



Reflections on my first year

I have spent a wonderful first year at Somerville, as have our freshers. I was delighted to note that many of the finalists have secured trainee positions in legal practice and are now going on to do the professional qualification (BPTC or LPC) relevant to their chosen career. The second years are well on their way to this; many will do vacation schemes, internships and interviews over the summer. I have been reminded this year of the rewards of legal practice too because, in between teaching, I have appeared in the Supreme Court in *X v Kuoni* [\[AB1\]](#) UKSC 2018/0102. This matter has now been referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg for a preliminary reference.

Legal practice aside, the contribution that academia can make to public debate is also important. I am pleased that an article of mine has been accepted by the journal *Legal Studies*. The article responds to some criticisms made by Lord Sumption in his BBC Reith Lecture of 2019. Lord Sumption criticised the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg for “mission creep” and my article responds to this kind of challenge. Lord McNair, for whom my post is named, was a pioneer of the European Court. The Court serves a valuable function to this day. It is evident that now, more than ever, we need Somervillians to use their acquired knowledge, innate talents and basic decency to counteract misunderstandings about law in the public sphere. I have no doubt that our present and previous students are doing so. I hope you have all enjoyed a wonderful 2018-19 and wish you all the best for the year to come.

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