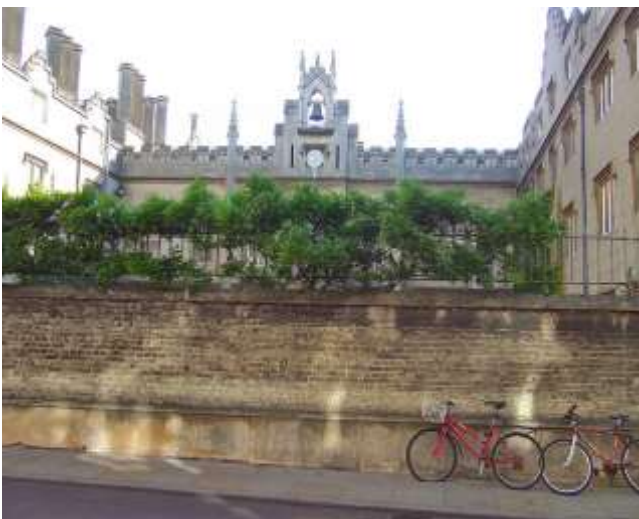




Sidney Sussex College Cambridge 2016 Visit: Karol Wijacinski



A group of 13 West Hill students visited Sidney Sussex College, one of 31 colleges (29 of which admit undergraduates) that make up the University of Cambridge) on the 17th and 18th March. We arrived at the College at around midday, which left us with some free time before we met again for other activities. We were led on a tour around the town by Mr Musiol, who explained the history of some of the other colleges, as well as regaling us with stories about certain student societies at the University, such as the infamous night climbers, who climbed buildings at night without any safety equipment. Other students who followed this tradition often indulged in nocturnal pranks without being discovered, such as hoisting a car onto the roof of the Senate House or dangling one under the Bridge of Sighs or placing Santa hats onto each of the four spires of King's College Chapel.



This was succeeded by a talk on admissions to the University and the subject options and paths available by Dr Kirsten Dickers, the Admissions Director. This gave me more insight, as I found out that rather than doing Physics or Chemistry separately, there is a course that combines the two – Natural Sciences. I am very interested in doing this and was told that my subject choices (Maths, Chemistry, Physics and Further Maths) are the best A-levels to take for entry into this course. Following this was an informal tour of Sidney Sussex by a current student. In general, I think that the College itself is beautiful, but in general the whole of the town matches this, apart from a few more modern buildings.

After this, we went on a punt (a type of flat bottomed-boat) down the River Cam (the river flowing through Cambridge). This gave us great views of some colleges as we passed down the river. The guide also told us some stories about the University. All of the stories we heard from different people gave us a great insight into the University. This was a very calm experience and it was my favourite leisure event of the two days as we were able to learn more things about Cambridge, while being in a relaxing environment.



Once we returned from punting, we had dinner in the College's Hall Court. There was a large selection of food, which tried to match everyone's dietary needs. As dinner finished, we were led into the Knox-Shaw room for a quiz that was about the University. It taught us about the history of the University and the College itself, both of which were very rich and extended long into the past. The quiz was completed by 8 o'clock and we moved into the TV room along with the other two schools to watch a film – *The Book Thief*.

In the morning, breakfast was served in the Hall Court dining hall once again. This was the start to a second day of activities, which included an introduction to Law at Cambridge with taster sessions on Law. Even though Law doesn't interest me as a subject to study, I found both of these sessions useful as they gave me insight into some parts of university life, but also the depth that people have to go to with research. One lecture was about what caused the recent global recession, starting from the very roots, which was the improving housing market in the USA and legal consequences. The second lecture focused on the Law Faculty and how it operated, as well as the Law course that followed by students.

We had lunch in the Knox-Shaw room and then we visited the Whipple Museum of the History of Science. I found this part of the trip very interesting, as it showed how developments were made in the world of science; from telescopes to surgical equipment and even things that seem as simple as calculators, clocks and globes. This showed us that things that we take for granted had a lot of engineering principles that went into them, to ensure that they worked properly. Between all of our activities, we had enough free time to explore the centre of Cambridge for ourselves. I personally visited many book shops in the area, which were full of various books of different genres, including older copies of the *Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin.



I believe that this whole trip was worthwhile because it gave me a huge insight into life at Cambridge, especially Sidney Sussex. Furthermore, I realised that Cambridge is a place where I would love to learn and that personally I prefer it to Oxford, which was my first choice of university prior to this trip. I also learned what I needed to do if I wanted to get into Cambridge, which mainly included things such as reading around subjects that I am interested in. Surprisingly, the University doesn't look at unrelated extra-curricular activities as much as I had expected. Also, after meeting an ex-West Hill student, Joe Gregory, I realised that it is possible for me to get into the University of Cambridge and it is something that I will strive for in the future.