

I quit school with only five O-levels to my name and a year later joined the Navy for National Service. Naval duties and tasks took me to distant parts of the world and I saw a side of life I had never known before. The experience changed my perspectives and I left the Navy determined to get a university education.

I wrote to several Oxford colleges but only the Senior Tutor of University College wrote back and arranged to see me. At our meeting David Cox wanted to know why I had chosen Univ. There were two reasons – first, the College had a good reputation for Law which was the subject I was hoping to read; and second, I had had an uncle at Univ who had been killed in the war. His name was on the memorial in the College Chapel (1).

David Cox explained that Law Finals at Oxford included two papers on Roman Law and that A-level Latin was obligatory for those wishing to read for a degree in Jurisprudence. I told him I had but five O-levels and Latin was not one of them. Nor did I have maths or a modern language, both of which were needed to get into Oxford.

After further consideration he agreed I could sit the College Entrance Examination provided I got the necessary qualifications within the next twelve months. He emphasised that the Entrance Exam was competitive and I would be vying for a place with some very bright people. He concluded by saying it might be an advantage to a candidate if he had interests outside the syllabus, such as the arts, politics or sport.

I got the necessary Os & As and sat the Entrance Exam. There were some Latin texts to be translated and an essay to write on 'Talent and Genius'. This was followed by an interview with a group of Fellows chaired by Arthur Goodhart, the American born, Cambridge educated lawyer who was both Master of the College and Editor of the *Law Quarterly Review*.

All went well and in Michaelmas term 1960 I was admitted to Univ as a commoner to read Law. My rooms were in the Almshouses, now Helen's Court. Three other people shared the staircase – Ed Scott, an American from Michigan who arrived with his pregnant wife; Ed Retief, a South African geologist who hated Dr Verwoerd; and Gilles Duguay, a French Canadian who wanted independence for Quebec. Our mutual scout was Arch Beesley who had been with the College since 1919 and who had known six Masters.

In our year there were twelve freshmen at Univ reading Law (2). Our principal tutor was Tony Guest, Praelector in Jurisprudence, Editor of Anson's *Principles of the Law of Contract* and a member of the Lord Chancellor's Law Reform Committee. Five years later he became Professor of English Law at King's College, University of London.