

Houses of Parliament Trip: James Burgess

On the 19th May 2014, I visited the Houses of Parliament with a few of my school council peers and representatives from other schools in my local area.

I have to admit; I had limited knowledge of what goes on inside the Houses of Parliament, prior to my trip. I mean who and what is a Lord? What do members of Parliament do ALL day? And why does the speaker of the house sit on a wool sack?

On arrival in London, after a pleasant coach journey, we pulled up outside Portcullis House and were greeted by the guides on the doors, who directed us to seating arrangements by an attractive water feature. After a few minutes we were found by a guide who took us down an escalator and a corridor that led to one of the entry points of the main building: Parliament. First, we were taken to the Central Lobby which is the heart of the Houses of Parliament. Just 1 in 1100 rooms in the whole building! After a quick tour of Central Lobby, we were taken to the House of Commons. The House of Commons' colour is green, whereas the House of Lords' colour is red. The colours are on the seating, leather or anything else suitable for the colour to be on.

Once inside the House of Commons, we had a short tour of some rooms, and then went inside the chamber, where all the debates go on. There were long leather seats for people watching, a chair for the Prime Minister, David Cameron and a bigger seat for the speaker.

Then we came upon the House of Lords. The House of Commons is quite a modern place, whereas in the House of Lords, about 60-70% of the whole grand room was plated in 23-carat gold. The layout was nevertheless the same as the House of Commons', but the leather and carpet was red. There was a seat where the Queen sits, (which was very highly decorated in gold) and lots of interesting paintings and highly decorated walls and roofs. It turns out the Queen may only walk on blue carpet. Once we had finished the tour, we went back through Portcullis House, over the River Thames and over to McDonald's. It was delicious; I always love a McDonald's.

Once we had finished our McDonald's, we went over to queue for the London Eye. On the London Eye there are 32 pods or capsules, 31 of them are silver, but one of them is orange. I'm guessing it's orange because the London Eye is powered by EDF Energy, and as EDF Energy has orange in its logo, that's why they have an orange pod. Believe it or not, we actually got the orange pod, it came around just in time. Once we were at the top, the views were spectacular! At that height you can see up to 40 kilometres in all directions. I still couldn't believe we got the one-and-only orange pod!

Once off the London Eye, we re-grouped with the other schools and got on the coach back to Stourbridge.

I really enjoyed the trip, and would love to go again.