



BRAMPTON COLLEGE

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2017

Top of the League
- for the last 16 years!

GETTING THE SUPPORT ART TRIP THEATRE OF IDEAS WELL-BEING

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STUDENT STORY

Embracing the challenge of Medicine

Joyce Kam loves her new life as a medical student at UCL. She feels that the culture of hard work and ambition at Brampton, where she achieved 3 A grades in A level Biology, Chemistry and Physics, prepared her well for its inevitable challenges.*

Medicine is a very tough subject which requires students to have great discipline and perseverance, but this is a subject which fits me well. I am a very curious person who enjoys problem-solving. One of my favourite parts of studying medicine is the intellectual challenge of problems set by lecturers who may be leaders in their field. I am also surrounded by very intelligent and enthusiastic fellow medics who can generate stimulating conversations.

The extra-curricular activities connected to Medicine are fantastic. I am particularly interested in promoting public health and have become a member of the Medecins Sans Frontieres committee. We will be holding seminars and fundraising for humanitarian aid workers. There are also lots of opportunities for students interested in medical research. I am really looking forward to working with a professor who works on Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) antibiotics resistance over the summer.



Spending a year at Brampton definitely equipped me with good time-management skills, which are essential in medical school. In just a year, we have already covered the whole of human anatomy (excluding upper and lower limbs), cell signalling, genetics, physiology, neuroscience, biostatistics and more. Planning ahead and timetabling a revision schedule for all this came easier because of my experience of planning and reflection at Brampton. I would say studying medicine is a harder version of completing two years of A-Levels in a year, but the concept is similar. Hard work is the key, and this is what teachers at Brampton encouraged me to do throughout my A-Levels year.

Getting the support to bring out your very best

Matan Hamburger is a high-achieving student who chose to switch to Brampton after his 1st year sixth to ensure he received the support to bring out his very best. He left last year with 4A*s in Maths, Further Maths, Physics and Chemistry.

Although I did well in my AS levels at another school, I felt I needed more support to achieve my goals at A2: Brampton was a good solution for this.

During my experience there I felt well supported and engaged in my studies, and it is this support that makes Brampton stand out as a different type of sixth-form college. The constant availability of teachers at college as well as the care the staff put into the students provide the impetus for the motivation and resulting success of the students.

Moreover, the excitement and enthusiasm teachers have for their subjects spurred me not only to try to master the syllabus, but to ask the teachers to go beyond it. This allowed me to better my understanding of the material, and gave me an outstanding foundation for my future studies to build on. The teachers' enthusiasm is also reflected by the focus of the students on their studies: everyone at Brampton is there to do whatever they can to succeed, which generates a framework which helps all students to succeed.

The speciality of Brampton is the enthusiasm for learning, the high quality of teaching staff, and the support given to students in whichever area they require. I would highly recommend Brampton to anyone wishing to strive for success and academic achievement.



Top of the League - for the last 16 years!

Name of College	Average point score per examination entry 2016
Brampton	43.22
Ashbourne Independent School	41.80
Cambridge Tutors College	40.38
DLD College	37.93
Fine Arts College	35.37
Collingham (London)	35.07
CATS College London	34.43
Duff Miller College	33.36
David Game College	32.92
Wentworth Tutorial College	32.15
England Average	31.79
Lansdowne College	30.86
Regent College	30.75
Chelsea Independent College	28.79
Acorn House College	28.73
Bales College	21.83
Average	33.00

Brampton students head to top universities

Brampton's outstanding record of success in A level exams continued last year with 84% of our entries achieving A*-B grades, well ahead of the independent school average of 75%. These figures carried the College to the top of the league table of London sixth form colleges for a fantastic 16th year in succession. 44% of our A level results were A*/A grades (compared to a national average of 26%), the vast majority of grades in "facilitating subjects", those that leave open a wide range of options for university study.

We are equally delighted, therefore, that so many of our students in 2016 have been placed at their first-choice of university, predominantly Russell Group institutions. As well as our traditional focus on Medicine (see, for example, Joyce Kam's story above), a wide range of degrees from Engineering to Geography and Classics attracted nine students each to UCL and King's College, London. Nottingham University also remained very popular, attracting 14 students, while others went to LSE, Edinburgh, Bristol, Warwick and Birmingham. In evidence here too was the increasing interest at Brampton in A level Geography and Computer Science, with six and nine students respectively going on to degrees in these subjects.



Above: At the Berlin Wall

Beauty and Tragedy of Berlin make for memorable Art Trip

Brampton's Art and Photography students have enjoyed visits to New York, Venice and Paris in recent years. This year it was the turn of Berlin. Lara Lavarini, A2 Art student describes the trip.

In autumn half-term we lucky Art and Photography students got to visit Berlin for four whole days. It was an inspiring excursion, not only because of all the galleries and art we were able to take in, but also to see a city that has been so important to European history and culture. I loved visiting the Berlin Wall and learning about its relevance in history for Germany and the rest of the world, as well as the global impact it had when it was broken down to unify the country again. Wild and vibrant graffiti and gleaming contemporary architecture mingled everywhere with melancholy reminders of the war and the East-West divide. What I found so fascinating about Berlin was this merging of past and present and the way the city incorporated both the terrible and the beautiful in its history. When we visited Museum Island on the last day, we were able to see bullet holes inside the museum walls puncturing the grand historical façade. Likewise, the museum which stood out for me was the Neues Museum: David Chipperfield was the architect, bringing together old fragments of the building and merging them with modern forms to create a beautiful and dramatic interior.

Russia in Revolution

The world-changing upheaval of the Russian Revolution was brought vividly to life for Brampton students at the British Library's wonderful exhibition of posters, artefacts, letters and maps from this crucial event 100 years on.

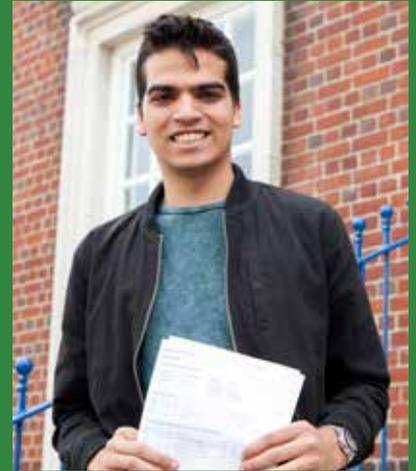
Colourful posters depicting the "typical" dress and occupations of the multifarious peoples of Mother Russia illustrated the way the Tsarist government tried to make links between the disparate strands of empire and promote loyalty to the regime. Dramatic propaganda posters from the civil war vied for attention with some startlingly evocative remnants of individual lives, from a single bast shoe, made from woven birch-bark, to a letter of application for a reader's pass to the British Library made by Vladimir Lenin in his years of exile before the revolution. Elsewhere, a huge tilted screen mapped out the lurching pattern of the civil war after 1917 and the Bolsheviks' gradual pinning-down of control across the vast territories of what was to become the USSR. The exhibits vividly brought the reality of such an alien environment and set of events to life for our students.



Right: Soviet poster of a worker sweeping the land of criminals

STUDENT STORY

*After underachieving in the past, Saul Elek turned his academic life around at Brampton. With grades of A*A*A in Economics, Politics and History, Saul has now gone on to read Policy, Politics and Economics at the University of Birmingham.*



I joined Brampton having not worked to my best and underachieving massively (even if I enjoyed my previous schooling a lot).

Brampton was different. Brampton brought the best out of me and got me accustomed to the hard challenges of A levels as soon as I joined. The teaching I found excellent and the teachers were all approachable. Meeting new people and being in a different environment was also something I'm thankful for. I'm really glad that I joined Brampton: it's definitely one of my best decisions and my experiences there have prepared me for university.

Brampton helped me achieve my goals in many ways. The small classes and excellent teachers help you keep on top of your work but teach you to be able to do that yourself rather than relying on others, though teachers will always be there to provide assistance should you need it. By getting on top of my work it meant I could be more organised, and when exam time arrived, I was more prepared for exams than I had ever been.

Brampton is different to other sixth forms as it gives you independence and treats you like an adult. People want to be able to get grades and go to university, but the independence gives you a taste of later life as well. The results Brampton gets speak for themselves. I don't think I would have been able to get to where I am now without Brampton pushing me.

Your body, your consent

Doctors' ability to use organs and other parts of the human body donated to such use before decease is one of the mainstays of modern surgery; yet it is also an area rife with ethical concerns.

Four Biology students from Brampton visited the Royal College of Surgeons at the Hunterian Museum in May to discuss this controversial subject in a seminar day entitled 'Your Body, Your Consent', run by the Royal College of Pathologists. They debated major modern-day problems about donor consent after death and whether the family have the right to overrule the decision made by the deceased. They learnt about the Human Tissue Act and what is legally counted as tissue and what is not. For example, consent is required for skin, but not for hair and nails. "It was fascinating to learn about how the Human Tissue Act of 2004 has affected the development of medical research on cells", the students reported. "All four of us thoroughly enjoyed the day and we all agreed that we would take every opportunity to do more discussion days."

Avni Master & Leora Marcus



Avni, Leora, Joshua and Nikil at the Hunterian Museum

Theatre of Ideas gives students new idea of Theatre

Brampton students thrilled to a masterpiece of modern drama in June when Head of English, Sam Adams, took them to see Berthold Brecht's *Life of Galileo* at the Young Vic.

Brimming with ideas relevant to today, the play examines the relationship between science, religion and political power in its depiction of the way the church responded to Galileo's demonstration that the orthodox geocentric model of the universe was wrong: despite appearances, the earth and other planets were in fact in orbit around the sun! Brecht's interest, as often, lies in the way self-interest and idealism battle unequally to govern the behaviour of individuals in times of crisis. Through its tremendous acting and staging, this production really conveyed to us the magnificence of man's intellect and his desire for truth alongside his cynicism, stupidity and fear. It was an intoxicating afternoon in the theatre.



Brendan Cowell and Billy Howle in the Young Vic's *Life of Galileo* (Photo: Johan Persson)

STUDENT STORY

Zak Marine came to the College after disappointing AS results and left with A A B grades to take him to the University of Southampton to study Computer Science.*

I'm lost for words! My outcome is amazing, considering the AS grades I achieved at my previous school. I thought all was lost, but after my experience at Brampton, I am over the moon! I'll genuinely miss being at Brampton. Although it's been a stressful two years, it's also been great, and I really do love it. Teachers here have given me motivation and helped me to believe that I am good enough. Throughout my time here, teachers kept pushing me to try harder, and I probably would not have been able to do it without their support and belief. Teachers here are always available. Even during study leave, I could walk into Brampton and get an hour's help or guidance. Brampton can see the potential in students, and if they think you can do it, they will support you 110%.



Zak on results day

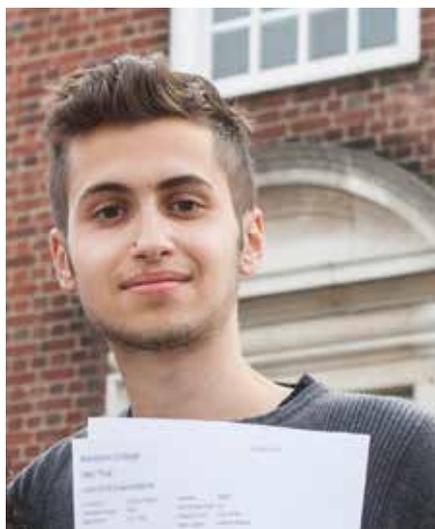
Caring for individual well-being

Well-being – it's a word we hear more and more in relation to young people today. The traditional anxieties of adolescence to do with physical, psychological and emotional change and what lies in the future have been exacerbated to critical levels today by the seemingly inescapable demands of social media.

Helping young people to be able to nurture self-belief, confidence and resilience in the face of such attacks on their developing selves is a vital ingredient in what schools need to do. At a recent conference on well-being attended by Bernard Canetti and Sarah Sephton, Sir Anthony Seldon commented, *"The evidence is totally clear that well-being interventions enhance well-being and allow students and young people to cope best with problems... schools that prioritise well-being, which includes challenging and stretching students, also build character and help them to perform better than those schools which are just exam factories."* Like any other school, Brampton has seen increasing numbers of students who need such help, and its traditional focus on caring for the individual has meant that we have strengthened our provision significantly in this area in recent years.

The warmth of the environment, small classes, individual tutorials, pastoral focus and using teachers' first names have always helped us to bring down barriers preventing students from getting help if and when they need it, while the challenge of evaluating their own work, organising their time and setting themselves appropriate targets for achievement build up resilience and self-confidence. Our personal tutors are attuned to the individual strengths and needs of their tutees; but in recent years we have also held workshops with professionals on resilience and beating exam stress, and engaged parents in thinking about how to deal with the issues faced by students in evening talks by Harley Street specialists such as Mandy Saligari of Charter. There are also extremely experienced professional staff on hand. Barbara Hines, whose help for students suffering from anxiety arising from a great range of sources has proved invaluable to many more. *"I provide students with a non-judgemental and safe environment to confidentially explore, understand and overcome obstacles that may be hindering them"*, explains Barbara. *"Counselling is not an advice service but a way to empower young people to access the answers within themselves. Counselling facilitates the young person to bring about effective change and enhance their wellbeing"*. Viv Osrin, Educational Psychologist, has helped many students over the years with targeted strategies for coping with emotional as well as learning needs. Viv works closely with English teacher Eileen McKniff, to help students with special educational needs. *"Some of our students tell us when enrolling that they have a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia,"* explains Eileen. *"Support is offered throughout the year in a variety of ways, depending on the level of need. Part of my role is to meet and listen to these students as well as liaising with parents, teachers and other colleagues; it is very rewarding to see how such support can lead to positive results"*.

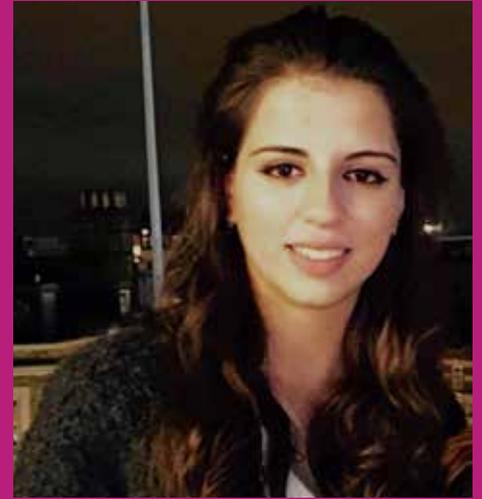
This focus on wellbeing pays off in the end: former student Saul Trup says of his experience at Brampton, *"you build relationships with teachers and feel cared for, like teachers genuinely have your best interests at heart. In terms of my work ethic, confidence and self-belief, I am leaving a different person."*



Above: Saul Trup on results day

STUDENT STORY

Now reading Classics at UCL, Margarita Liasides left Brampton in 2016 with grades of AAAB in English, Classics, Economics and Maths. She tells us here how Brampton supported her to achieve her aims.



I came to Brampton after having suffered exam anxiety and panic attacks during my time at a previous school. I was nervous having to start afresh as my confidence was low and I didn't believe I would be able to complete my A levels at all. The support I received at Brampton was incredible! They understood what I was battling and catered for my needs from the very beginning, giving me the support and guidance I needed to complete my exams and leave with results I am very proud of. For me, the main thing that separates Brampton from my previous schools is that there is a mutual passion for and engagement in study between students and teachers. This creates an environment where students are able to fully unlock their potential, discover a love for learning and achieve the very best results. The enthusiasm and energy that the teaching staff have is incredible and doesn't compare to anything I have ever experienced before. The teachers are highly approachable and always around to help, even during out of school hours, constantly going above and beyond expectations.

Another aspect of Brampton which I particularly benefitted from was the small class sizes; this allowed for a more personal learning experience, promoting focused study and at the same time a strong sense of teamwork and camaraderie. Moreover, Brampton greatly helped me with my application to university, giving me all the support that I needed and leaving me happy and confident with my choices.

Throughout my time at Brampton I was constantly inspired and motivated to do my very best but also to be happy and cultivate a love for learning.

Staff News

Brampton has always had an exceptionally strong teaching staff in the sciences, and this year sees the return to the College of one of its most significant figures from the past: legendary Chemistry teacher and former VP of the College, Jim Donaldson, who is returning to add even more depth to our outstanding Chemistry Department.

Jim left us in 2004 to teach in the Far East, where he has immersed himself not only in a fascinatingly different culture, but acquired a wealth of new educational ideas and experience which he is keen to bring to our classrooms.

We are also very pleased to welcome **Julian Schofield** as our new Head of Biology. Julian has been a highly successful Head of Science at St Helen's School until now, and Brampton biologists will be in very good hands with him from next year. We're also delighted to have been able to appoint Ian Simpson to the crucial post of Director of IT and Computer Science, and say a very fond farewell to Oliver Dowling, who has done a great job of promoting not only IT in the classroom and as a student resource via the VLE, but the independent learning skills of our students in his "flipped classroom" teaching. We wish him all the very best for the future.

Ian Simpson

joins Brampton College as Director of IT and Computer Science. Ian has worked as Head of Computer Science and IT at St Louis School of Milan for the past two years, successfully raising the profile of Computer Science and purposeful use of technology amongst students, parents and staff whilst simultaneously hunting for the perfect espresso. He is also passionate about increasing the integration of low-cost electronics for teaching and learning especially the Raspberry Pi and was fortunate enough to present on the topic at BETT 2017. Ian enjoys travel with his partner and two children, old movies, simple guitar chords and the work of Glen David Gold.



Rini Mukherjee

adds to the College's outstanding strengths in Biology. "I love teaching biology. Having worked as a private tutor alongside my Masters studies and then a full-time teacher in another sixth form college", says Rini. "At University I completed a BSc in Biomedical Sciences with Neurosciences followed by an MSc in Human Molecular Genetics. Outside the classroom my main hobby is running; I completed my first half-marathon last October and aim to try a



Jim Donaldson

full marathon next year. I'm also a fan of flying and am taking flying lessons to attain my Private Pilot's License."

When Alice Ciccioni

was in high school she wanted to be a vet, but in the summer before University she read *The Number Devil*, and she ended up choosing Maths. She graduated with honours at the University of Ferrara (Italy), then gained a PhD in Mathematics from the University of Padova (Italy). Her thesis was about Algebraic Geometry. She attained experience in teaching at University and worked as a science communicator. In 2012 she moved to the UK where she decided to pursue teaching full-time. She adores London and she is very fond of dogs.



Dominique Cowan

is joining our expanding Geography Department. Dominique studied Geography (BA) at Leeds University and then gained her PGCE at Middlesex University. She has taught Geography at Mill Hill County High School and as a private tutor for six years. When she is not teaching she is looking after her two energetic young girls and, when she can, she likes to go to Stamford Bridge on a Saturday afternoon to support Chelsea Football Club.



A tribute to Tina Short

Very sadly, Dr Tina Short, one of the College's best-loved teachers, retires this year after 16 fantastic years of service to Brampton students. As a very experienced examiner and head of department, Tina has been able to exploit her compendious knowledge of biology to push generations of students to the highest examination standards. She has spent countless hours coaxing students through the complexities of the subject, led dozens of biology field trips and written thousands of authoritative, precisely worded departmental notes to give our students a love of the subject and the best possible chance of success. Her attitude to the learning of our students has been a model for others to follow. Now, Tina is looking forward to spending more time following the fortunes of her beloved Spurs once August rolls around: we wish her a very, very happy retirement.

STUDENT STORY

Multi-talented Shyam Dattani reaches final of BBC Young Dancer of the Year



Brampton alumnus, Shyam Dattani, reached the final of the BBC's Young Dancer of the Year competition in April, after winning the South Asian dance category. The annual competition looks for the best dancer aged 16-20 in four categories; Ballet, Contemporary, Hip Hop and South Asian Dance.

Shyam studied at Brampton from 2013-15, achieving A*A*A grades and a place at King's College to study Dentistry. While at Brampton he was a gifted student of both sciences and art. But his love of South Asian dance, particularly Kathak, goes back much further, beginning at the age of two! He is a passionate performer, eager to challenge himself, and has undergone rigorous training under different teachers. Currently under the guidance of his Guru, Urja Desai Thakore, Shyam is now working towards vocational qualifications in dance, and hopes to pass on his love for dance through teaching to others in the near future.