

GRADUATE PROFILE:



NICK

HISTORY

WHAT SUBJECTS DID YOU STUDY PRIOR TO ARRIVING IN DURHAM?

Modern History, Economics and Geography.

WHAT WERE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF STUDYING AT DURHAM?

It was a very sociable time. I very much enjoyed college life and the company of a much wider group of highly talented people than I had known at school and all the events and sport in and out of college, from college balls to capsizing on the river, and drama in the assembly rooms. Small group tutorials on subjects we had to get to grips with virtually from scratch in little more than a week... living and studying on the Bailey and Palace Green and walking everywhere. It is such a beautiful city.

Last, but not least, falling in love with a lady from my college to whom I have been happily married for close to 40 years and with whom I have four children. My wife and I return to Durham when we can and we are shortly returning for a college all years' reunion the weekend before we drop our youngest at our old college to start his undergraduate studies.

WHAT WAS THE TOPIC OF YOUR DISSERTATION?

German expansion in 1937- 1940 under the supervision of Dr Orde. This was the academic highlight for me and of course the end of year tea party at Dr Orde's house.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW AND HOW DID YOUR DEGREE HELP PREPARE YOU?

I qualified as a solicitor in 1984 and worked at a couple of City law firms before moving to a tax consultancy in the mid 1990s. I later became a partner of BDO (as a result of it acquiring the tax consultancy) and I am now a partner in a niche tax consultancy practice.

I think my degree taught me (i) how to think things through for myself and to have the confidence which comes from that; and (ii) resilience. I would not be where I am today without both those qualities.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS TO HISTORY AT DURHAM?

Work comes first. I found some assignments quite tough and getting behind to be uncomfortable! It is a rigorous and first rate academic training. I found that I needed to be disciplined and that some essay assignments were very much tougher than others. Be discerning - some of my reading lists included works which I subsequently discovered at the tutorial had dubious merit.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR ADVICE ON THE TRANSITION FROM HISTORY TO LAW?

I think a History degree is a great starting point for a career in the law. You learn how to cope with a mass of information, extract what is relevant, and then to set out your argument clearly and cogently. Anyone who is contemplating a career in law who wishes to read History should read History and enjoy it. It will mean completing a Law conversion course but some law firms are sponsoring their recruits through this year and the subsequent Finals' exams.