

Arriving in Cambridge was an experience like no other. After 36 hours of travel I step off the bus and onto Kings Parade. The bus pulls away exposing from behind it the magnificent Kings College Chapel. Suddenly I'm no longer tired. I set off, bags in tow, for my college – St Catharine's. Walking down the street I noted the dates on the buildings I passed, the newest of which was built in 1675. I stop to check the map and notice above me a modest plaque paying tribute to Alan Turing, a Cambridge Alum. A professor and a student walk by me deep in conversation, both wearing academic gowns and furrowed brows. I arrive at St Catharine's with its welcoming and uncharacteristic open court, and pause for a moment to take it all in. This historic haven of academia would be my home for the next year as I pursue an MBA at Cambridge Judge Business School.

This report updates the Trust on my experiences after my first three months of study at the University of Cambridge, an endeavour which has been supported by the Yvonne A M Smith Scholarship. I want to express again my extreme gratitude to Yvonne and the Trust for their support in what has already been a defining experience for me, both personally and professionally.

The first two weeks of the MBA were very busy! We had classes from 9am-5:30pm every day, inevitably followed by a social event as we rushed to get to know one-another. Our weekends were spent punting down the River Cam, exploring the grounds of the 31 beautiful colleges, and learning the history of the university. It was an exhausting schedule but the excitement of being here kept us all going, and each classmate I met filled me with new inspiration. Our class of 200 students has 41 different nationalities represented, and everyone has a different story to tell. The diversity of the class is not only nationality-based, but also a result of age, industry and job function. For example, my study group last term was comprised of an ophthalmologist from London, a venture capitalist from South Africa, a policy advisor from Poland and an accountant from Thailand. I quickly realised that I would learn even more from my classmates than I would from my courses, which is certainly saying something considering the calibre of the lecturers.

The first term of the MBA was comprised of core courses to give everyone a good ground grounding in critical business aspects. Classes ranged from the more qualitative subjects such as Organisational Behaviour and Management Praxis to quantitative courses such as Corporate Finance and Accounting. Each class is very discussion based, which reflects that, collectively, we have a wealth of experiences and expertise from which to draw upon. The programme is very experiential, with plenty of opportunities to put our taught theory into practice including case studies and longer-form projects. Last term I worked on a month-long consulting project for Cambridge United Football Club, helping them to transform their donation-dependent mental health awareness programme into a sustainable social enterprise.

As we settled into classes, we started to form Special Interest Groups – student run groups which aim to facilitate discussion and events related to specific focus areas. These groups allow you to tap into the knowledge of your classmates and to explore areas that you are passionate or curious about. I am a member of the Social Innovation and the Energy and Environment groups, and have enjoyed learning more about the different ways that the private sector help tackle climate change, be it sustainable finance, social entrepreneurship, impact investing, CSR programmes, strategic transformations, etc. I am currently a member of two teams competing in business school competitions related to sustainable finance and impact investing.

The beauty of Cambridge as an MBA destination is that you are integrated with the wider university and college system. I have had the privilege of attending events at the Cambridge Institute of Sustainability Leadership, the most notable of which was a lecture from Keith Tuffley, previously the CEO of the B Team – a private sector sustainability movement which is working to redefine the

accountability of businesses to include both people and planet. I also had the opportunity to attend a conference in London on the future of Impact Investing.

Everyone who studies at Cambridge is a member of a college, and it is with your college that you play sports, share accommodation, and have regular formal dinners. College life means that you are frequently mixing with people outside of your field of study, and they say that the diversity of thought and experience in such interactions is the key to the university's success. Recently I have had the most engaging conversations with people pursuing PhDs in genome therapy, ancient Nordic storytelling, the history of piracy, the B word (Brexit), the suitability of other planets for human life, and the psychological challenges associated with climate change action. These conversations can really open your mind to different approaches and remind you to be forever curious and a lifelong learner.

I'm very excited to get back to the programme after the Christmas break. This year holds a lot to look forward to, including a month-long global consulting project, internship opportunities, and the ability to choose electives based on our interests and career goals. It's also time to start thinking about my career post-MBA. For me this will involve working out how best to use my MBA and engineering background to help mobilise positive and sustainable change in the private sector.

Once again, I would like to thank Yvonne and the Trust for this life changing opportunity. I look forward to providing further updates in the future.

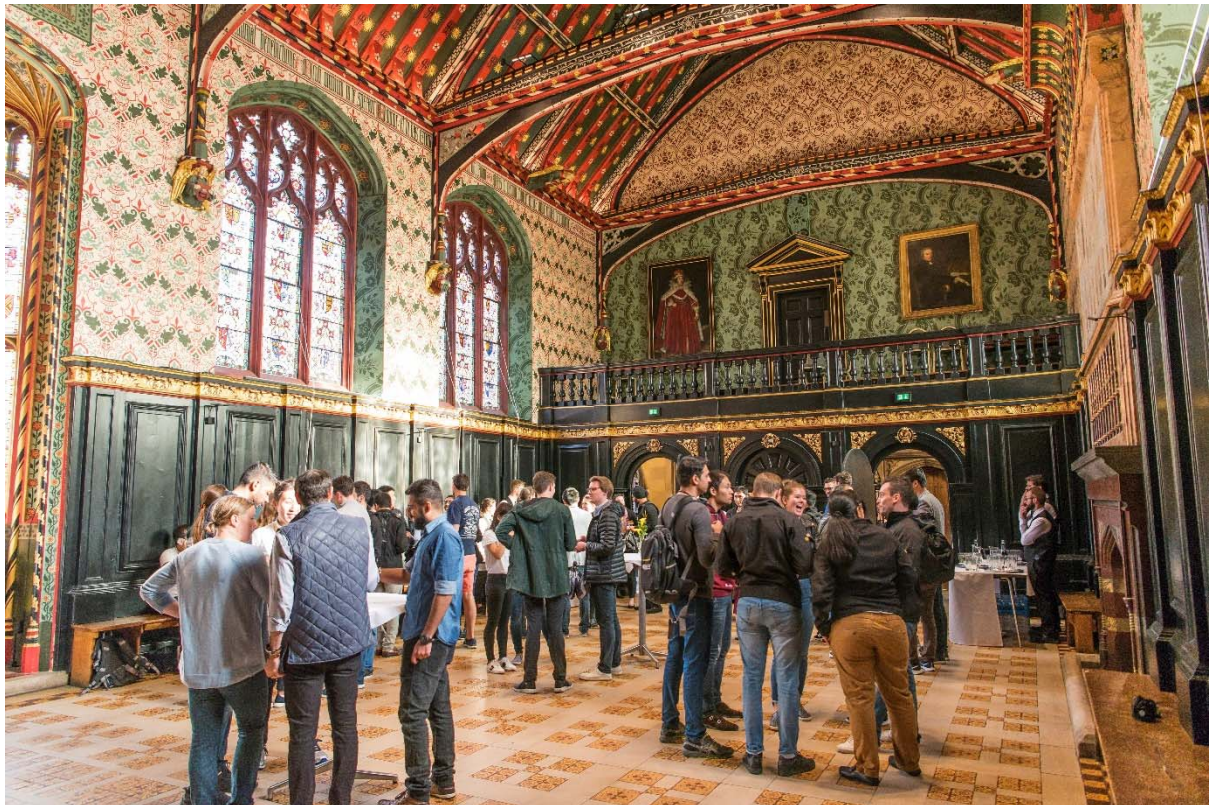


Matriculation Ceremony: St Catharine's College





The Business School



New friendships in old places: Queen's College





Exploring the old colleges: Trinity College



Exploring the old colleges: St John's





First Day of School: Cambridge Judge Business School





The sun doesn't come out that often in the UK, but it's worth the wait! Kings Parade viewed from St Mary's Church Tower



My favourite way to get around: The River Cam





Not a bad spot for some study: Sherlock Library in St Catharine's



End of term celebrations: Fitzwilliam Museum