



Corpus Christi College in Three Questions (and Five More)

You can read (and re-read) descriptions on a website and pour over Google images from here to eternity, but sometimes the only real way to find out about a study abroad program is to hear from students who have taken part in it.

With that in mind, here is a brief Q&A with three MU undergrads who headed across the Atlantic for a week in March 2018 for the inaugural “Global History at Oxford” study abroad trip.

Of the five lectures you attended, which one did you take the most away from?

Carley Johansson (Class of 2018, Interdisciplinary Studies): Steve Tuffnell gave the best lecture of the trip, because he said and did something new. While I did learn something from all of the lectures, Tuffnell’s was the one that really showed me what a paper/lecture/book/etc. was capable of. What he really gave us was a narrative. He talked about how copper bottoming on boats, quinine, ice, and bananas (and the corresponding ice trade and banana trade) were more than just inventions or innovations; they were tools of imperialism developed out of the necessity to protect the empire and its efforts to geopolitically expand.

Isaac Baker (Class of 2019, Secondary Education-Social Studies): My favorite was Professor Katherine Paugh’s lecture entitled “The Politics of Reproduction in North America and the Caribbean during the Age of Abolition.” Professor Paugh’s lesson keyed in on how reproduction impacted the ways in which slave owners managed their plantations and the effect it had on the slave trade. For example, Prof. Paugh used the high rates of reproduction amongst slave populations in the southern colonies, in comparison to low rates of reproduction in the Caribbean, to examine the methods that slave owners in the latter region used to encourage slaves to reproduce (and why). This lecture also featured discussion of the ways that venereal disease was understood, the methods taken to treat it, and the stigmas associated with the disease and how they intersected with ideas about race and promiscuity. Overall, Prof. Paugh’s talk offered a very interesting perspective and shared a history that is often neglected, which I found truly intriguing and engaging.

Sarah Jolley (Class of 2019, History, Political Science, and English): I absolutely loved Steve Tuffnell’s lecture, “The 19th Century World in Three Objects.” Dr. Tuffnell’s work focuses on technology and empire, and he discussed three small technologies that shaped the nature of 19th century imperialism. The three things he identified as globalizing technologies were quinine, copper plating, and ice. Each of these innovations contributed to the mobilization of commerce and empire. Copper plating the bottom of ships revolutionized the shipping industry by curtailing the devastating effects of ship worm, which in turn eased the transportation of goods and people. The widespread use of quinine prevented malaria outbreaks and prompted empires to increase their colonizing efforts

in Africa, South America, and Asia. The ice industry revolutionized the shipping of agricultural products, and inadvertently led to American foreign intervention on behalf of U.S. fruit companies in Central America. I enjoyed this lecture because I believe one of the most fascinating things about studying history is making connections between the micro and the macro. I love to investigate how individual people, places, and things are influenced by the larger historical context, and how they themselves influenced their eras. After listening to Dr. Tuffnell's lecture, I can't wait to read his next book!

The site/sight (natural, architectural, artistic) that you will most associate with the trip?

SJ: The site I most associate with the trip is without a doubt the hill outside of Oxford Castle. It was one of the first things we saw while wandering about Oxford, and I was struck by how incongruous this giant medieval hill looked next to its urban surroundings. We immediately became obsessed with climbing it. After joking about the hill for several days, Matt, Katie, Drew, and I were determined to attempt it during a lunch break. When we finally reached the summit, we were treated to an incredible view of Oxford Castle and the surrounding colleges. When I think back to the hill, I remember the feelings of accomplishment and comradery the experience inspired.

IB: The chapel at Corpus Christi College, where I would go in the mornings after having breakfast in the dining hall. It will stay with me because it was somewhere I could visit in silence and on my own. Due to the exhausting nature of travel and the academic rigor associated with the lectures and discussions, I found this site acted as a place for me to collect my thoughts. A place like Oxford is ripe with history, a characteristic one can feel as they move through the city, and I found myself constantly thinking about historical context while exploring. This site, much like many others, has a physical impression of the history of the college itself, and it was extremely humbling to sit in the pews for a moment and reflect on my experiences.

CJ: The view from Corpus Christi terrace. Standing on the terrace allows you to look at the college itself and its garden on one side, and a meadow with trails to the River Thames on another. If you peer over the side of the terrace furthest from Corpus Christi, you can see the bees that are kept at the college. The founder—Bishop Richard Foxe—had a vision that Corpus Christi would operate like a hive of intellectual (and religious) ideas. So, the college keeps bees and doesn't take their honey from them, letting them instead prosper of their own accord, much like a student should. The last side of the terrace looks right out onto the Christ Church cathedral and part of the college. During the first champagne reception, Professor Cowley and I were looking out over that side of the terrace, talking about how much I loved the rich literary history of Oxford. In particular, I mentioned Lewis Carroll, whose poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter" has remained one of my favorites. This was when Prof. Cowley directed my attention to a tree just over the terrace and fence that separates Christ Church and Corpus Christi. He informed me that Lewis Carroll sat underneath that very tree and wrote *Alice in Wonderland* (and therefore "The Walrus and the Carpenter").

Favorite personal moment from the trip?

IB: One of my colleagues and I went on a walk one afternoon after our lecture with Professor Darwin. We walked down a path that headed away from Corpus Christi toward the river. It was a sunny day in England, and the slowly softening light of the midafternoon and the clouds rolling by created an atmosphere that was truly relaxing. The dirt path we walked along and the grassy sides of the river lined with trees left an irreplaceable memory of the natural beauty of England and the sense of calm

it offered. We discussed the lectures, our excursions into town, our upcoming essays, and the changing nature of our academic ambitions as we walked. As I reflect on my memories and experiences, I will cherish most the times when I had a chance to get away from the tourist aspects of picture taking and social media updating. The most memorable moments came when I could immerse myself in the environment and the people. I almost forgot I was visiting, because with comradery and immersion, this place had qualities that made it feel like home and made me long to stay.

SJ: My favorite moment was climbing St. Mary's tower with Isaac, Katie, and Matt. We were the very last group allowed up that day and had to convince the staff several times that we had arrived before the cutoff. When we finally reached the top of the tower (after climbing what felt like a thousand steps), we were treated to a panoramic view of Oxford. It was a rare sunny day, and we could see from the Radcliffe Camera below, all the way to the edge of Oxford proper, where colleges, pubs, and churches gave way to rolling hills. I remember how indescribably beautiful Oxford seemed in those moments, and how lucky I felt to be experiencing it with my friends.

CJ: One night I went on a walk through Oxford and had a sort of life talk with Prof. Sexton. As we were getting close to his bus stop, our conversation trailed off and I turned to head back to Corpus Christi. Coming off the high of an excellent and encouraging conversation with one of my favorite professors, I noticed that the sun was setting, and the gothic romance of Oxford really shone. It was a moment of quiet and solitude during which I just let myself see and hear and feel the incredibly breathtaking city I was in. I soaked up the people laughing on their ways home, and the chatter coming out from the pubs and cafes on High Street. My brain had been operating at high capacity during the entirety of the trip, so it was nice to turn it off for a bit and just let myself be in Oxford.

Lightning Round

Object from the Tuffnell lecture that you most identify with?

CJ and IB: Copper bottoming on boats

SJ: Ice

Books that you now feel like you have to read (and that everyone else has to read, too)?

CJ: *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power*, by Richard Carwardine, and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, by Maya Angelou

SJ: *The Making of Politics*, by John Watts

IB: *Lincoln's Humour*, by Richard Carwardine

Sexton vs. Dyer in real tennis...who wins?

SJ: Sexton

CJ: Jay annihilates Dr. Dyer

IB: Are there draws in real tennis?

Unforgettable Oxford pub?

IB: Tie! The King's Arms or The Bear

CJ: The Eagle and Child was very cool, but the underground we went to, The Purple Turtle, will go down in history

SJ: The Eagle and Child

Most embarrassingly American thing you did abroad?

SJ: Unintentionally speaking ten decibels louder than everyone around us

CJ: I spent the first five days paying only with paper money and pound coins, because I couldn't remember which other coins were worth how many pence, and it was incredibly stressful

IB: Saying cheers with a defined American accent