

'IT'S THE BEST OPPORTUNITY I'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN'

AMBER SCONCE

2018

Amber Sconce was awarded a fully funded boarding bursary to study A levels in the Sixth Form at Headington. Amber left Headington in 2018 and is now studying Physiotherapy at Manchester Metropolitan University. Amber talks with Helen Batchelor (1978) about how being given this opportunity changed her life.

Tell us a bit about your background

I'm from Cheshire, and attended High School in Chester from the age of 11 to 16. When I was in Year 9, the School began running a Bursary programme scheme with the Hope Opportunity Trust to give hardworking students the opportunity to study A levels in private boarding schools. I remember hearing about Year 11's who had been granted bursaries; I thought it was so cool and I wanted that to be me! I worked towards that right up until Year 11, then I went through some testing and interviews, which flagged that I was a student looking for an opportunity, and that's when Headington came forward and offered to give me an interview. I remember getting the phone call to say I'd been accepted at Headington and I was beyond happy... I had worked so hard for this opportunity.

How did you feel about starting at Headington?

When I first came to visit Headington I was shocked and amazed at the sheer size of the School and facilities. It was so different from what I was used to – my old School had around 300 students, and to move to a School with over 1000 girls was just crazy to me. I was a little nervous; this was like entering a whole different world compared with where I'd come from. I was so excited to start; it was the only summer I wanted to go quicker, so that I could begin my journey at Headington.

I specifically remember moving into the Boarding House. That was really different for me but I was excited as it was a new opportunity; I thought of it as living with my friends. I was absolutely amazed by all the sports facilities at the School. I remember when my parents came round on a visit they thought it was incredible as well... I just couldn't believe that girls had the opportunity to do yoga in the evenings and things like that!

What opportunities has being at Headington given you?

I was given the chance to be Head of House. If you'd asked me two years ago, I wouldn't have even known what a Head of House was, never mind actually being one. I absolutely loved the role, especially being able to put my ideas forward and also to be a communication link between staff and the students.

Another aspect was my EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). I don't think I would have ever decided to write an essay off my own back before coming to Headington. My EPQ was about how psychopaths have enhanced abilities to be successful. I remember going to a lecture when I first started at Headington which I found so interesting that I was inspired to write my EPQ on this topic. That was such a great opportunity; I was nervous about presenting my essay on the presentation evening but it went so well; Mrs Jordan also came to hear my presentation which meant a lot.

I have made some absolutely amazing friends; I've got friends for life. I keep in contact with the girls that I lived with, especially Kate, my best friend.

What are you doing now?

I'm studying Physiotherapy at Manchester Metropolitan University. I'm loving my course – it's challenging, but I am really enjoying it. I'm looking forward to going on placements next year. I've just finished a Final Assessment for our group project and managed to achieve a First, so that was very rewarding.

Much to my Mum's dismay, moving to University I wasn't homesick at all. It was just so smooth for me as I'd already been away from home for two years. Having the experience of living with other people, knowing their boundaries and how to act in a shared environment was so much easier for me compared

with other people who had obviously never been away from home. Headington is probably one of the most diverse environments I've ever been in – I'd met so many girls from different cultures and backgrounds – so at Uni, being able to adapt and relate to other people was relatively easy.

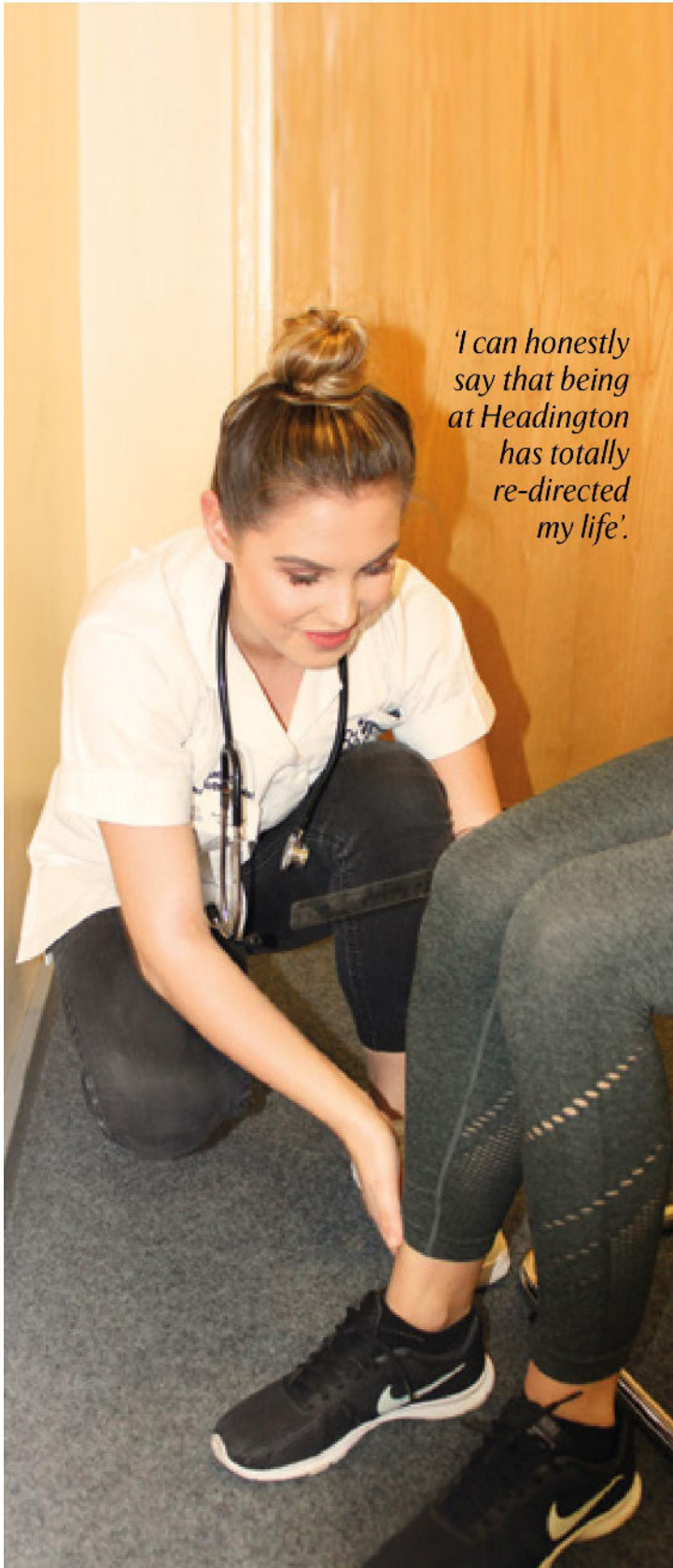
What do you want to do in the future?

In the short term, I'm planning to complete a sports massage qualification, because as part of my course we have to do CPD (Continued Professional Development), so I'm hoping to become a qualified sports massage therapist this year. Longer term, I'd like to do a Masters course in Physiotherapy Manipulation and then go on to work in the NHS, maybe doing neurological physiotherapy, helping people with neurological disorders. Recently we've learnt about Guillain Barre Syndrome, which is when people lose the sensory information through their whole body. It's probably one of the most rewarding aspects of physiotherapy as you can change people's lives through rehabilitation and helping to make them fully functional again.

Looking back, what impact has being at Headington had on you?

I can honestly say that being at Headington has totally re-directed my life. If I hadn't come to Headington, I probably wouldn't have done my A levels or gone to University. It's allowed me to grow as a person so much and opened up so many opportunities for me – it's been amazing. It's honestly the best thing I've ever done.

For anyone else who is offered the chance of having a Headington education I'd say be brave, grab the opportunity and don't waste it. I'd tell my younger self – or another bursary student – to challenge yourself and take every opportunity you can. All I can say is a massive thank you to everyone who made this possible for me. It's the best opportunity I've ever been given.



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OPEN THE DOOR TO HEADINGTON

BY DONATING TO OUR BURSARY FUND

Headington is a special place, and many generations of Headingtonians have passed through its gates, benefitting from inspirational teaching and having made friends for life.

Bursaries have always played an important part in the School's commitment to providing an excellent education for as many promising pupils as our resources will allow. Headington is only able to extend this opportunity with the generous support of you, the family of Headington.

Our aspiration is for any girl with the ability to win a place at Headington to be able to do so, regardless of their financial situation. Help us to open the door to more pupils like Amber, so that talented children from all backgrounds can continue to benefit from the same education at Headington that you received.

A gift from you, no matter what size, can help to change the course of an individual's life. At present, for every Amber that we can offer the opportunity of a Headington education, we disappoint another three. We would be delighted if you would consider supporting us and giving to the Bursary Fund in whatever way you can.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Giving on a regular basis is an affordable way of donating to Headington's Bursary Fund. Regular gifts quickly add up, and your contribution will join those of others to fund a bursary place.

To fund a bursary place at Headington, this is the equivalent to receiving:

£10 per month, from **120 people**

£25 per month, from **48 people**

£50 per month, from **24 people**

Alternatively, we always welcome single donations and all gifts will be gratefully received into the Bursary Fund.

If you make a regular donation or a one-off gift, provided you are a UK tax payer, you can help Headington further by gift-aiding your donation, which allows us to claim an additional 25p for every £1 you donate, at no additional cost to you.

If you know someone who would be interested in applying for a bursary at Headington, you can find more information on our school website or email admissions@headington.org

Thank you, from the Headington bursary pupils of the future, for making a difference. Together we can educate the next generation.

To discuss how you can support Headington's Bursary Fund, please call the Development Team (Helen Batchelor, Alice McLinden or Vicky Huggett) on +44 (0)1865 759101 or email development@headington.org.