

After an enjoyable day in Oxford, on Sunday the students tapped into their energy reserves for another great day out. This time, we were heading to Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick Castle. A small, but bustling town in the English Midlands, Stratford-upon-Avon is famed for being the birthplace of the great William Shakespeare. Some of the students had studied his plays at school, or watched one at the theatre, so it was exciting to wander around his home town. They were given free time to explore the charming sites, and many students were interested to venture inside the house in which Shakespeare was raised. Countless selfies were taken outside with the street performer dressed as Shakespeare's ghost, and many mementos bought from the Royal Shakespeare Company gift shop. Students enjoyed their packed lunch overlooking the river and spent time perusing the street market.

Our next stop was Warwick Castle, only 15 minutes away, and also situated upon the River Avon. This 12th century castle is bursting with rich history, and was a pleasure to behold in all its magnificent glory on this warm, sunny day. The students made the most of their time at the castle in a number of ways. Some climbed the dark, winding stairs to the highest battlements, to admire the view of the English countryside from the top. Others watched the old-fashioned sport jousting and the birds of prey show. Perhaps most popular, was the dungeon experience- the students emerged laughing about all the 'frights' they had encountered. All in all, there was a lovely atmosphere felt by all on the trip. At this stage of the program, the students know each other well and have formed fantastic friendships. It is a pleasure to watch them take a break from study and enjoy these new places with each other.

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