



Samuel Ritchie

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“I attended a comprehensive school and then read law at Keble College, Oxford. I would not have considered a career at the Bar had it not been for a tutor at university repeatedly suggesting that I take a closer look. Having been won over by the graduate recruitment “machine”, I had accepted a training contract offer at a magic circle firm. The Bar seemed like a risky step; my family did not have the financial resource to assist, I did not know anyone in the profession personally and the stereotype of life at the Bar is one that can appear both lonely and a bit out of touch.

However, not taking up the training contract and trying for the Bar was one of the best decisions that I have made. The job itself is intellectually stimulating and provides responsibility from a very early stage. Although there are the hard deadlines that come with any professional career, one of the most striking features is the level of control which you have over your own practice and, as a result, your own approach to working. This is invaluable and allows you the potential to take control over your work-life balance to an extent that I would not have expected as a junior lawyer.

My concerns about loneliness and being out of touch were also misplaced – chambers is collegiate and friendly, and I have found it to have a refreshingly modern outlook. My view is that pupillage is as much for the pupil as for the chambers; moving chambers is still very rare and there would be no point in trying to forge a career somewhere where you cannot see yourself being content as a member. When I was offered tenancy I was thrilled not just because the risk my tutor convinced me to take had paid off, but because Fountain Court was somewhere which I could imagine being a both a successful and a happy practitioner.”