

It is always a pleasure accompanying students on excursions, but I have been looking forward to this trip more than any other. Despite living in Cambridge for four years, I never made it to Ely, a nearby city with one of the country's most beautiful cathedrals. Once we went inside for our tour, it was clear that the cathedral was everything I had hoped for - a mixture of Norman and Gothic architecture with a beautifully painted Victorian ceiling. We learnt lots of amazing facts, including that the man who began the huge task of painting the ceiling died about a third of the way through his job, of poisoning. This mysterious end is apparently because many Victorian painters licked their paintbrushes to get it to the right shape. The paint contained various chemicals, including lead and arsenic, which of course are highly dangerous.

After looking around the cathedral, there was a chance to explore Ely itself. On the green next to the cathedral was a big Alice in Wonderland-themed fair, with stalls selling everything from scones to scarves, hog roasts to paintings. There was also a small petting zoo, with a sheep, rams and baby goats, a merry-go-round, and a face-painting stall.

The centre of Ely is lovely - full of old buildings, a market, lots of teashops, an amazing antique shop which had everything you could ever want, and some brilliant independent bookshops. It was great to have some free time to wander around and relax after the busy Global Leaders week, and before the school groups join us.

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