

Courtney Oser

Honors Enrichment Award Report

During my time participating in the Summer in Oxford study abroad program, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to visit the Cotswolds, a historic area within England. Using the money from the Honors Enrichment award, I was able to visit several of the Cotswold villages, including Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Moreton-in-Marsh, Snowhill, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Bibury. Through visiting the Cotswolds, I had the opportunity to learn more about the history of England.

I began my visit of the Cotswolds in Moreton-in-Marsh, where I learned about its connection to royalty. I learned that King Charles I stayed at the White Hart Royal Hotel, a hotel that I walked by many times. After visiting Moreton-in-Marsh, I was so enamored with the Cotswolds that I decided to use the remainder of my Honors Enrichment Award to visit more Cotswold villages, rather than visiting Stonehenge. I was able to take a guided tour of several other villages, where I learned about the history and culture of the Cotswolds. I learned how each village had a different purpose. Several of the villages were market villages, which carries on in importance to this day. Stow-on-the-Wold was a very important sheep market, which is reflected in the design of the town, as it has narrow lanes leading to the market square which made shepherding the sheep much easier.

The tour guide also informed us of various cultural aspects of the Cotswolds. He told a story of how the Cotswolds used to push all of their children to go to college or university. However, various trades of the Cotswolds, like repairing thatched roofs, began to disappear. Because of this, the residents of the Cotswolds decided to offer apprenticeships as an alternative to college so that these trades that are so important to the history of the Cotswolds do not

disappear. I also learned about the Cotswold Olympics which take place on Dover's Hill. These games were started by Robert Dover as a way to channel the more competitive traits of the local residents in a more positive manner. One of the games is shin kicking, in which two men grip each other's shoulders while kicking their shins to try to trip or throw them to the ground. Another game involves rolling a block of cheese down the hill, with people running after it, racing it to the bottom.

The Honors Enrichment Award allowed me to learn so much more about the history of England and was incredibly useful and important to my education. I thoroughly enjoyed touring and learning about all of the various Cotswold villages and am glad I got the opportunity to learn more about the country where so many of my ancestors are from.





