

# 10 QUESTIONS WITH EMILY HARMAN: ALUMNI MATTERS 2019

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**In our most recent *Alumni Matters* we caught up with alumna Emily Harman, currently Legal Counsel at BP, with 10 quickfire questions.**

## **What or who inspired you to become a lawyer?**

I very much enjoyed reading Rumpole of the Bailey in my teens which may have subliminally influenced me. On a more conscious level, I was attracted by the problem-solving element to being a lawyer and by the notion of achieving order and clarity – an accessible, albeit limited way, of putting the world to rights.

## **Your new role with the Commercial Development and Transformation team is particularly future focussed. With this experience and insight how do you see the future of work evolving in your sector?**

There is a heavy technology focus for my clients and embracing this as lawyers is going to be key. I am doing more and more projects with radically condensed time frames and which rely on scrum masters and online project management. This means that multiple people work in real time on the same documents. As a lawyer this is faintly terrifying as it challenges our natural instincts for control and perfection. Adapting to this new way of working requires pragmatism and flexibility, and of course a good IT system. How we do this will be critical to ensure that lawyers can keep pace with the fast-moving world start-ups operate in and specifically for me, in relation to the changing world of mobility.

## **What career path would you have taken had you not become a lawyer?**

I still don't know! Age 7 I would have said a ballet dancer, age 14 I took a fancy to advertising, and have always been drawn to teaching.

## **What's the most unusual request you've ever had from a client?**

Not so much an unusual request, but an unusual thank you – having done some work helping the British Gas Energy Academy when I was on secondment to Centrica, I got sent a British Gas branded lip gloss. Apparently produced as part of their drive to recruit more female

engineers...

**What's the best career advice you've been given?**

If you have principles that are important to you, make sure your job aligns with them – don't allow the prospect of a "better" job to lure you away from them.

**Tell us about one of your proudest achievements?**

I am pretty proud that (so far) I have managed to keep my career going whilst doing enough good-enough parenting to have relatively sane children.

**What's something funny or interesting people don't know about you?**

I can't wink!

**What can't you live without?**

A superficial answer would be mascara, but on a slightly deeper level, my husband and two daughters.

**If you could invite any 4 people to a special dinner party, who would it be and why?**

Leonardo da Vinci to see the workings of such a brilliant and varied mind at first hand.  
Phoebe Waller-Bridge because she is amazing, would make us laugh and would take the conversation in "interesting" directions...

The Queen so that I might get glimpse beyond the Crown.

My mum to bring the whole evening together and keep the conversation flowing.

**If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?**

In my late teens and early twenties I specialised in gap years so have been lucky enough to do a lot of exploring of far flung places. I would love to do a balloon safari over the Masai Mara – something about the combination of the majesty of the landscape, the thrill and excitement of spotting game and the romance of floating through the air appeals to me.