

## **Amelia Quince – 2020 Alumni**

### **A Level Choices**

There was no doubt in my mind over the subjects I was to take at A Level. English Literature, History and Latin were the subjects I chose; motivated by an absolute passion in each one. Having finished my first year of university, I can look back and say, confidently, that all of my A Level choices absolutely helped me in my university studies with independent learning. I also directly applied Latin in my Roman law studies.

### **Reflections on the Past Year**

I was concerned at first when I found out I had been pooled from Downing to Churchill. The Roman-esque buildings of Downing that I had envisioned myself in, replaced with the concrete 60s architecture of Churchill. My concerns were completely misplaced. The community and the people at Churchill are absolutely what make it. I have met the most incredible friends, absolutely passionate about what they do and always willing to have a good time. I am college married (I have a husband and wife) – which is difficult to explain to anyone outside of Cambridge, but our college children shall arrive in September and we will give them advice and hopefully a good time as they come in as wide-eyed freshers, much as we did the year before. My college parents will become their grandparents and there will be a whole family meet-up. You simply accept when you arrive at Cambridge that you just have to embrace the traditions, however strange they are.

In terms of the work itself, I have learnt so much from Michaelmas (first term) to now. I started off overwhelmed by the hundreds of pages of reading and I had no idea how to approach it all. As time went on, I developed new methods of working and although no term at Cambridge is easy, with an adapted way of working, much inspired by some of what I did at A Level, I scanned cases, tackled pages of articles and textbooks, with the confidence that I knew what I was doing. Something that always assisted me in this was an absolute love for my subject. Law has taught me so much about myself and the world around me. I have learnt to challenge every perception on society and the world I had. I started my degree with a victim-centric approach, dismissing any leniency for defendants in the court process or sentencing. The media censors us to hold this 'guilty until proven innocent approach' and it is not right. I have learnt the importance of the defendant's voice. I have learnt that if they are guilty of a crime, however awful, they are entitled to present defences to their actions to a court; 'my actions can be justified' or 'my actions can be excused'. The court process, upheld by fairness, will decide their fate. Most of all, I have learnt to have pride in the law. I see its faults, its drawbacks, but ultimately, I have absolute faith in it. I know it is a place I need, and want, to be.

One of my absolute highlights has been my involvement in the Cambridge University Law Society. The society is well-known for the most incredible events and although mostly online this year, we have had events such as the 'casino royale' evening with cocktails sent in the post to us and casino games online. This year I have worked in the Pro Bono department as a Freshers' Representative. The project I was assigned was the International Law Book Facility, which is a not-for-profit organisation which acquires old editions of law books and ships them internationally to organisations that need it most. We collected books from 12

college libraries, enabling us to send 50 boxes of books to a university in Ethiopia, 10 boxes of books to Justice Defenders in Uganda and 65 boxes of law reports to storage to be shipped at a later date. Next year, as Head of Pro Bono, I will be organising projects with Amicus, which reviews homicide cases where the death sentence has been applied, Citizens Advice, International Law Book Facility and the Pro Bono Awards, which celebrates students that contribute so many hours of work to volunteering in law-related organisations (I won the platinum award this year). I really hope that, Covid permitting, I can get more involved in Cambridge theatre next year, as it is a huge passion of mine which I haven't been involved in for a long time. It is a complete misconception that Cambridge is just about work – the societies are amazing and you can meet so many new people and have new experiences.

### Hopes for the Future

I hope that, upon finishing university, I will start my training to become a barrister. I hope to work in criminal and human rights law, advocating for those that need it most. The next few years will be full of hard work to arrive at where I need to be, but I have learnt so much this year that will prepare me for the future.

### Advice

I have realms of advice for anyone willing to listen, but I will try and highlight my key points based on what I have learnt the past few years. My absolute best advice that I think applies to everyone is to remember that there will always be people around you that will make you believe you can't do it or put doubts in your mind. Use this as the fire that burns inside you to want to prove them, and yourself, wrong.

For those that apply to Cambridge and don't get an offer, do not be disheartened. I recall someone saying that Cambridge gave 'anyone' an interview and that was the only reason I got one. This is not true and if you reach the interview stage you should be proud of yourself because Cambridge saw your potential and even if it doesn't result in an offer, it is an achievement to get to that stage. Even just applying to Cambridge is an achievement – do not let others tell you it isn't. I never believed I had the ability to go to Cambridge and probably wouldn't have applied had it not been for my teachers, family and friends holding that belief in me – despite not holding that belief in myself. Some of that was motivated by a perception that I was not good enough for Cambridge because I didn't have the 'traditional' Cambridge background. This is a huge misconception – I have met people from completely different backgrounds at Cambridge and there is no such thing as the 'traditional' background anymore. Do not let that myth discourage you.

Finally, my greatest advice for those deciding on which subject to study at university is to do something you love and show that love when you apply. Go with how you feel, not what you think they want to hear. My statement was quite political and opinionated, but I took the view that if they didn't like it, they probably wouldn't like me- luckily it worked out!