

The one-week trip in Cambridge was certainly fruitful and rewarding. Not only is Cambridge a beautiful town with beautiful scenery and great stories to tell, it is also a place where intellectual minds meet and inspire the world.

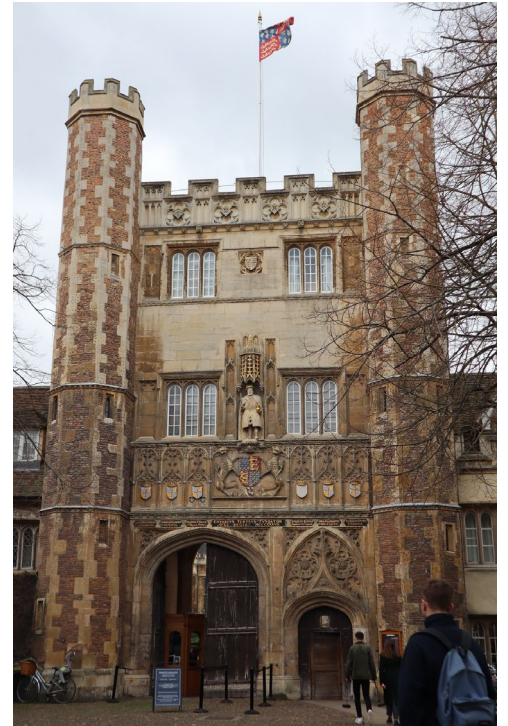
Recap of the trip:

College Tours



This is Gate of Honour at Gonville and Caius College. I like the story how students will first pass by the Gate of Humility when they enter the college, then the Gate of Virtue as they study there, and the Gate of Honour when they graduate. I think the three highlights and sums up how education is viewed and treated in Cambridge.

It might be surprising to know how 'naughty' students in Cambridge are. In Hong Kong, we are always taught to be obedient to rules and laws. Yet, rebellions can also be a form of creativity. It is important how educators strike a balance to allow students to showcase their talents while maintaining discipline. As students, it is also essential to realise that we can and are allowed to challenge the status quo.



High Table dinners

We attended formal halls in 3 different colleges, namely Pembroke, Churchill and Trinity, each with very different styles.





Churchill college is one of the modern colleges. Unlike other colleges that has ancient architecture and traditional rites, formals here are more casual.

The Environment

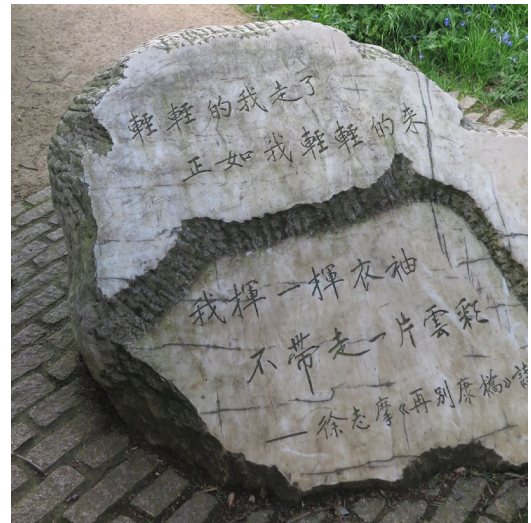
I really enjoy the tranquillity and slow pace in Cambridge. With the quietness that we could hardly find in the hectic city life, we can truly appreciate the nature with our senses and meditate on the creation of life.



The Botanic Garden is a good place to feel the spring vibes in the town.



Being the icon of Cambridge, the best way to experience River Cam might be punting along the river. It is not hard to imagine how Xu Zhimo put down those beautiful words in his poem.



Meeting Professors and Students



The visit to the Cambridge Debate Union is an astonishing experience as it is exciting to see how debaters argued in an intense and well-organised manner.

The meet up with the two prominent professors was very encouraging as they shared how Cambridge is a place for everyone. I am deeply impressed by the humility and patience they have shown. With the hard work that they have paid to achieve their current status, they are still very willing to learn, even from their students.



Thoughts:

Firstly, it inspired me a lot on what education is and my attitude towards learning.



Growing up, I found attending school is more about fulfilling society's expectation and preparing myself for work than to sharpen my mind and thinking through the acquisition of knowledge. In an education system that spoon-fed students with information and measures one's success with grades and numbers, seldom do I think about why do we have to learn that. Here in Cambridge, I observed that they educate in a way that allows and requires lots of personal thinking. For instance, tutorials are created for students to raise questions and new ideas instead of answering questions

with model answers. They also try to escalate the discussion to a more philosophical level which require interdisciplinary knowledge. I used to limit myself to subjects that I am good at or interested in, and many times I will take facts as it is. However, I now realised that one must be open enough to learn from all disciplines in order to obtain a fuller understanding of the mystery and beauty of creation in the world. It is through questioning that we discover the unknown, which is food for thought and a good reminder for me to keep in mind when pursuing my studies.

Furthermore, I really appreciate the culture and atmosphere in Cambridge that they are always open to new challenges and thoughts. Talking to professors and students there, I realised that they very much welcome comments and debates from others and embrace the discussion with joy and excitement. Never will they judge you from the background or ways of thinking. Plus, they are confident with reasoning their own ideas and will not be afraid of saying something that is wrong. I see that how the flow of ideas could widen one's perspective and I would like to cultivate that openness and humility in myself.



Another highlight was how the trip made me reflect on the community life in St. John's. Even in prestigious colleges like Oxbridge, they highly value their unique collegiate system that takes care of students' wellbeing and personal growth. Despite their academic excellence, students are also deeply involved in extra-curricular activities, like the sports team or the choir, and having relaxing and enjoyable times during formal halls and activities like May Ball and concerts, demonstrating 'work hard, play hard'. I am glad and grateful to see how similar

exposure and experience could also be found in St. John's. With residents coming from different backgrounds, majors and years, we could all unite in striving for excellence in all aspects. I found myself lucky to be part of this precious connection and am more committed to preserve and pass on this spirit as I realise how beneficial it is to one's personal growth.



To round up, I feel that the trip has marked a good start of my university life. It has granted me the opportunity to think about how I want learning in my university years to be and it has widened my horizon by introducing me to different options that I can have after my undergraduate years. I am grateful that I was given the chance to be part of the trip and experience all these wonderful encounter with great people around me.