History and politics have had a profound impact on my outlook. From childhood, the tangible history I found in castles, museums and family photographs appealed uniquely to my imagination.

As I grew up my interest in the past introduced me to the political traditions and ideas of my community, and the study of politics became equally absorbing. Both subjects retain their fascination for me, the extent of their interrelation making them a perfect platform for a more complete understanding of our world and its future.

My A level studies have confirmed my commitment to history and politics, and encouraged me to challenge and expand upon my perceptions of the subjects.

The diversity of historical opinion I have discovered, in Kershaw’s historiographical surveys for instance, has particularly interested me, and led me to explore texts on historical theory including Carr’s ‘What is History?’ Peter Clarke’s ‘Hope and Glory’ drew my attention to the historical roots of contemporary political problems, as well as the timeless themes of politics.

The more explicitly human aspect of the disciplines similarly enthuses me, and I have enjoyed reading biographies such as Strachey’s ‘Queen Victoria’ and Paul Routledge’s ‘Mandy’, finding them insightful, as well as enjoyable.

University lecture days, talks from local politicians, and visits to Westminster and the Welsh Assembly have all been valuable and stimulating experiences, allowing me to engage in my proposed area of study guided by my growing curiosity.

My greater involvement in the school community has been a rewarding aspect of sixth form life. As well as being a prefect, I have been active in the year 12 charity committee and have participated in the ‘Toe-by-Toe’ reading scheme.

For the past year I have been editor of the school newspaper, requiring of me the ability to work in a team and to deal with pressures of time. This role, along with my position as secretary of the school council, has seen me develop greater flexibility in my written style. I have particularly enjoyed competing for my school’s debating team at local and regional levels, which has taught me to research, structure and maintain a line of argument.

A highlight of the past year has been participating in a French exchange programme, developing my linguistic and communicative skills.

I find experiencing different ways of life through travel fascinating, and hope to organise an independent trip to Paris with my French class later in the year. Outside school, my interests in art and literature are a helpful balance to my academic work. I have also been a member of Circus Eruption, a group working with able-bodied and disabled young people through the medium of circus skills, for six years.

I have a real passion for current affairs and it is my long term ambition to go into journalism; a career in which the unique insight into society provided by the combination of history and politics would be invaluable. I have already completed a week of work experience at a local newspaper, during which I had two independently researched articles published, and which I hope to follow-up with further placements during a gap year.

This break would allow me to travel more widely, consolidate my skills in French, learn a further European language or work abroad, and would equip me with skills and experiences that could only enrich my time at