

Cambridge is a beautiful and inspiring place to live and study, but we also like to take students outside of the city and show them what else England has to offer. What better way to begin our series of excursions than with a trip to Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace. It is a particularly appropriate year to visit the famous bard's hometown, as 2016 marks 400 years since he died - in fact, some of the students even visited his grave.

Though everyone visited Stratford-upon-Avon, the students split into two groups who spent the second part of their day in very different ways. One group remained in Stratford to watch *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, performed by the brilliant RSC (Royal Shakespeare Company) that has been producing Shakespeare's plays both in Stratford-upon-Avon and across the world for 55 years.

The other group, meanwhile, visited the nearby Warwick Castle, a medieval castle with over 1000 years of history. Aside from the stunning building and grounds, there were a few notable highlights. Many of the students enjoyed a Birds of Prey show which demonstrated both the birds' magnificent skills and talents, as well as their varied personalities (Ernie, for instance, was a particularly grumpy owl). There was also a trebuchet show, using an authentic recreation of a huge weapon used to siege castles like Warwick Castle. It's basically a massive catapult, which we saw in all its glory as it hurled a flaming projectile across the skyline. Lastly, the maze proved very popular; it was no ordinary maze, but tasked each participant with going back through the ages to collect stamps from different periods.

The activities back in Cambridge in the evening were a relaxing antidote to a long day - either watching the football or playing boardgames. It's back to classes tomorrow, and then more excursions at the weekend!

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