I arrived at the college about mid-afternoon, and the porters/staff were very friendly, as were the student helpers. That night there was a subject tea, Q and A session. There was already a notice on the board in the common room about when everyone’s interviews were. Mine were both on the next day, but some people had theirs over two days, or both on the next day.

The first interview was with two women, and it was an extract from Richard II (or III… I cant remember!) They asked quite a few questions, which were roughly:

* What was the text about/ what was happening?
* What I thought of specific lines/phrases/words.
* When I made a particular comment at one point, they gave me more information which showed I was wrong. They then asked me whether this changed my perception.
* How I go about reading/ understanding unfamiliar Shakespearean texts.
* They asked what my guilty reading pleasure was, and then why I thought it was successful.
* What pre-Shakespeare texts I had read.

Both were extremely welcoming and friendly. They prompted most of the conversation.

The second interview was with two men and divided into half on a poem and half on my personal statement.

* The poem part was similar to the one above with the certain lines, and techniques.
* For my personal statement, they read out a small section and asked me to elaborate. For example I had written about Virginia Woolf’s stream of consciousness in The Waves, and they asked me how ‘believable’ it was. We also discussed my EPQ, but that was all about the contents of it and not the process of completing it. One of the men was marginally more scary, but both were pleasant and polite.

The next morning some people were pooled (I think about half?) and mostly they were those who had already done their interviews. At St John’s there were 3 interviewers and each talked for just over 10 mins each.

* The first was from my personal statement and was about my EPQ (again just its content).
* The second asked what Shakespeare I wanted to talk about, and then moved on to the one that I had mentioned in my personal statement. I had called the production of Macbeth I saw ‘dystopian’ and he was interested in this, and expanded on this.
* The final part was a poem, much like the ones before, except the woman expected much more precise answers - at one point asking about the noun form of a verb and its root. However at this college the interviewers seemed much more persistent and during the interview weren’t as warm as the Christ Church ones. (Although they were pleasant before and after the interview.)

None of the questions were abstract, all were text based. The day after a couple of people were pooled again, and we were sent home the day after that. (The food and accommodation were lovely! Staying there was worth it in itself.)