

It was 10 June, on a (surprisingly) pleasant afternoon, when I arrived tired and jet lagged in the UK after a total of twenty odd hours in transit. I was soon in the hands of David and Phillipa who explained, much to my dismay, that due to heavy traffic it would likely be two hours before I would arrive at my home for the next three weeks.

Thankfully, the scenery was gorgeous – even just minutes away from the airport I was greeted with greenery and expansive fields, the likes of which could not be found in Australia. As of such, it didn't feel like long before we arrived at the Wilson household, a charming and quintessentially English house, with an expansive back garden, great view of the nearby sea, and most importantly – a piano!



There were a few days to relax and settle in before heading off to Brighton College at 8.00am on Monday morning. The school day was constructed out of half-hour periods, which was a surprising change from Christ Church's 50 minutes, but they also had many double periods for subjects such as English and the Sciences/Mathematics. One thing I found particularly interesting is that lessons off the main school campus were not uncommon – a walk in the rain from Music class back to the school made sure I wouldn't forget that!



The school had a chapel service every morning *apart* from Thursday, in a stone church having the traditional shape of a cross.

Learning 'English' was an odd process, trying to decipher the meaning of their 'lairy' teachers, the kids who 'skive' school, or what on earth this 'cilantro' they've put into my meal is.

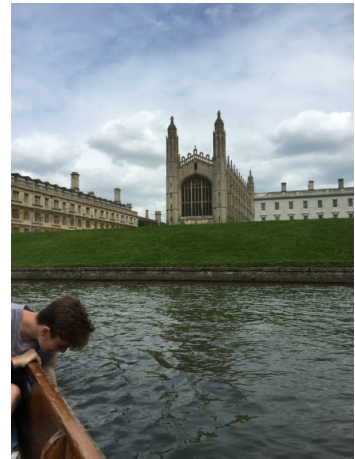
But of course, the accents and the local colloquialisms weren't the biggest shock to deal with – upon heading down to the 'beach' to play cricket, I was rather amused to find that the beach had not a

single speck of sand – but instead millions of ochre pebbles.

By far one of the most rewarding experiences in England was heading to London on a Saturday with George and Martha to tag along to the music academies they attended. George went to the Royal Music Academy in London, and being able to experience chamber and symphonic music with other people my age to a very high standard was amazing.



On one weekend we headed over to Cambridge where we had a punt down the river, displaying our skills by crashing into practically every other boat on the water. However, when we weren't on the verge of tipping ourselves over (or someone else) or threatening geese by trapping them against the side of the river, it was a beautifully serene way to see some of Cambridge's famous colleges such as King's.



The final week of school went quickly, with two days on leadership, a day of music, and a trip to Thorpe Park. Before I knew it, it was my last day at Brighton College. There was a flurry of Snapchat username exchanges and farewells before the end of the last school day at lunchtime, and it was time to pack for the journey back to Australia.

The Beyond Queenslea Drive program to Brighton College was an unforgettable experience of integration into another school, country, and society. I gained new friends, a better understanding of the world outside my own, and most of all, I had a great time doing it. I believe the exchange program is an invaluable opportunity provided by CCGS and anyone with the chance should absolutely go for it!