food because she knew I was missing China in lockdown!

During a year abroad in Spain I tried to celebrate with friends and we made Jiaozi. They turned out a mess because everyone copied me and I didn't have a clue! But it was hilarious and I brought a new cultural experience to international friends!

Being in the outer ring of Kunming City and watching our hosts set off beautiful fireworks in their yard. Their neighbours continued to set off fire-crackers and fireworks long into the night. We walked around the next day to see the remnant of fire-crackers and paper money from the night before. It was really special to be able to share in such a recognisable tradition.

Making dumplings with my Chinese teacher and her family!

Visiting Singapore and seeing some awesome dragon dances

Visiting my Chinese friend in Kunming and going to her family home in the countryside, meeting her grandparents, parents and family, eating an amazing Chinese new year dinner with Yunnan speciality, then setting off fireworks at midnight! Although it was amazing, the cases of covid in China were rising fast and the next day I would have to leave China in a rush 😞

Setting off fireworks on the streets of Kunming with the locals



FOOD

What is your favourite CNY tradition?

Making dumplings with my boyfriend!

Eating massively long noodles

Watching the CCTV New Year's Gala! I have no idea what they are saying but it is always very cool

I think putting a coin in the jiaozi for someone to find is fun (if not dangerous!)

ACADEMIC / CAREER PROFILE

Andrew Small (2015-2016), International Studies at The Open University, working in the NHS in immunisations

What stage of your education are you at? What is your subject? Where do you study? Where do you work?

Final year, International Studies, The Open University. Also working in immunisations with the NHS part-time.

What led you to working in this job?

I am interested in areas like humanitarian aid and international development, so I wanted to give a wee hand during the pandemic. I initially worked in some of the hospitals as a nursing assistant before finding my feet in immunisations in early December 2020.

What does a normal day look like?

A normal day is quite hectic, at the minute, there's been days of more than 8,000 people going through a clinic I've been working in, so we are never short of something to do.

What is the one thing you really like about your job?

One thing I enjoy about my job is getting to work with a diverse team for the common good. Everyone has their own skills and at times I've been able to use the Mandarin I learned in Tianjin, to assist Mandarin speaking patients.

What has your degree been like?

Overall, it's been challenging to do so much of the course online, but I can't fault the student services and lecturers for the support they've given us, they've been great.

What is your research focus?

My research has been in Genocide in Rwanda and Humanitarian Intervention in Kosovo, this year. I've decided on these 2 events because in terms of academics, I've found eyewitness accounts of events and actions - or non-actions - to be something I can engage with more thoroughly than other academia.

What is your favourite part about researching this area?

Personally, I've learned a lot about my own place in society and the world, more broadly. I note that I have so much more to learn on these subjects and my own place in such affairs. So, I think this research area is something that will be a continual process of learning in the years after I finish my degree.



ACADEMIC PROFILE

Leah Duncan-Karrim (2016-2017), MSc in East Asian Relations, University of Edinburgh

What are you studying now? What has your academic career been like so far?

I am currently doing an MSc in East Asian Relations at the University of Edinburgh, having graduated from an MA in Chinese in summer 2021. I am also taking an MBA module in Leadership Theory and Practice through the Edinburgh Business School. Over the past six years I have been fortunate enough to study at a number of different schools in both China and Scotland, including the University of Edinburgh, Heriot Watt University, Peking University, Tianjin Foreign Studies University, and Tianjin International Chinese College. These have provided a very varied programme of subjects, although largely focused around China, Chinese language learning, and international relations.



What is your research focus?

My current research largely focuses on the role of East Asia within international systems, particularly through exploration of regional integration initiatives and examination of security dilemmas both internally and internationally. While a lot of my subjects are based on international relations more broadly, my specific area of interest looks at how China engages with international systems of human rights. For my MSc dissertation I have begun to explore the extent to which lasting influences of colonialism in China continue to impact on Chinese policy today, in particular when it comes to engaging with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international treaties. Through this I want to find out more about attitudes towards human rights compliance in China, and find out if greater sensitivity to colonial legacies could motivate a higher level of engagement in the region. After graduation I am hoping to either pursue a PhD which looks at similar themes, focusing more on human rights directly through the study of human trafficking networks in China and Southeast Asia, or enter directly into the field of human rights professionally.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to pursue a career in academics/research?

For anyone wanting to pursue a career in academia, or who may even feel intimidated by the prospect, I would recommend allowing yourself time to adapt, learn and settle into it. Being an academic is not something we are often taught how to do well as school, and it is not something I even felt really confident with as an undergraduate. The skills required to produce high quality work take a lot of time and work to develop, so be compassionate to yourself, read around subjects that interest you, and do not be afraid to ask your peers and lecturers for advice when you get lost. Every academic started off much as you are now, and they are almost always willing to support others who wish to follow in their footsteps.

CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to **Erin Duffy** (2015-2016) for her new job! Erin will be starting as a Content Developer for Radiolingua. Radiolingua is a Scottish company headquartered in South Ayrshire that provides various language courses through podcasts and other Internet-based media. Good luck in your new job Erin!

Claire McCarthy (2017-2018)'s personal website is live! Claire is a freelance filmmaker, currently studying Film at Napier University (Edinburgh). Definitely check out her website, it is amazing!: <https://clairemccarthyfilm.squarespace.com/>

Congratulations to **Leah Duncan-Karrim** (2016-2017) for being accepted onto the Japanese Government's MIRAI programme as part of the politics and security cohort for 2022. The MIRAI Programme is a short-term youth exchange scheme set up to invite graduate and undergraduate students to Japan. Leah is also currently working for the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland (CYPCS) as part of the John Smith Minority Ethnic Emerging Leaders Programme. Congrats Leah!

Congratulations to **Ailsa Brown** (2017-2018) for receiving an offer for the Yenching Academy of Peking University! This is a scholarship to study China Studies (Law and Society) for two years in Beijing. 恭喜你!

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Lian Pu 脸谱, Nicholson Square, Edinburgh, 5/5 stars

This restaurant is both a hot pot restaurant and a Chinese restaurant and it does both amazingly! I love the hot pot if you are feeling more of an event but their normal Chinese food is equally great. I would recommend the sweet and sour chicken! Also they accept Wechat Pay if anyone has some left over Wechat money.

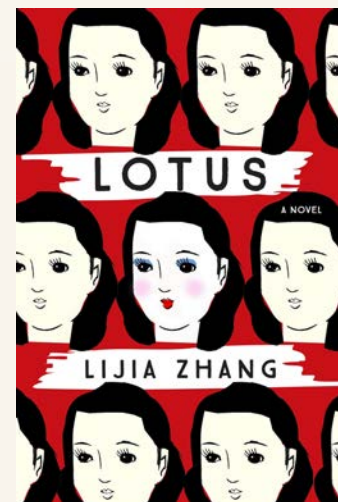
Sister Bao 包姐, Newington, Edinburgh, 5/5 Stars

For people missing the baozi in China (I know I do - best breakfast!), this place in Edinburgh does amazing baozi, with lots of different types. They are pretty big, so make sure you don't order too many!

BOOK REVIEWS

Lotus by Lijia Zhang, 5/5 stars

This is a heartbreaking story about a woman trying to make ends meet as she starts a new life in Shenzhen. It tackles issues of class, poverty and gender equality in China today and it is a beautifully written coming-of-age story of a young woman finding her strength.



TV SHOW REVIEWS

流星花园 Meteor Garden, Netflix, 2/5 stars

This is a remake of a very popular Taiwanese show. It is really a deep-dive into the way problematic relationships can be made to seem romantic and desirable. This show is about a high school romance between a guy who is 高富帅 (tall, rich, handsome) and a girl. The series is about their relationship and the main character's friendship between her love interest's friends. However, their relationship is incredibly problematic. Despite this, everyone I know, including me, who has watched it have all finished it incredibly quickly so it can't be that 难看 (hard to watch).

Watch with a critical eye and it may be enjoyable.

-Ailsa Brown (2017-2018)



PAST CISS EVENTS

LINKEDIN 101 EVENT, 25th November 2021

Our LinkedIn 101 event was a great success with a great group of attendees from the alumni and also from further afield. Our Co-hosts Claire O'toole and Alistair Paton provided a great insight into where to start on the platform as well as some do's and don'ts of the platform. Be sure to watch the event on our YouTube when it is posted if you were unable to attend!

Keep an eye out for our next LinkedIn event where we will take a deeper dive into the more advanced settings and features, there might even be a special guest!

- CISS Alumni Events Team

CHINESE LANGUAGE RESOURCES

TV SHOWS

爱很美味 Delicious Romance, YouTube - female-led drama about three woman and the troubles they face at the start of their adult life. Good reviews as the characters are a lot more nuanced than other female-led dramas which have been criticised for portraying the characters as "superheroes" who manage to deal with all pressures of society.

BOOKS

500 Common Chinese Idioms: An Annotated Frequency Dictionary, By Liwei Jiao, Cornelius C. Kubler, Weiguo Zhang - A perfect go-to dictionary for all those nasty chengyus, provides the story behind the chengyu, and lots of examples.

CHENGYU OF THE MONTH

南辕北辙 nan2yuan2bei3zhe2 - to defeat one's purpose

A literal translation is 'south shaft north rut,' which could be translated more freely as 'go south by driving north.'

Origin: "Stratagems of the Warring States"

Story: In ancient times, there was a man who wanted to travel to a country in the south, but in a rush to find a vehicle he could take, he ended up traveling to the north instead. A good-hearted person told him he had gone in the wrong direction and that he should go south, but he said it didn't matter, that he had a good horse that ran very quickly. The good-hearted person said that if the man kept going, he would be further and further from his goal, but the man again said it didn't matter, that he had brought along a lot of money. The good-hearted person then said that though the man might have a lot of money, he was wasting it. But the man again said it didn't matter, that his servant was very good at driving vehicles. In the end, the good-hearted person said: "You have a good horse, a lot of money, and a servant who is good at driving vehicles; but all this will only make you be further and further from your goal. You won't get to where you want to go at all!"

Info: "500 Common Chinese Idioms," by Liwei Jiao, Cornelius C. Kubler and Weiguo Zhang

UPCOMING EVENTS

CISS Alumni Chinese New Year Party, 3rd February 2022, 8pm, Zoom

Similar to our CNY Zoom catch-up last year, come along to meet old alumni and celebrate the year of the tiger. Open to alumni and friends. Will be lovely to catch up with everyone. Check your email for the sign up. Feel free to get in touch with us if you can't find the email.

Looking forward to seeing you there!



STUDY / WORK ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES

BACS-Taiwan Huayu Enrichment Scholarship

Taiwan Ministry of Education scholarship programme for either nine, six, three or two month language programmes at approved language centres in Taiwan.

Applications open from *29th January to 29th March 2022.*

Backroads - Job Opportunity

Backroads is an active travel company: biking, hiking and multi-adventure trips worldwide. Current positions available: Trip Leaders and Trip Prep Specialists. The job includes paid travel and accommodation. Find out more here: [https://www.backroads.com/jobs/leaders?](https://www.backroads.com/jobs/leaders?fbclid=IwAR1B8DjCse5xVMSP1ir_JIDXtSArSxkesVI5bbA_2nkiBlg-IQ0ZsvJFexM)

[fbclid=IwAR1B8DjCse5xVMSP1ir_JIDXtSArSxkesVI5bbA_2nkiBlg-IQ0ZsvJFexM](https://www.backroads.com/jobs/leaders?fbclid=IwAR1B8DjCse5xVMSP1ir_JIDXtSArSxkesVI5bbA_2nkiBlg-IQ0ZsvJFexM)

GET INVOLVED WITH CISS ALUMNI

Hey guys, we want to thank all alumni who have given time, effort and ideas to make this newsletter happen, we hope it's been an insightful read and gives a glimpse of the expertise, passion and achievement of the alumni since inception. But that's not everything, we are working harder than ever this year to create something truly professional and unique here in Scotland. And we'll need as many of us as can to get involved to see the CISS Alumni grow from strength to strength. There are multiple ways you can do this!

Subcommittees

Even if you have a spare hour a week, this can be a way to get involved without having to commit to a full committee role. This is an informal role, helping with the current work of the CISS Alumni committee. We have subcommittees in the following areas:

- Social Media
- Glasgow Events
- Edinburgh Events
- Alumni Liaison
- Newsletter

If you are interested in getting involved with a subcommittee, drop as a line at: ciss.alumni@outlook.com or message our Facebook or Instagram pages (both found at "cissalumni")

Newsletter

If you would like to contribute to the next newsletter, you can write reviews or give someone a shoutout for the celebrations page using the following Google Docs:

Celebrations:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeU8IfcftN9wzlmkyyy6TCpIPzU8ImX8qxEWTJNDjG5bMl4Gw/viewform?usp=sf_link

Book recommendations (any books!):


https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScHszIsO8rd9yFTqo4Av-5pLgNgG0vnITohLYFGrGwlbTewIQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Restaurant recommendations (any restaurant!):

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeO6NjPJs8-cl5O6cnVhcfzG7vtNE7OJQYTrNDXr-aRFbEzQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

We are really keen to make sure this alumni makes and creates things that at first instance, interest the alumni, if you want Chinese classes, say so, help us plan them! **Get in touch** via:

@ ciss.alumni@outlook.com

 <https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/confuciusinstituteforscotlandsschools/scholarship/cissalumni/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/cissalumni/>

 <https://www.facebook.com/CISSalumnischolars>

 Group (for scholars): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1931393547136913>

 LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ciss-alumni>