

UPDATE

AUTUMN 2021

**NEW CANINE MEMBER
JOINS THE COLLEGE
PERSONNEL**



**BEST EVER INTERNATIONAL
BACCALAUREATE RESULTS**





SUCCESS FOR VARNDLEAN COLLEGE STUDENTS IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Varndean College celebrated the high achievements of its students in August, who yet again achieved an outstanding record of A Level and Vocational course results. Students completing their studies this year have had an educational journey like no other, with much of their education spent in lockdown and online learning, as well as the Government's cancellation of exams.

Despite this, students were exceptional in their capacity to rise to these challenges and continued to engage with their studies. Final results, which were based on attainment over the past two years, proved a very unsettling and worrying time for them all, but we were immensely proud of how they responded. The grades students earned were very well deserved, having undergone rigorous assessments throughout their studies and especially so from Easter 2021 when there was an 'assessment period' where all students carried out final

point assessments under exam conditions. Our teachers worked tirelessly with students to ensure that their results were accurate, fair and reflected their abilities and hard work.

THE OVERALL PASS RATE AT A LEVEL WAS 99% WITH THE MAJORITY OF SUBJECTS ACHIEVING 100% PASS RATE WITH 65% ACHIEVING A*-B AND 86% A*-C GRADES.

All vocational courses, BTEC and CTEC had a 100% pass rate, as well as our Level 3 CACHE course having exceptional results of 100%.

Visual Arts courses (Art, Graphic Design, 3D Design, Textiles and Photography) once again continued to be outstanding, with 97% of students achieving A*-C grades, 86% achieving A*-B grades and 86 students achieving the prestigious A* grade. In 3D Design, all students gained an A*-B grade, and in Photography 94% of students gained an A*-B.



Other subjects with exceptional success include: in languages, A Level French has a 100% pass rate with 88% A*-B, in A Level German 80% of students gained A*-B. In Humanities; in History A Level 88% of students gained an A*-B, in Maths and Science all subjects gained a 100% pass rate with 100% of Further Maths students gaining an A*-B grade, in Maths 76% gained an A*-B, in Physics 71% of students gained an A*-B. Similarly, Film students gained 100% pass rate with 70% getting the very highest grades of A*-B; in Drama and Theatre Studies 72% of students achieve an A*-B.



College Principal, Donna-Marie Janson, said; "We were incredibly proud of our students this year, particularly under the extreme circumstances they found themselves to be in due to the global pandemic. They dealt admirably with all of the uncertainty of the past two years, to the lockdowns, self-isolations and online lessons, as well as huge changes to the system of assessment, taking everything in their stride and continuing to focus. They were inspiring to work with, to teach and to get to know. Our students were quite frankly

amazing and they and their loved ones should feel as proud of themselves as we do for their spirited determination and for all they achieved. I would like to thank and commend my entire staff for their hard work and dedication working throughout the pandemic, adapting and responding throughout and ensuring that students had the best possible opportunities and the best possible experience. I would also like to thank all the parents and families of our students who have supported us throughout, we could not have done it without you."

VARNDEN IN TOP 1% OF UK PROVIDERS FOR VALUE ADDED

We are pleased to announce that Varndean College also this year received an ALPS score of 1 in the Department of Education's "16-18 Schools and Colleges Performance Table for Value Added", placing us in the top 1% of UK schools and sixth form colleges.

'Value Added' scores are Government calculations which provide a measure as to how much more or less successful students have been by declaring how much 'value' has been added to their results. This means that Varndean students perform better than 99% of all other schools/sixth forms in the country compared to students with the same GCSE grades on entry. This confirms the high-quality teaching support, care and guidance that takes place here.



BEST EVER INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE RESULTS

Students and teachers at celebrated their best ever set of results in the prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in July, with students now off to study at some of the UK's leading universities including Cambridge, UCL, Imperial College London, Bristol, Warwick, Sheffield and Leeds.

Forty-one students completed the international qualification which requires them to study English, Maths, Science and three other subjects alongside a range of other activities. The College achieved a pass rate of 98% and received its highest marks ever, with an average score of 36.61 points, equivalent to at least three A grades at A Level and beating a global average of 33.02.

- **82%** of our UCAS applicants were successful, with 77% securing places at Russell Group universities.
- **63%** achieved 36 or more Diploma points, with 15 gaining an impressive 40 points or more, equivalent to A*A*A and placing them in the top 9% of students worldwide.

Amongst those achieving the highest grades were:

- **Hayden Newnham** (ex-Oathall) whose perfect score of 45 points - comparable to five A* at A Level - placed him in the top 1-2% of 170,660 IB students worldwide. Hayden is taking a gap year but is looking to apply for BA in Modern Languages, studying French, German and Russian in 2022.
- **Sammy Doublet** (ex-Varndean School) with 44 points reading Architecture at UCL having achieved grade 7's in Higher Level Maths and Visual Arts and Standard Level Physics.
- 43 points were achieved by ex-Sir Robert Woodard Academy student **Lucy Ayres** and ex-Hove Park student **Circe Marden-Rull** seeing them head to Leeds to study Sociology and Internal Relations, and Bristol to read Comparative Literatures and Cultures respectively. Also achieving 43 points **Lillian Laffan** (ex-Varndean School) now reading Philosophy at Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge.
- Scoring 42 points (equivalent to three A*): **Tabitha Fawfus** securing a place at Warwick University to read Politics, International Studies and Global Sustainable Development and **Legona Bray Kaji**, heading to Glasgow to study BioChemistry.
- Our two Medicine applicants this year were also successful in securing places. **Miaya Harman** is heading to Cardiff University, whilst **Anthea Gabot** has a place at UCL.
- Four of our learners scoring 40 points this year included



Jessica Daniels and Lewis Edmunds who are embarking on Art Foundation courses before heading to university; **Madeline Downie**, now at UCL reading Natural Sciences; and **Ruby Duck**, at UCL studying Mechanical Engineering.

As a global qualification, the IB created a dual pathway model this year for schools who were able to safely host exams and those who were not. Out of 170,660 students globally, 104,275 were in the non-exam route and 65,576 in the exam route. Similar to A Level and GCSE, IB exams were cancelled in the UK this year, however grades were awarded in a slightly different way. Each student completed a piece of coursework for every subject as normal, however these were then sent to the IB to be marked rather than by their teachers as per usual. These coursework grades were then combined with teacher predictions to calculate the students' final grades.

It has been a challenging time for all involved, with students spending approximately half of their studies online since March 2020. However, students and staff rose to the occasion and demonstrated great resilience, working together to progress and support each other.

Varndean College IB Coordinator,

Lee Finlay-Gray, said: "I would like to commend all of our IB students for their maturity, flexibility and commitment to their studies during their time at Varndean. I would like to thank them all for embracing online learning, being patient with their teachers and encouraging them in their own development. I am moved by how supportive our learners have been to one another, building strong friendships and positive working relationships which I hope they nurture and treasure moving forward. They have been a fun, dedicated and hardworking cohort and I am hugely proud of each and every one of them."

Principal Donna-Marie Janson said: "These fantastic results are a testament to the energy, hard work and endurance of the wonderful IB students at Varndean College. While their time at college has been challenging in ways we could not foresee, their exceptional focus on their studies saw them all make the most of every opportunity. They have been a truly delightful group of young people to teach and to get to know and they have inspired their teachers throughout their time here. We wish them all the very best in their future endeavours. I would also like to thank the tireless efforts of the teaching staff who have gone above and beyond and done everything they can for our students. This considerable success is well deserved by all."



VARNDLEAN REAPS THE AWARDS

During this past year, Varndean is been proud to have been the recipient of two awards.

Pearson's Certificate of Excellence in 'The 2021 Lockdown Hero Award for Learner and Community Support', part of this year's Pearson National Teaching Awards. A huge thank you to Year 2 student, Amanda Burton, for her truly wonderful nomination and well done to all the staff involved.

The SFCA (Sixth Form Colleges' Association) 'Covid Above & Beyond Award'. The SFCA Annual Awards initiative represents an important opportunity to identify, celebrate and showcase exceptional practice across the sixth form sector and we are so proud of our Additional Support, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Team whose dedication and hard work over this past year has been recognised. Well done and congratulations to every member of staff involved.

Covid Above and Beyond Winner



Jen Neal, Learning Support manager; Darren Holes, PA to Safeguarding Team; Sheila Sword, Wellbeing co-ordinator; Jack Dine, Inclusion co-ordinator; Becky Wood, Mental Health Practitioner; Rebecca Cadle, Social Work Liaison Officer; Well-being team: Sarah Lock, Emma Haddr, Mel Keast, Jai Matthews, Paul Turner, Maria Green

Sixth Form Colleges Association
The voice of sixth-form education
Varndean College



NEW CANINE MEMBER JOINS THE COLLEGE PERSONNEL

2021 saw the welcoming of a new member to our College personnel ... **Simba, the College Dog!**

Simba, a Goldendoodle and still very much a puppy in training, is based in our International Office and joined the International team on a trial basis last summer to help make the international students who join us feel more at home if they feel homesick. Non-international students may

of course also enjoy time with him too. Here is what Simba has been up to over his first six months at Varndean.



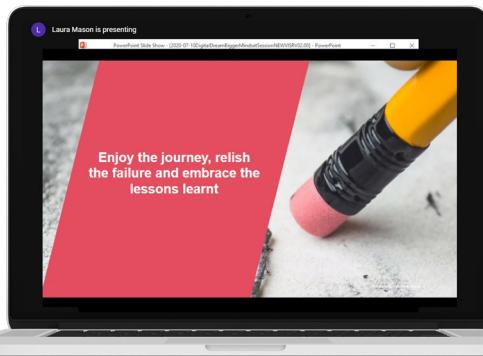
DREAM BIGGER WORKSHOP BY NATWEST BANK

In March, our Business Studies students attended an all-day workshop facilitated by NatWest Bank. Students needed all their wits about them for this fast-paced, engaging and interactive set of sessions. They reflected on the skills and personal qualities required to be an entrepreneur. Growth mindset was a real focus and students reflected on how all the qualities and skills required would help in their wider lives as well as the business world. Skills such as a clear vision, effective communication, resilience, creativity, adaptability, curiosity, self-awareness and reflection were discussed and how these help entrepreneurs to be successful. The future of the business industry was also discussed, including globalisation and new technological ways of working - some of which were

exciting but also rather unnerving. As always, our students were brilliant and engaged with all the videos, workbook, interactive chat, polls etc.

It was great to see how the 'real' corporate world was considering new opportunities and researching future business developments which we also cover

in Year 2 A level Business! One of the most fascinating elements of the workshop was seeing real life entrepreneurs such as Jessica Black - 'Jecca Blac' makeup brand explain how they developed the skills and mindset to be successful, as well as how they turned any setbacks around. A very full and successful day!





CHEMISTRY NEWS

A LEVEL CHEMISTRY STUDENTS WIN AWARDS IN RSC CHEMISTRY OLYMPIAD

A strong team of Year Two Chemistry students once again took part in the Royal Society of Chemistry's (RSC) Annual Chemistry Olympiad this year and yet again finished with an impressive array of individual awards.

Designed to challenge and inspire students to excel in the field of chemistry, this competition is one of the leading UK chemistry competitions for students, providing an enriching experience and an opportunity to push themselves further. Aimed at students aged 16+, students will develop critical problem-solving skills, learn to think more creatively and get a chance to test their knowledge in real-world situations.

This year, our students won 6 Gold, 9 Silver and 2 Bronze awards. Pictured are some of them receiving their certificates from Chemistry tutor, John Luton, in our brand new STEM Centre.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE C3L6 CHEMISTRY CHALLENGE

Varndean students also competed in Cambridge University's annual C3L6 Chemistry Challenge. The C3L6 competition is open to any UK student in Year 12 studying either A Levels or the International Baccalaureate and takes the form of a 90-minute written exam. Students who do well in the competition are awarded certificates of achievement (either a

copper, silver or gold award), and those who perform best win an invitation to a residential camp at the University of Cambridge. Once again, 21 students won an impressive array of awards; 2 gold, 14 silver and 5 copper. Congratulations to everyone.



EX-VARNDLEAN STUDENT AND NOW QUALIFIED DOCTOR, TALKS TO VARNDLEAN'S ASPIRING MEDICS

Ex-Varndean student, Natasha Wilcock (2013-15), made a very welcomed return visit in September when she gave an informative and inspiring talk to current students aspiring to follow a career in medicine.

Natasha studied Biology, Chemistry, Maths and French, as well as AS Modern History. She went on to University College London where she followed a six-year degree in Medicine (in which her final year was during a pandemic), graduating in 2021. She is now a qualified junior doctor working in London.

MED/VET/DENT STUDENTS FLY HIGH

Our Medicine, Veterinary Science & Dentistry students came first in Brighton & Sussex Medical School's 'Global Health Charity Challenge'. Their presentation on 'Neglected Tropical Diseases' was an incredible opportunity to develop presenting and time-management skills, whilst acquiring an understanding of the socioeconomic factors affecting disease. This only reinforced their motivation to study Medicine, Veterinary Science or Dentistry even further. They are donating their £100 prize money to charity 'Evidence Action's Deworm the World Initiative'.

They also competed and were finalists in the British Heart Foundation's 'Science at Heart' competition, researching the future of mRNA technology for the treatment of heart disease and the mechanisms of mRNA vaccines. Well done everyone.



VARNDEAN COLLEGE EARLY YEARS STUDENT SUCCESS

Congratulations to ex-Varndean College Early Years students, Libby Heffernan, Emily Davis and Kate Smith who have successfully completed their BA(Hons) in Primary Education (5-11) with QTS at the University of Brighton and are now newly qualified teachers. These three students became close friends whilst on the Childcare and Education two-year course at Varndean and went on to study and graduate together from university. We look forward to seeing them in action in local schools and wish them every success for their future.

This year once again saw an outstanding record of success from the students studying Childcare & Education at Varndean. With a 100% pass rate, most have now gone on to higher education courses at university or directly into employment in the childcare or education sector. Examples of success include; Amber Holland

(ex PACA) (A*A*A*) now studying Childhood and Youth at University of Sussex, Enya Stanford (ex Lewes Priory) (A*A*A*) employed as a Teaching Assistant and Isobel Brewster (ex Peacehaven School) (AAA) studying Primary Education at University of Chichester.

Special mention also goes to Naomi Kerse (ex Downlands) who was awarded the Chubb Foundation Scholarship to study Primary Education (5-11 years) with QTS at Brighton University from September. Hendon Chubb established the foundation to provide scholarships to deserving students in families of qualified Chubb employees. Naomi said "*In order to be given this opportunity I had to write about my past experiences, details of my course and why I thought I would be a suitable recipient for the scholarship. After getting into the semi-final I was then required to write a statement highlighting the charity work that I had undertaken and reasons why I wanted to become a primary school teacher. I was delighted to hear that I had been awarded a full scholarship for my 3 years at Brighton University*"



CHILDCARE & EDUCATION 'STUDENTS OF THE YEAR'

Earlier this year, our Childcare and Education Department introduced a 'Student of the Month' award, given to those students who produced great work, showed exceptional effort in their work, or who were outstanding in their work placement.

First to win the award were **Anna Sykes** and **Magda Sochocka**, whose assignment brief was to plan opportunities for children from 0-5 years to support physical development. Students had to show their knowledge of developmental needs, use the current framework to support their ideas and present their plans in an interesting manner. Anna and Magda produced two leaflets that met all the criteria in a unique and thoughtful way.

Next, the award again went to joint winners, **Isobel Brewster** and **Amber Hill**, for their volunteering duties during lockdown, helping reception teachers at Telscombe Cliffs Primary school with zoom lessons. Teaching phonics and maths to 60 children aged 4-5 online was no mean feat. With microphones muted (apart from the teacher), hand gestures and facial expressions were all that could be used to support the children's learning.

Other winners of the award were:

Year 2 student, **Enya Stanford**, for fully completing the practical aspects of her course and producing an excellent 'Play Sack' for the children in her placement. Enya used the Hungry Caterpillar as her starting point and the children loved all the various activities she designed. Enya completed her studies with us this year, achieving A*A*A* and is now employed as a Teaching Assistant.

Twins, **Ruby and Lily Brooks** - Ruby for successfully completing her Level 3 Diploma and Lily for achieving some of the highest marks for assignments in her class. Both girls deserved the award for their hard work and excellent professional practice.



NEW STUDENT UNION!

After a brilliant campaign back in March, with hustings and student voting taking place over several weeks, our brand-new Student Union for 2021-22 were announced.

Congratulations go to the 11 students who make up the new 2020-21 Executive; Jack & Robyn (Joint Presidents), Maddie (Social Media), Ellie (Communications), Tanusha (Graphic Design), Ruby (Equality), Isobel (Wellbeing), Ushika (Democracy), Bruno (Environment), Matilda (Charity/Events) and Maria (Enrichment).

STUDENTS AND STAFF CELEBRATE NATIONAL POETRY DAY



Students and staff celebrated National Poetry Day on 7 October at a 'poetry café' run by enrichment group 'voice@varndean'. With the theme being 'Choice' this year, participants celebrated poetry written by both students and staff, as well as published poets throughout the centuries. Everyone came together to read, perform or just simply listen and enjoy the poems.



RUBY AND LILY BROOKS



ADULT EDUCATION AT VARNDLEAN

Whether you wish to learn new skills or simply take part in an activity that appeals to you, Varndean College has a course for you and is taking enrolments for its Adult Education courses commencing throughout the year.

There are a wide variety of leisure courses for those looking to learn a new hobby, such as Painting, Flower Arranging, Photography, or Bridge; you can get fit with one of our many health and fitness classes, such as Circuit Training, Yoga, Pilates or Tai Chi. Alternatively, why not learn a new language or musical instrument? Our popular qualification courses can provide a pathway to becoming a qualified counsellor or working in the childcare and education sector and places can still be taken up on the introductory and level one courses this academic

Kelly enrolled on the Level 2 Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools (STL) in 2019. She had been a stay-at-home mum for nine years, but when her youngest child started school wanted to return to work but had no idea what she was good at. Seeing an advert for the Level 2 course and thinking it looked interesting and something she would enjoy, she asked her children's school if she could do her placement with them and they readily agreed.

Kelly said "The course was more than I expected it to be. I learnt so much, not just from my tutor, but also from the other students and the teaching assistants I worked with in school. As the weeks went on, I knew I had made the right decision in choosing this career path. I made lifelong friends whilst studying at Varndean and went on to study Level 3 STL which really helped me prepare for working as a Teaching Assistant (TA). Studying whilst in lockdown was very strange, but my amazing tutor really took the stress

year. Read about the success of one of our adult learners, Kelly, below.

Courses take place at our main Varndean College site in Surrenden Road, or as part of our Community Learning outreach programme in Hollingbury, Hollingdean, Bevendean, Moulsecoomb and Woodingdean. Learning changes lives and it is never too late to upskill or take up a new hobby. To find out more or enrol, go to the Varndean College website www.varndean.ac.uk/adult



out of it and I also gained new computer skills. One of the great things I really got from both courses was meeting people from different cultures and learning about each other; I now get to call them my very dear friends.

I have been working as a TA since finishing my Level 3 course and I absolutely love working with the children and feel honoured that I get to help support them in every aspect of their school life and well-being. Completing both courses at Varndean gave me the

confidence to study a degree with the Open University in Childhood and Youth studies. Varndean offers many courses in childcare and I am sure at some point in the future I will study with them again to enhance my knowledge and increase my chances of career progression even further."



SAM PATERSON AWARD 2021

This year's recipient of the Sam Paterson Award went to Year 2 Performing Arts student, Sami Al-kizwini.

Now in its eighth year, the Sam Paterson Award was established back in 2014 to commemorate the sudden and unexpected death of Varndean College Drama tutor, Sam Paterson. Set up by Sam's father, Ian Paterson, each year a sum of £500 is awarded to a student who upon completion of their course is judged by Varndean College to have made the most of their opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Sami's Performing Arts tutors, Nicky Jones and Steve Bates said: "Sami has been given this award for his incredible transformation into a dedicated, outgoing and inspired student, performer and creator. His work is outstanding and he takes every opportunity to demonstrate his insight into performance techniques and styles with verve and enthusiasm. Sami is determined to pursue a career in the performing arts and we wish him all the very best for the future."



PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENT MAX MISTRY SECURES WINNING ENTRY IN 'SHOW AND TELL' PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Congratulations to A Level Photography student, Max Mistry, whose photo 'Jumbled' was one of the final 83 winning entries in the 'Show and Tell' photography competition this summer. Out of over 20,000 entries from young people answering the important question 'how are you feeling?', Max's image was selected by photographic artist Daniel Regan. Winning entries had their images displayed at an online exhibition, as well across national billboards and bus advertising sites.

VARNDEN'S FILM STUDIES STUDENTS AWARDED A MOVING IMAGE AWARDS CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION

Earlier this year, Varndean's Film Studies students were delighted to have been awarded a Moving Image Awards 'Certificate of Commendation' to acknowledge their high standard of work entered in the Moving Image Awards competition this year. Well done everyone involved.



CLASS OF 2021 WE SALUTE YOU!

On Friday 25 June we said a heartfelt farewell to our Class of 2021 who left Varndean to move on to pastures new, whether it be to further their education at university, follow an apprenticeship or move directly into employment. Students gathered on our back field to share their goodbyes with one another, whilst savouring the delights of Prosecco, pizza and ice cream! Due to the pandemic, our 2021 leavers endured two years like no other and we are so proud of everything they have achieved. They have been an inspiration to us all and we wish them all the very best in the future.



FESTIVAL OF PROGRESSION

Varndean College students were treated to a two-day 'Festival of Progression' in June after enduring over a year of lockdowns, cancelled exams and general Covid restrictions.

A variety of local employers were able to impart their knowledge to Year One students, after which they welcomed Q&A. These included Sussex Partnership NHS Trust, Martin Cray & Co, Bouygues Construction, National Apprenticeship Service, SECAMB and Shoreham Port Authority. Speakers from further afield included Channel 4's Senior Film Editor, Tim Highstead; Company Director of Edward Selden Recruitment, Rafe Knowles; and freelance editor Paul Simpson, to name but a few.

Local universities; Solent, Kent, Portsmouth, Sussex and not so local Aberystwyth University, were also engaged with students in application and statement workshops. Other exciting workshops/talks were held face to face, ranging from Oxbridge Talks, Gap Year Talks, Apprenticeship Workshops, CV Writing Workshops, as well as our extended Speakers' Stage offering talks by external speakers from a wide range of careers such as Medicine, Midwifery, Engineering, Politics, Occupational Therapy, Air Cabin Crew, Pilot Training, Social Work, Law, Construction, Journalism, Teaching, TV Production and many more.

And to give it a festival feel, there was also a BBQ, music and even an ice cream van and pizza van!