



# Q&A

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## **What area of research do you focus on and why?**

I work particularly on seventeenth-century British history, especially the Civil Wars on the 1640s and the career of Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell was a local figure who was born and grew up in Huntingdon, and he also lived at various times in St Ives and then Ely. He is one of the most contentious figures in British history who continues to divide opinion as deeply now as he did in his own lifetime. His admirers see him as a hero, a champion of liberty who stood up against Charles I, whereas his detractors see him as a military dictator who trampled on people's liberties not only in England but also in Scotland and especially Ireland. I find it fascinating that the same person can inspire such radically different views, and the debate over whether he was a hero or a villain shows no sign of ending!

## **Which historian has had the greatest influence on you?**

I was taught by Professor John Morrill at Selwyn College, Cambridge, and he is the historian who has had the greatest influence on me. He is the reason I came to specialise in the early modern period. It was not just what he taught me, but his passion for the subject and his infectious enthusiasm for history in general, and that period in particular, that made such an impression on me. I'm now fortunate enough to be his colleague at Selwyn College, and we are currently collaborating on an edition of Oliver Cromwell's surviving writings, letters and speeches.

## **What is your favourite museum?**

I would particularly recommend a visit to the Cromwell Museum at Huntingdon, which is very easy to get to from Cambourne Village College. It is housed in the building in which Cromwell himself went to school, and it contains a wealth of pictures, documents, weapons and other items related to his life and his career, both as a soldier and as a politician. The museum has recently had a major refurbishment and the exhibits are very attractively presented. It is well worth a visit, and they warmly welcome school groups!

**We hope to welcome you to CamVC soon!**



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