

7AC CAMBRIDGE – Travel Log

DAY 1: Candy and Colleges

Today was our first day at language school. Unfortunately, some of us had trouble finding the way to get there. When everyone had finally arrived, we were divided into smaller study groups. We then played several games to learn more about the UK. At break most of us visited the candy shop which is next to our school. The shop looks a bit like the one in Harry Potter. There we saw many amazing sweets which you can't find in Austria.

After the break we had another hour of classes before we ate lunch together in a beautiful park. After lunch two tour guides picked us up at school and we went on an orientation tour around Cambridge. We learned many interesting facts about the history of Cambridge and got to see the world-renowned Trinity College and Pembroke College.

Once the tour was over, we had some spare time and decided to go explore the city centre on our own before returning to our homestays and spending the evening with our host families.

- Corinna Polt, 7C

DAY 2: City of Ely

We started off our second day in Cambridge with three hours of classes at language school - same as yesterday, the only difference being that today everybody was on time. We talked about the differences between the Austrian and UK education system and learned all about GCSEs and A-levels. Furthermore, we played a number of fun and challenging communication games like "Hot Seat" and "One Minute" to improve fluency as well as our overall speaking skills.

We already feel very comfortable here. Some of us have already tried traditional British foods, like fish 'n' chips, scones, porridge, Chelsea Buns and savoury sandwiches at Fitzbillies.

After classes we took a train to Ely, a picturesque city in Cambridgeshire about 25 kilometres northeast of Cambridge. Ely is a cathedral city, which means that despite its rather small size (Ely is the third smallest city in England), it was granted city status by the monarch due to its diocesan cathedral, which was built from 1083 to 1539. Because of its beauty and size Ely Cathedral is the only UK building to be listed as one of the "Seven Wonders of the Middle Ages". After Ely Cathedral we visited Oliver Cromwell's house, who lived in Ely between 1638 and 1646, and we also had time to look around the little shops and walk along the riverside, which was really beautiful. We had a lot of fun on this trip and Ely really is a beautiful city.

Unfortunately, the train back to Cambridge got delayed so we had to wait at the train station for quite some time. When we finally arrived in Cambridge, everyone went home for dinner with their host families or to eat in a restaurant in the city. All in all, it was a very nice day and we really enjoyed it.

- Corinna Polt, 7C

DAY 3: A Cup of Tea Under the Apple Tree

Our third day here in Cambridge didn't go entirely to plan, but it was great nonetheless. Classes at language school were good: First, we talked about legal differences between Austria and the UK; then, we explored different subcultures like Hippies, Punks or Hipsters. We also had to figure out which subculture we would belong to. The results differed greatly - some of us were Hipsters, some were Ravers and some of us were Fans.

In the afternoon, we had planned on going punting, but it was way too windy so our traditional Cambridge Punt on the River Cam got postponed to the next day. Instead, we decided to experience the English countryside on a 5.5 km walk from Cambridge to the nearby village of Grantchester. This popular riverside walk took us along the River Cam with lovely views of Grantchester Meadows and the surrounding countryside. After following the riverside path for approximately 50 minutes, we finally reached a gate that took us to the Orchard, an idyllic tea garden with outdoor seating among the apple trees. In the garden, we sat down in deckchairs and enjoyed a traditional English cream tea, sipping tea and munching on some scones with clotted cream and jam. Afterwards, we spent some time chatting and relaxing in the deckchairs before we headed back home.

Despite the unexpected change of plans, the walk was really beautiful and we had a lot of fun!

- Corinna Polt, Nora Machata & Tim Eysselt, 7C

DAY 4: Punting and Hunting Ghosts

School was a bit different today. In groups of two to three, we were asked to create our own surveys! After coming up with a number of questions to ask, we went to a mall to interview people. Every group interviewed up to ten people and tomorrow we will present and discuss our results.

The weather today was really grey and drab, but it was not as windy as yesterday, so we could actually go punting. Punts are flat-bottomed boats (not gondolas!!) designed for use in small rivers or shallow waters and are propelled by pushing against the riverbed with a pole. Punting, therefore, refers to boating in a punt. It was really exhausting for those who had to punt, but it was also a lot of fun and we enjoyed floating around in our little boats. Luckily, nobody fell in the water!

After punting we had some more time to go sightseeing and souvenir shopping on our own or even go home and unwind before some of us met at a restaurant where we enjoyed delicious burgers, fries, and chicken wings.

When it got dark we met with a guide who took us on a ghost tour around the city centre, showing us Cambridge's most haunted sites and telling ghostly tales and real-life stories of hauntings and scary goings-on. The tour was exciting and it was really funny to see people's different reactions to the ghost stories told by our guide.

Like the days before, we enjoyed this day very much and had a lot of fun.

- Corinna Polt, 7C

DAY 5: Graduation Time, a Treasure Hunt and The Backs

Our last day at language school started off with a presentation of the surveys we conducted the day before. After discussing some of our surveys' findings, we played some more games and tested our knowledge about all the things we've learned this week. After the games it was 'graduation time' for us: We received our certificates from our language teachers in a big ceremony room and took group photos afterwards. Next we discussed our plans for the rest of the day before we went to lunch.

We met again in the afternoon to go on an interactive treasure hunt in the Fitzwilliam Museum. The Fitzwilliam Museum is the arts and antiquities museum of the University of Cambridge and was founded in 1816. It has five departments: Antiquities, Applied Arts, Coins and Medals, Manuscripts and Printed Books, and Paintings, Drawings and Prints. In the museum, we divided ourselves into four groups. Armed with our mobile phones and a scavenger hunt app we started to treasure hunt through the museum, investigating and learning about the different exhibits.

When all the groups were finished, we went for a city walk visiting The Backs, where several colleges of the University of Cambridge back on to the River Cam. This walk led us past the backs of Peterhouse College, Queen's College, King's College, St John's College and Trinity College and also led us over the famous Mathematical Bridge, which we had already punted under on Thursday.

We ended our walk at the language school and everyone was free to do what they wanted for the evening. Even though some of us were tired and their feet hurt after the walk, it was a nice day once again.

- Corinna Polt, 7C

DAY 6: London Calling

Saturday started off with breakfast for everyone. Afterwards, we set out for the train station where we met with our classmates and teachers. When everyone had arrived we got on a train to London King's Cross, one of the busiest railway stations in the UK. From there we took the tube to Oxford Circus to finally indulge in something we had been looking forward to all week long: shopping on Oxford Street!

After 1 1/2 hours of shopping bliss, we waited in the pouring rain (that English weather finally lived up to its name!) for everyone to arrive and then we went on a sightseeing walking tour around London, visiting all the famous sights like Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, the Palace of Westminster, Big Ben and the London Eye. Sadly, we weren't able to witness a Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace and unfortunately, Elizabeth Tower (or Big Ben as it is more commonly referred to) was completely scaffolded due to renovations so we couldn't see much of it.

After a short lunch break we met in front of the London Dungeon, a tourist attraction along the south bank of the Thames, next to the London Eye. Everyone was really excited and some were even a bit frightened. The London Dungeon recreates various gory and macabre historical events in different walkthrough theatrical shows, using a mixture of live actors, music, special effects and rides. We were taken on a journey through 1000 years of London's gory history, from experiencing events like the Great Fire of London, the Black Death or the Gunpowder Plot to meeting infamous characters like Jack the Ripper, Sweeney Todd, The Torturer, The Plague Doctor or The Judge. Some of us were even encouraged to participate in the shows by the characters! At the end of the walkthrough, we went on a "drop ride to doom", a free-fall ride staged as a public hanging. Even though the tour was not really what

we had expected, we still enjoyed the experience. Some of us even bought pictures of us during the free-fall ride in which we looked really scared.

Next, we went to the City Hall on the south bank of the Thames to get a good view and the best shots of Tower Bridge, which was really huge. We had some time to take a couple of group photos before we headed back to King's Cross to catch our train back to Cambridge. When we finally arrived home, it was already dark and everyone was very hungry. It was a really nice day nonetheless, and we had lots of fun and took many great pictures.

- Corinna Polt, 7C