

Holly Hetherington – 2016 Alumni



Graduation Day COVID Style: We took graduation pictures in my back garden hanging a phone from our washing line!



2nd Year in St Andrews

Hi, I'm Holly and I attended Spalding High School from 2009-2016. I took A Levels in History (B), English (A*) and Physical Education (A).

Develop Diverse Interests



With Raghavi Babu (Head Girl 2015-16) and Hannah Darley (Deputy Head Girl 2015-16)



With the Prefect Team and Sixth Form Staff 2015-16

I have such fond memories of attending SHS, but particularly from Sixth Form. I feel like I really came into my own and had such a diverse group of friends. Sixth Form is, of course, incredibly stressful at times, but I loved studying three subjects which I was passionate about and being Deputy Head Girl allowed me to be involved with a broad range of activities in the day-to-day running of Sixth Form and the wider school. I was, and still am, actively involved in lots of sports including playing Netball and Rounders for the school teams and dabbling in High Jump once a year for Sports Day. I also played Hockey for Spalding Hockey Club and was captain of the school's Equestrian Team which placed in the top 10 at the National Championships every year I attended SHS. I did all of these things because I enjoyed them, but these diverse interests set me up really well for writing a

personal statement which felt individual and showed I wanted to contribute to university life beyond just attending lectures.

Think Beyond Your A Levels

When thinking about going to university, I didn't feel like I wanted to study any of the three A Levels I had chosen at degree level. Although I loved them, I knew I was interested in potentially entering the business world, so I was eager to get some level of business knowledge before graduating. I, therefore, started to look into Business Management degrees and found that I didn't need to have studied Business at GCSE or A Level in order to study it at university. I'd really encourage students to think beyond what they are studying at A Level if they don't feel they want to study their current choices at university. When people say you 'read' for your degree, they really mean it! You spend so much time studying the subject that it has to be something you enjoy. Obviously, there are some degrees which have prerequisites so you need to keep that in mind, but for most non-vocational degrees they are open to broader A Level subjects.

Applying to University

I made a shortlist by looking online at the different universities and ordered prospectuses from the ones I was interested in. From there, I made a list of around 5-6 universities which I wanted to go and look at, all with different grade boundaries. I was fortunate that my parents were incredibly supportive and travelled with me to visit the universities. If you're in a position to be able to, I would strongly recommend seeing universities in person because choosing a university is almost like buying a house – you never know until you've been there and have assessed the vibe for yourself.

I went to see York, Kings College London, St Andrews, Leeds and Edinburgh. They were all very different propositions! I wasn't as keen on the campus feel of York and I didn't like being in the middle of the city for Leeds. Kings College London was a great university and the highest grade requirements (A* A A) but I wasn't 100% convinced on city life. I really liked Edinburgh because it was a historical smaller city which had more of a large town feel and when I went to St Andrews I was immediately sold on going there. I was drawn to its beauty and the small town feel of it, where you couldn't walk anywhere without seeing someone you knew. As it is one of the oldest universities in the country, it has so many traditions associated with it and I knew that I would have a really unique university experience there. For me, I knew that I would probably move down to a city for a graduate job, and so I wanted my university years and my first time away from home, to be spent somewhere where I felt a real sense of community, and St Andrews was that for me. In Scotland you also do a four-year degree, with the first two years giving you the opportunity to study 3 different subjects and you can switch your degree at any point during those first two years before you specialise in your final 2 years. As I had never done Business before this was a great option for me and I was able to carry on History and take up a new subject in Social Anthropology while I assessed if Management was right for me.

For my 5 choices I put down:

- Kings College London (A*, A, A)
- University of St Andrews (A, A, A)
- University of Edinburgh (A, A, B)
- University of York (A, A, B)

- University of Nottingham (A, B, B)

My predicted grades were A*, A, A and I wanted to make sure I had a wide variety of options. I got offers from all 5 and Nottingham gave me an unconditional offer. It was tempting but I knew I wanted to go to St Andrews.

I was so relieved when I opened UCAS on results day and I got into St Andrews. I ended up getting the equivalent of the 3 As I needed (my A* and B balanced each other out), and I only had 1 week before I started due to Scottish terms starting on 1st September!

Get Part Time or Volunteer Experience



One of the unique St Andrews traditions: A Foam Fight during 'Raisin Weekend' where first years are dressed in costumes by their Academic Families (third year students) and go into the historic quad for a foam fight.



Coaching the 4th Team for Hockey



University of St Andrews Hockey 1st Team 2018-19.

I graduated this year with a 1st Class Honours Degree in MA Management from St Andrews, after four, quite honestly, dreamy years in Scotland. I joined the Hockey 1st Team for 2 ½ years which took me all over Scotland, to Barcelona and to Rotterdam! I became a qualified Level 1 Coach which allowed me to have a part time job working for Saints Sport (the university's athletic department) coaching lower hockey teams and I volunteered to teach the local children how to play hockey at the weekends. I went into local primary schools and volunteered to teach PE to those schools which lacked PE provision and I also worked for the Athletic Union from 2nd – 4th

year in their Marketing and Events Departments where I was able to sit on the Athletic Union Board and speak with the Proctor about how to shape positive sporting experiences for future student athletes. This gave me such a wide breadth of experiences to draw upon when I began looking for graduate jobs and internships.

In my first year summer I worked for a summer camp in York where I lived on site for four weeks and looked after campers. This was a lot of fun, meant I earned some money during the summer, and also proved I did something with the 3 month long summers you get at University.



With Rachel Riley (right) and the Managing Director & Senior Vice President of Enterprise Rent-a-Car UK&I, Khaled Shabo (left) winning the UK Management Undergraduate of the Year Award 2018.

In second year, I entered the TARGET Jobs Undergraduate of the Year Awards simply as a way to gain exposure to the graduate recruitment process while it didn't matter if I did well or not. These awards are open to any university student in the UK and each award is sponsored by a major graduate recruiter like Rolls Royce, L'Oreal, P&G etc. These companies utilise the usual assessment methods you go through for graduate jobs (applications, psychometric testing, video/telephone interview, assessment centre), looking for future talent and choose one winner for each award who receives an internship with the sponsor company. I was fortunate enough to win the UK Management Undergraduate of the Year and as such won a 12-week internship at the

European Headquarters of Enterprise Rent-a-Car working in their Government and Public Affairs department in Surrey. I got to go in and out of the Houses of Parliament on an almost weekly basis and was exposed to the senior leaders of the business. To finish the internship, I was flown to the World Headquarters in St Louis, Missouri where I got to spend a week with the Global team, meeting with State Treasurers and Congresswomen to discuss the future of travel. Oh, and I got to see my first live home run in Baseball! It was a whirlwind summer which left me with unforgettable experiences and transferable skills to be able to apply for further internships in my third year.



In Unilever's Reception during my Summer Placement in 3rd year

In my third year summer I went through the rigorous application process of applying to lots of top businesses' internships as I was aware that in your penultimate year the aim should be to get a good internship which could then have the potential to earn you a graduate job offer starting the following year. I got onto Unilever's Summer Placement Programme and had an amazing 11 weeks working in their Marketing division, which solidified my desire to work in Marketing upon graduating. I was lucky enough to be fast-tracked to the final stage of the recruitment process for the graduate scheme following my performance in the summer placement and in November of my fourth year was successful at the Graduate Assessment Day, securing a place on Unilever's Future Leaders Programme for Marketing. 15,000+ people applied my year and only 30 people gain places on the scheme, so I feel very lucky!

Life as a Graduate

I'm coming up to 6 months on Unilever's graduate scheme now and it has been a whirlwind year graduating during a pandemic, moving from Scotland to Surrey and starting a graduate job. It has surprised me how close I have been able to get to each of my team members and how quickly I have been able to settle into full-time work life whilst working from my living room. I think my experiences in sports teams and attending a multi-national university like St Andrews has served me so well in working with people all over the world (albeit virtually). Gaining work experience throughout university has also helped me exponentially in understanding how the business operates

and how best to navigate corporate working environments. Unilever's graduate scheme is a 3 year programme and so I am looking forward to learning and developing more as my role progresses so that I can hopefully be a leader within the business in the future.

My Biggest Takeaways

My biggest top tips for people currently at SHS and looking to the future would be:

- Find a range of hobbies or interests which you are passionate about and get as involved as possible – it will open up so many opportunities for you and you will acquire so many transferable skills while you're doing something you enjoy
- Learn how to talk about your hobbies and interests in terms of the transferable skills they give you. This really is a skill and gets easier with practice but if you can clearly demonstrate the teamworking, performance under pressure, determination, perseverance, leadership (etc.) skills which you have gained from your experiences, you will stand out at a job interview
- Really research the university or company you are looking to apply for and make sure that the culture is right for you. Do some self-reflection of the sort of person you are and the environments where you thrive – take these into consideration when making your choice
- Be brave and open to new experiences – Embrace not knowing things and join new societies, clubs, jobs which will push you out of your comfort zone and teach you new skills
- Get work experience or volunteer experience – I promise you won't regret it.
- Enjoy it. I hope all of you can look back at your Sixth Form and University years with as much fondness as I can. Work hard but also enjoy it – there has to be a balance!