

The Global Leaders Program is a jam-packed, but very fun, week. The course is filled with activities, and on the first full day this included our first excursion. The group visited the extremely impressive Hampton Court Palace, once home to one of England's most famous leaders - King Henry VIII.

We were lucky enough to have a Blue Badge tour guide, 'Tricia, with us who made sure that we saw the best the Palace had to offer, and told us interesting facts along the way. She told us what England would have been like during Tudor times, from food and medicine to the makeup of society, and gave us a bit of background as to how the Tudors came to rule England. We found out how Hampton Court Palace would have been run, with a focus on the huge kitchens (Henry VIII is known for his love of food). There were many fascinating facts, for instance did you know that the pastry of a pie was only meant as a receptacle to cook meat in, and would be thrown away rather than eaten? And when dining, everyone carried their own knife on their belt - to make sure they didn't contaminate the food they shared, they would wipe their knife on a piece of bread after they had cut into and eaten anything.

Of course, we also found out a lot about Henry himself, from his early sporting years, to his later life filled with many wives. There was a chance to look around his apartments - the kitchens were only 30 seconds walk from the enormous dining room, which had a raised area for minstrels to serenade diners, a top table for the king, and massive tapestries on the wall charting the story of Abraham which King Henry particularly related to. The tapestries were made of silk, silver and gold, and were each as expensive as a war ship. They would have been rolled up and taken to whichever of the King's many palaces he was currently staying in, an amazing display of his wealth. It was pretty breathtaking to think that King Henry had seen, and very likely touched, the exact tapestries that we were now looking at, hundreds of years later.

Another highlight was the Haunted Gallery - the corridor running past the entry to the King's Chapel. Catherine Howard's ghost is said to haunt this passage at night, screaming for Henry to spare her - a young bride (and the king's fourth wife), she was sentenced to death for treason after supposedly committing adultery. Desperate for forgiveness, the story goes that she escaped the room she was being held in, and ran through this corridor trying to catch Henry as he entered his chapel, and beg him to save her life. Henry spared no mercy and she was beheaded, but fortunately none of us saw her ghost today! We did go inside the Chapel Royal though, which was beautiful -

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from the balcony where the King and his current Queen would have watched over the service, we could look down on the lovely Chapel, and up at its star-covered ceiling.

Hampton Court Palace is set in sprawling grounds - we had a picnic in a sunken garden and tried to find our way in the Maze. We also saw Henry's private garden, which was very different and far more functional than what we would consider a garden now.



After we got back to Cambridge, there was a chance for dinner before a session on Essay Writing. After that there was an opportunity to do some art and have a bit of free time before bed ahead of the first day of classes.

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