

After a very busy week, today's excursion was a more relaxed trip that allowed the students a chance to recharge their batteries. We visited the city of Norwich, which is now a quaint British town though in the 11th Century and for hundreds of years following, it was the second largest city after London. There are historical references to Norwich dating back to the Romans and Anglo-Saxons, as well as the Normans, Vikings, Tudors, and all the way through from the Victorians to the present day. Norwich played a central role over hundreds of years as a major centre for trade, commerce and manufacturing, and there is still a vibrant market on the same site used by the Normans for their market.

This made the students' free time in the city extra-special, as they wandered the cobbled streets overshadowed by the city's castle, browsing the different market stalls and popping into famous shops in the Royal Arcade mall (Digby's chocolatiers and the Colman's Mustard Shop are lovely examples of a bygone era). We also took guided tours around Norwich Cathedral: the building begun in 1096 and therefore has a rich and interesting history. One of my favourite stories from the Cathedral is that of the Despenser's Retable, a beautiful 14th-Century painting named after the Bishop of Norwich, Henry Le Despenser. During the Civil War, a tumultuous period in English history, the painting was cleverly hidden to protect it from Oliver Cromwell's soldiers (there are still bullet marks in the walls of the Cathedral from this time). It was not until 1847, hundreds of years later, when a worker in the church dropped his pencil and, looking up as he bent down to collect it, spotted the painting on the underside of the table!

In the evening, the students enjoyed Sports and a Debating workshop, which began with light-hearted topics - "This house believes classes should start at midday" for instance - and gradually became more intense, focusing on topics such as feminism in the workplace. After experiencing a quaint English town, tomorrow we're off to a traditional British beach - Brighton!

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