

# UPDATE



## TEN VARNDEAN COLLEGE STUDENTS WIN PLACES AT CAMBRIDGE AND OXFORD UNIVERSITIES

More than half of this year's Varndean Cambridge and Oxford applicants have been successful in their application to university. About one in five students who apply to these most prestigious universities receive offers; and this year 53% of Varndean applicants have been offered places. They are of a mixture of A Level and International Baccalaureate students.

Four students took a year out and applied after completing their IB

Diploma. Left to right, are Freya Way (Biological Sciences, Wadham College, Oxford), Lola Dickinson (History, St Hilda's College, Oxford), Olivia Wynn Thomas (History, Jesus College, Cambridge). Not pictured is Khem Rogaly who is going on to read History at King's College Cambridge.

Six current second year students all have offers from Cambridge: Back row, left to right are: Richard Slaney (Engineering, Homerton College), Sam Corbett (English, Emmanuel College) Bluebell Nicholls (Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, King's College); Front row, left to right: Olivia Sutherland (English, Christ's College), Caroline Banerjee (English, Sidney Sussex College), Rosemary Little (Linguistics, Corpus Christi College).



## VARNDEAN STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT APPRENTICESHIPS

On 14 March, Varndean students were given the opportunity of attending an Apprenticeship Fair at the college, where approximately 20 organisations had exhibition stands and students were able to collect information and discuss apprenticeship opportunities as an option after college.



## LAW TRIP

ON 22 NOVEMBER, 45 LAW STUDENTS VISITED LONDON AS PART OF THEIR A LEVEL/ BTEC COURSES. THE FIRST STOP WAS THE OLD BAILEY WHERE THEY OBSERVED THE CLOSING SPEECHES IN THE THOMAS MAIR TRIAL FOR THE MURDER OF MP JO COX. FOLLOWING THIS, THEY VISITED THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE AND SAT IN ON AN APPEAL CASE WHERE THE DEFENDANTS WERE APPEALING AGAINST THEIR CONVICTIONS FOR MANSLAUGHTER. AFTER LUNCH, A TOUR OF THE SUPREME COURT WAS UNDERTAKEN AND STUDENTS OBSERVED FIVE LORD JUSTICES HEARING A CASE THAT INVOLVED BREACH OF CONTRACT AND A CRUISE SHIP.





## BRIGHTON STUDENT'S SUCCESS AT THE ARCHERY GB INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Varndean College student Natasha Homer was selected to represent England in both the Junior and Senior levels Archery GB Indoor Championships in December at the NAEC. It was definitely the highlight of Natasha's year.

"I had an incredible weekend at the Archery GB Indoor National Championships. On the Saturday I represented England at the junior indoor home nations match and individually was placed 5th in U18s, and the England team came 2nd to Scotland by one point. On the Sunday I shot in the senior championships and finished 17th out of 107 people."

## VALUE ADDED PUTS VARNDEAN 2ND IN NATIONAL PERFORMANCE TABLE

Varndean College has once again scored extremely highly in terms of the 'Value Added' that the college generates for its students. In the recently published Department for Education 16-18 Schools & Colleges Performance Table for Added Value, the college was ranked 2nd out of all sixth form colleges in the country.

In the league table for all providers of A Levels (2,770 of them), Varndean College was placed 217th (i.e. in the top 9%). Within Brighton & Hove, Brighton College was next in the table at 234th.

'Value added' measures the progress students make from the beginning to the end of their qualifications against a prediction of potential achievement which is based on the national average achievement of those at a similar



ability level on finishing Key Stage 4.

Principal, Phil Harland, was delighted with the news saying "No matter what level of academic achievement you come to Varndean with, we have a proven history of developing your potential beyond that predicted at GCSE stage. Quite simply, our track record of enabling students to achieve more has been consistently outstanding."



## LITTER PLEDGE WINNERS!

Nearly 600 students signed the Varndean Litter Pledge last term. They signed to say that they pledge to keep the college litter-free and environment clean by using the bins and recycling facilities around college. The winner of the prize draw, Jordan Brookes, said "I think more needs to be done in the common room for improving litter as well as the college in general." Runners-up were Harry Murray and Jazmine Tiley.

Photos and pledge signatures are on the noticeboard outside the canteen. Thanks to all those who have pledged so far. Check out the Environmental Committee's Facebook page for more news.

## OLIVIA WINS CREATIVE WRITING AWARD

Olivia Sutherland, who takes part in the Creative Writing enrichment class, won a 'New Views' award from local charity New Writing South. As part of the award, she is participating in a year's worth of mentoring and development opportunities for young writers and also received £100 bursary which she plans to use to enter her poetry in other competitions and purchase poetry magazines. She has now recently taken part in a workshop run by poet Dean Atta.



## FELIX'S DREAM PLACEMENT

A Level Photography student Felix Reitze de la Haye recently took part in a placement with top fashion photographer Nick Knight. The placement came as a result of him attending SHOWstudio when he was in his first year at Varndean and he was invited him to come and work for him as an intern!

There wasn't masses for him to do the first week, so he made lots of tea and helped wrap up books. But the highlight came when he got to help with a promotional event for Veuve Cliquot champagne and at the end of the week was invited to return for a second week.

This week was much more eventful with photo shoots involving top models Madison Stubbington,

Anna Cleveland and Jazzelle Zanaughtti, along with stylist Julia von Boehm for Stern Mode magazine. Felix helped to design parts of the sets using gold foil and smashing a mirror to capture a shattered reflection. The days were really long, yet incredibly fun, sometimes working from 8am through to 2am!

For the second part of the week they worked in Shoreditch and Seven Sisters for part of Nick's anniversary of punk series, with 15 models and top art director Simon Foxtan.

Felix is going back to work there again in the summer and hopes to do a foundation at Central St Martins before pursuing a career in the fashion photography industry.

Back on his 15th birthday, A Level Photography student Rowan Smedley got scouted in Brighton (whilst buying a speaker in Currys) by top London agency Elite London and has not looked back since. He has now taken part in four fashion shows - Top Man, JW Anderson, Kiko Kostadinov and Burberry - and hopefully upon leaving college will take this further as a career, possibly moving into fashion photography. Rowan is currently studying Photography and Graphics A Levels at Varndean and has a possible shoot coming up in Paris for Loewe.



## DOG SHOOT!



YEAR 2 PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENT CHANEL DU TOIT HAS RECENTLY BEEN PHOTOGRAPHING HER PET AIREDALE TERRIER 'AMBER' FOR TOP UK FASHION HOUSE BODEN. CHANEL'S MUM, MEGAN, IS A BREEDER OF AIREDALE TERRIERS AND BODEN APPROACHED HER AND ASKED IF THEY COULD USE ONE OF HER DOGS IN THEIR PHOTOSHOOTS. THEIR DOG AMBER HAS NOW BEEN MODELLING FOR BODEN FOR OVER TWO YEARS. CHANEL IS ALSO NOW PHOTOGRAPHING HER FOR HER OWN FASHION SHOOTS PROJECT 'EXPERIMENTAL FASHION' AS PART OF HER PHOTOGRAPHY COURSEWORK.

# INTERNATIONAL A STAR PROJECT STUDENTS

Vardean's International A Star Project students, who graduated in 2016, donated a bench to the college recently and a ceremony was held in the West Quad to mark the occasion. Some of the students who graduated last year came back to visit and we were all so glad to see how well they have done.

The Chinese A Star Project offers after college support, both academic and social, for Chinese students at Vardean. Students are given group lessons and one-to-one tuition in specific subjects, Trips to Europe and weekend activities are also organised. This is our third year running this programme.

The students attending were: Shiqianbao SHI (Cece) now at Southampton University, Yuechen LU (Simon) now at Birmingham University, Yanhua LIU (Stefan) , Ning WANG (Steve) both now at Hertfordshire University and Wenyu LI (Lora) now at the University of Chichester.



# INTERNATIONAL TEA PARTY

International students held a wonderful charity event in December, with 70 students attending, the largest ever, with a good mix of home and international students.

For a small donation students enjoyed a range of teas and cakes from around the world. Students donated a total of £140; 50% of the proceeds went to local charity the Chestnut Tree House and 50% to Muslim Aid Charity to help Children in Syria.

Phil Harland said how proud he was to see such diversity at Vardean College and that the students who organised the event, moved by the plight of other young people who don't have the same opportunities and safe environment, had shown great commitment to make the event a resounding success.



# EX-VARDEAN COLLEGE STUDENT'S TRULY INSPIRING STORY

Vardean College in October to tell current students of her struggle to overcome a cleft palate (affecting her speech patterns), as well as having to battle cancer whilst at college.

"My journey started, as for many of us, aiming for high grades in college to get the degree I wanted at university. I came to England 9 years ago with broken English and very little knowledge of science. After three years of college (2007-2010) I managed to get a place at Brighton University. I finished one chapter to climb a bigger ladder, the highest level of degree a student can achieve - I am now studying for a PhD. My passion for the things I want to do and achieve in life has made me overcome numerous challenging battles, including the "out of control disease of cancer" and my cleft palate. Sharing my story is one way of giving back the support and love I have received throughout this journey, hoping that it will inspire others to have a great vision for life."



## CHEMISTRY NEWS

**Chemistry Olympiad** results are out for Spring 2017 and yet again the college has produced some outstanding medals, in total gaining 13 Bronze and 6 Silver.

**The Analytical Team** are preparing for the annual RSC Analytical team competition in which the college has reached the National Finals two out of the last three years.

Now in its 17th year, this year's **Chemistry Conference** also recently took place, and virtually all Vardean Chemistry students attended. Run by Vardean College ChemSoc and held at the University of Brighton, the event comprised of a series of talks with students hearing from speakers about The Secrets of the Atom, Drugs; The Good, The Bad and The Ugly; Biomaterials; and how we might gain immortality courtesy of chemistry and material science. It finished with a fascinating and intriguing talk about how 'Chemistry is Communicated'.

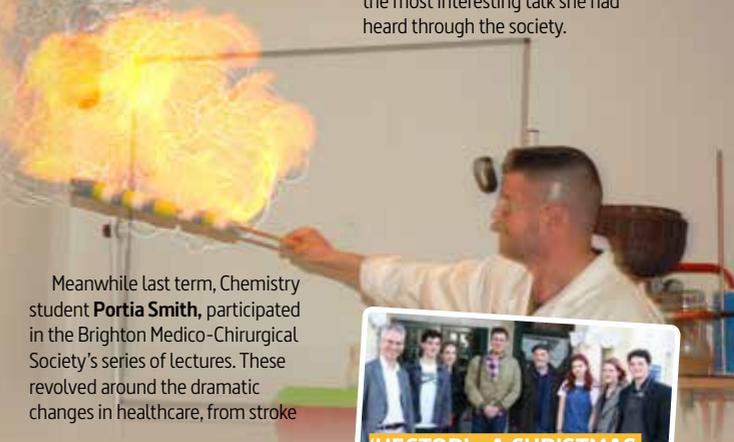
As part of the **Med/Vet/Dent Society**, a series of MedVetDent talks

have been held including ex-student Megi Kamenica, Marc Abraham (Pup Aid), Toby Collen (student vet at RVC), Steve Sparks (NICE) and Dr Sally Doust (clinical study).

**Heroines in Science** featured a small team going up to Reading University and giving their presentation on heroine, Dorothy Hodgkin, to a university audience.

Meanwhile last term, Chemistry student **Portia Smith**, participated in the Brighton Medico-Chirurgical Society's series of lectures. These revolved around the dramatic changes in healthcare, from stroke

management to volunteering opportunities in Landmine Clearance, with Dr Ransom giving a talk on the latter. Whilst the series as a whole was interesting, particularly to an aspiring medic, it was Ransom's talk which really opened Portia's eyes, inspiring her to enter the society's essay writing competition and winning an award of a £50 book token for writing about the most interesting talk she had heard through the society.



**'HECTOR' - A CHRISTMAS TALE OF HOMELESSNESS ENTHRALS FILM STUDENTS**



## UPWARDS THROUGH BUSINESS

As part of their teaching and learning project, Business Studies have introduced the 'Upwards Through Business' (UTB) Awards which are awards given to students in each of the six courses to recognise their marked improvement in an aspect of their performance. This could be engagement in lessons, attendance,

quality of course work etc. The awards will be presented on a half-termly basis by Principal, Phil Harland

The first Spring 1 UTB awards were presented in March to 12 students, some of whom are pictured below having received their certificates from Phil Harland.

At the 2016 Cosmat event, Film and Media teachers and students enjoyed a grand morning out of their schools and colleges to enjoy meeting industry practitioners Jake Gavin and Will Jewell. The annual event featured acclaimed British film 'Hector', a tale of a homeless man heading from Scotland for his annual Christmas lunch in a London hostel.

The conference started with a screening of film short 'Man in Fear', followed by a presentation and Q&A session with Will Jewell, local film director at Fractured Films, and lecturer at Brighton Film School and Ravensbourne College. Jake Gavin then also answered questions before and after watching the screening of 'Hector'. Supported by Brighton Film School and run by Vardean College, students said the event was 'inspiring and entertaining'.

# MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING AT CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE

Back in October, Vardean Drama students had the opportunity of attending a workshop with the cast and creatives of the RSC's production of Much ADO About Nothing at Chichester. Students were invited to take

part in exercises to explore the company's methods and how the actors, directors and designers developed their ideas for the production. Directed by Christopher Luscombe, with design by Simon

Higlett and music by Nigel Hess, one student commented "I thought this trip was thoroughly enjoyable. I learnt a large amount in such a short period of time and I'm now looking forward to the next one."



## CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS

A2 Film Studies student, Carlos Almonacid, recently received a special commendation letter from the WJEC Film Studies lead examiner, Jeremy Points. This was to recognise his exceptional performance across all areas of the AS Film exam, achieving full marks and putting him in the country's top 10 students out of 10 000 candidates.

Phil Harland (Principal) and Kirsty Painter (Programme Leader) proudly presented Carlos with this very special letter of achievement and congratulated him on this success.



## STUDENT SUCCESS IN UK MATHS CHALLENGE

Students at Vardean College achieved 5 golds, 6 silvers and 15 bronzes in this year's UKMT Senior Maths Challenge. Over 82,000 pupils from across the UK entered with the top 10% receiving a gold certificate, the next 20% silver and the next 30% bronze.

Approximately 4,600 of the top students are invited to sit one of the follow-on competitions, the British Mathematical Olympiad (BMO1) or the Senior Kangaroo (SKANG). Ben Burgess and Richard Slaney from Vardean College were selected to take part in the SKANG and congratulations to Kerim Taskin who qualified to enter the BMO1.



# POLITICS TRIP

30 A Level Politics students were on a mission in London recently – to find out just how our Government works. In one day, they saw all three branches of Government, our Parliament, the Executive based around Downing Street and Whitehall and the highest court in the land, the UK Supreme Court.

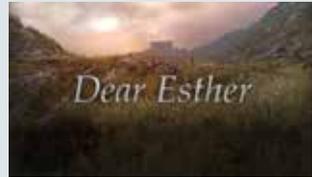
They emerged out of the tube station at Westminster for a quick walk up Whitehall to glance at the main Government departments and a peek through the gates to Number 10, and from there they went to the Supreme Court. If people can't agree on the Law, it might well be that the case ends up here to be settled.

The second part of the day was a tour of the Houses of Parliament where The House of Commons was debating an emergency motion on Syria and Aleppo. Students were able to watch from the public gallery as MPs made impassioned speeches.

Later they took part in a workshop on how rights and representation had been fought for and won over the centuries, with the students discussing what could be done to engage more young people in politics. A quick dash back to the station and a crowded train journey back to Brighton ended the day with students having a better understanding of just how it all works.



## IN SHORT



Ex Music Tech student, Henry Garratt and Varndean Music Tech tutor, Laurence Bush, recently performed at the first-ever games concert in the UK, in which the music is performed live to the game as it's being played. They did this for 'Dear Esther' in October at the Barbican and will be doing it again on April 1st for the London Games Festival.

Back in November, Year 2 BTEC Health and Social Care students attended a 'Dementia Friends' training session. Ellen Jones, who is a 'Dementia Champion', visited the college to hold an information session to enable students to become more informed about Dementia and create more dementia-friendly communities. At the end of the session the students all received a certificate and badge to show that they are all now 'Dementia Friends'.

Year 1 Graphic Design students have been involved with a project to design the graphic materials for the Breaking Boundaries dance production. The designs of ten students were chosen as a short list by Dance Co-ordinator

Lisa Yelland and were then shown to the dance students taking part in Breaking Boundaries who had the final say. The final three students were: in 3rd place Beth Walker, 2nd place James Shaw and in 1st place Summer Clarke.



## NONNA'S KITCHEN

On 30 November, ex-student Sofia Duplain came back to college to make a presentation to the Level 2 Business Studies class on how she set up her Nonna's Kitchen business. She gave students samples of what she produces as part of the classroom session and then opened her street kitchen kiosk up to all students at lunchtime.

It had been a dream of sisters Romina, Dominique & Sofia to share their love of their grandmother's cooking with others, so they put together a menu of Italian-style street food inspired by her cooking.

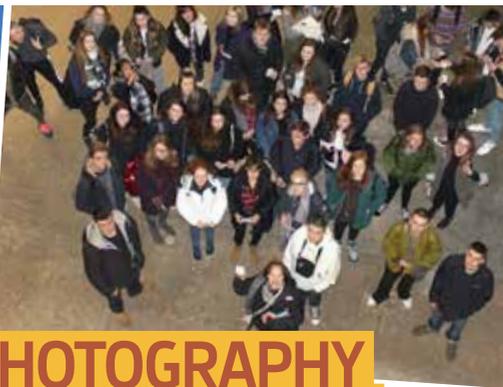


## PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENTS VISIT TATE MODERN

In January, 46 Year 1 and Year 2 students trekked up to London to the Tate Modern to see two fantastic exhibitions.

In the morning we saw Radical Eye which was Elton John's collection of classic black and white images. The students responded really well to these images and they support the portrait project they are undertaking. In the afternoon, we saw the Robert Rauschenberg exhibition - a real contrast of contemporary abstract colour images, which appealed especially to the Year 2 photographers and links with their colour project. On the way home we were caught up in the snow but successfully reached Varndean after a very eventful journey.

**VARNDEAN RAN A COLLEGE SKI TRIP TO THE SKI AMADE REGION OF AUSTRIA DURING HALF TERM. GREAT DAYS WERE SPENT ON THE SLOPES; WITH BLUE SKIES AND WINTER SUN, SOME FANTASTIC SKIING AND SLEDGING, AUSTRIAN SKITTLES AND AN ALPINE ADVENTURE FOR THE STUDENTS.**





## PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO THE REAL WORLD

YEAR 1 PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS HAD A TRIP TO LONDON ZOO RECENTLY TO STUDY THE BEHAVIOURISM USED TO ENHANCE NATURAL ANIMAL BEHAVIOURS AND HELP WITH GIVING MEDICAL TREATMENT.

## ROME

Students studying Classical Civilisation visited Rome during February half term and enjoyed not only glorious weather but also a truly magnificent and impressive array of ancient sights.

We walked to the Pantheon on the first evening and then over the next three days visited the Roman Forum, the Colosseum and the Palatine. Some of the best memories are from the Capitoline museum where we marvelled at the exhibits including the Bernini, Bust of Medusa and the Capitoline wolf, mother of Romulus and Remus! We sat in the sun at the Trevi Fountain eating ice creams and then wandered to the Spanish Steps. We averaged 15 miles a day and slept like logs. The last day we visited Ostia Antica, the harbour city of Ancient Rome where it is still possible to see the taverns, shops and ancient loos dating back to the 4th Century BC.



## REVEREND PRODUCTIONS

Back in October students at Vardean were treated with a visit from nationally touring theatre company Reverend Productions. This is a company dedicated to creating and producing new work for the theatre, born of a series of collaborations between practitioners who trained together at East 15 School of Acting.

They performed a new play Jekyll & Hyde before an appreciative audience and followed the show with a Q&A session providing the students with great insight into playwriting and devising, as well as approaching the acting industry, drama schools and making your own work.

The event was so successful, the Performing Arts department are looking to programme similar events, inviting professional companies to perform at college and provide insight into the challenges and rewards of working in the performance industry.

## RUSSELL MARTIN FOOTBALL ACADEMY GETS OFF TO A KICK-START

Trials for the September intake of the elite Russell Martin Football Academy programme saw 29 players attend with some exceptionally high levels of talent on show.

Jay Lovett, Brighton & Hove Albion under 14 coach and ex professional, is coming on board with the college as head coach from September. Promising developments range from a small pilot this year to a full-scale programme from September.



## SILICON ROUNDABOUT VISIT

Thirty-five Business students went on a guided tour of the Uber trendy / hip fastest growing enterprise hub, 'Silicon Roundabout' back in December. Places visited included Rough Trade records, Nike Lab, Vice Magazine and The Foundry. Students were entertained by a running commentary on disruptive business techniques and creating virtual markets by the well-informed guides.

## 3D DESIGN STUDENTS GET INSPIRATION

Second year 3D Design students recently enjoyed a trip to the Cass Foundation Sculpture Park at Goodwood, the Thomas Heatherwick Beach Cafe and the world's longest bench at Littlehampton.

They went as the starting point for their exam projects in order to get critical references and inspiration through drawing and analysis of other designers' work. They were accompanied by ex-student Chico Shankland who has just completed his Architecture degree at Cambridge University and is working alongside our A level students for a term. Chico left Varndean in 2013 with A Levels in 3D Design (A\*), Maths (A\*), Further Maths (A\*) and Physics (A).



VARNDEAN STAFF AND STUDENTS RECENTLY RAISED £330 FOR THE MARTLETS BY TAKING PART IN A 3 HOUR UV ZUMBATHON AT THE SALLIS BENNEY THEATRE! A GREAT AND REWARDING TIME WAS HAD BY ALL.





## BBC RADIO 4 STARDUST DRAWING COMPETITION WINNERS

IB Art student Zoe Alexander was a runner-up in the BBC Illustration Awards (13 - 16 age category). Budding artists were invited to create an evocative and original image that captured the essence of Neil Gaiman's Stardust story. Four judges, Chris Riddell, Sophie Rundle, Jeremy Howe and Sean Phillips, chose the winners from two categories. Zoe is a fan of the story and said "I wanted to make a connection between Tristran's and Yvaine's heart. I knew the story and had lots of ideas and images that stood out."



## TRIP TO SAN SEBASTIAN

In November, Varndean's Modern Foreign Language students spent a week in the beautiful Basque city of San Sebastian. They spent their time at a language school in the mornings and then explored the town with the most iconic beach in Spain during the afternoons. Staying with host families made the cultural immersion complete. San Sebastian is internationally renowned for its tapas and the group enjoyed sampling all the specialities and the local culture. They also went to Bilbao for a day and had a great time at the world famous Guggenheim Museum.

## VARNDEAN MUSIC ALUMNI VISIT

In January, the Music Department welcomed back one of its past students, Roddy Hawkins, for an informative talk about his college experiences and his career since leaving Varndean in 2001.

"Coming back", he said, 'brought back lots of memories of a rich and vibrant environment' and reminded him of the ups and downs of college life. He studied A Level Politics, Music and English and after his A Levels took a gap year to reflect on the best choice of university courses.

He chose Leeds University

and worked his way from an undergraduate course to doctorate level in Musicology. His thesis was "British politics surrounding the music of the 70s and 80s". He continues "research aesthetic theory, digital cultures, theories of practise and the politics of consumption and has also started teaching at the University of Manchester. In addition, he has



been an Early Career Research Associate at the Institute of Musical Research (London) and a Teaching Fellow at the University of Leeds. He is an Admissions Officer for undergraduates and gave the music students some helpful tips for their university applications.

In the future, he plans to continue research into contemporary music ensembles. His ambition is that in 5 years he will publish his research findings and continue to teach.

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