



**BALCARRAS**  
From strength to strength

# NEWSLETTER

## Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

We arrive at February half term a little damp and weather worn but generally in good spirits. On Sunday I am travelling with 100 pupils and staff to the beautiful mountain resort of Myrkdalen in Norway. I'll admit to being just a little excited. I can't wait to put on some skis and spend time gliding (albeit without any grace) down the beautifully manicured pistes of this fine resort.

Whatever our young people are doing February half term represents a much-needed oasis of calm in an otherwise busy term to Easter. So much of the heavy lifting of learning is being done at the moment, particularly as we finish GCSE and A-level courses. I would like to praise the effort and attitude of our students. It has been another vintage half term and I am delighted with how the vast majority of our pupils are progressing.

**Dominic Burke**



## BUDDY THE SCHOOL DOG

### MARK CONSTANCE

We will be celebrating Buddy's 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday on 13<sup>th</sup> March with a BBQ at lunchtime.

Buddy has made it clear that he's keen on fundraising, and the proceeds from the BBQ will go to the Geography Department's Nigerian Borehole Project. It will be a nice opportunity to celebrate and also to raise some funds for a terrific cause.

We thought that hot dogs would be an appropriate choice. Vegetarian option will be available.

**Pre-order on scopay please by 5<sup>th</sup> March – cost is £3 but overpayment can be made.**



## ACTIVITIES WEEK

### LYNNE MASSEY, ACTIVITIES WEEK CO-ORDINATOR

Activities week 2024 this year is from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> of July until 12<sup>th</sup> July inclusive. Monday and Tuesday 8/9<sup>th</sup> are curriculum days. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the students will be allowed to choose from several options available to them to participate in either in school or out on trips. I am aware that some students have already booked on certain trips including residentials.

After the half term, there will be more information provided to you regarding this. All of this information will be sent electronically, so no paperwork involved. Please look out for all of these details coming your way very soon.



## SIXTH FORM NEWS

**DARREN LEATHERBARROW, ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER**

### Sixth Form Applications - 2024 Admissions

Thank you so much to all of the Y11 students that have applied to Sixth Form, we have now emailed all of our applicants to confirm receipt of their application and inform them of next steps. We are now in the process of setting up consultation meetings, which will take place at school in March and we will be in touch with those dates/times after half term. The induction day will be on Tuesday 2nd July. If you do require any further information, please contact [cc@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:cc@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk).

### UCAS 2024-25

The UCAS deadline has now passed and we have submitted 176 applications, which includes some from alumni who we are always keen to support. Many of these students have already participated in university interviews or admission tests and many have already received offers. We are delighted to mention that 3 of our students have received offers from Oxbridge universities.

### Debates

Our annual inter-tutor group debate competition is both a long running and a hotly contested affair. Each tutor group puts up a team and the students battle it out together. Recent topics have included 'Ignorance is bliss' and 'All students should study Maths and English up to the age of 18 at the expense of other subjects'. It's a real highlight of the year and our students acquit themselves superbly. The finale is a big celebration event when we use the main hall and invite a guest adjudicator to proclaim the final judgement. This is also a great way of making sure that Year 12 and Year 13 get the opportunity to bond and share their Sixth Form experience.

### Lessons from Auschwitz

We are delighted that we have been able to secure two places for Year 12 students to participate in the Holocaust Education Trust's 'Lessons From Auschwitz' programme. Students in Year 12 have been asked to write to Mr Leatherbarrow to express their interest should they want to be considered for a place by Wednesday 21st of February.

## EXAMS ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

**HEATHER HARRIS, EXAMINATIONS OFFICER**

Please note that the Balcarras Exams Access Arrangements policy can be viewed on the school website. Parents should be aware that applications for access arrangements for the summer exams will be submitted by the end of February 2024. Only applications for temporary illness or injury can be processed after this time. If you have any queries regarding special arrangements for your child during exams, please contact Mrs Harris or Mrs McLaughlin on [exams@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:exams@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk) or 01242 545119.



**NOTICE FOR PARENTS OF YEAR 11 & YEAR 13****HEATHER HARRIS, EXAMINATIONS OFFICER**

We have received the following message from the national examination boards. Please read it carefully. If your child is taking examinations this summer, please make sure to keep the dates below available should it be necessary for the examination boards to schedule examination for those dates.

**From National Examination Boards Summer 2024 contingency days**

The awarding bodies have collectively agreed a contingency day for several years now which is always scheduled at the end of the GCSE, GCE AS and A-level exam timetables.

The contingency day is in the event of national or significant local disruption to exams in the United Kingdom, being part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for exams.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, further resilience was needed within the exam timetables. A single contingency day was not felt to be sufficient if a national event or incident had a significant effect on the exam timetable. For example, summer exams could be affected by extremely high temperatures.

The awarding bodies have designated two additional half-day contingency sessions for summer 2024 examinations: These are on:

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June PM and Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June PM**

The standard contingency day remains at the end of the timetable being scheduled on:

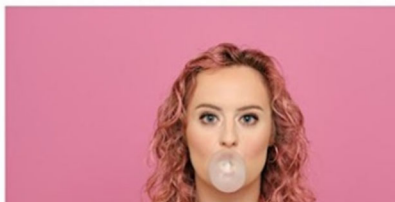
**26<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

Schools and colleges should ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements on these three days. They should consider the contingency day of 26<sup>th</sup> June when making their plans for the summer. Candidates should be encouraged to remain available until 26<sup>th</sup> June should examinations need to be rescheduled.

**PTFA NEWS****KAREN MASON, PTFA**

The next PTFA event will be the PTFA Comedy Night on 8<sup>th</sup> March in the school hall. It's usually a great evening of comedy and a great opportunity to support the school.

Please click [here](#) to purchase tickets via eventbrite!





**6<sup>TH</sup> FORM FOOD TRIP TO LONDON****ADRIENNE FORD, FOOD TEACHER**

Embarking on a culinary adventure is always a delight, but when it comes with a side of history, culture, and a dash of education, it becomes an experience worth cherishing. Recently, I had the pleasure of organising a day trip for 24 Year 12 and 13 Food students to experience London, and it turned into an unforgettable exploration of tastes, sights and stories with Walk, Eat, Talk, Eat's Portobello Tales tour company.

**Morning Bliss: De Nadas Empanadas**

Our day began with a visit to De Nadas, a cozy empanada haven that immediately captured the attention of the students. Led by our enthusiastic guide, Eddie, we dove into the world of these savoury pockets, each bite revealing the culinary richness of different cultures. The owner Nico's stories behind the empanadas added an extra layer of flavour to this delightful morning stop.

**Street Food Extravaganza**

The next part of our journey along Portobello road took us to a vibrant street food market. Eddie's guidance through the bustling market allowed the students to explore new flavours and engage with local vendors. It was a lively and fitting start to a day filled with diverse culinary experiences.

**Chocolate Dreams at Melt**

Next on our journey was Melt, a haven for chocolate enthusiasts. Eddie's knowledge about the artistry behind chocolate-making transformed our visit into a sensory experience. We indulged in handcrafted chocolates that not only pleased our taste buds but also offered insights into the craftsmanship that goes into creating these delectable treats.

**Cultural Immersion: Spanish Deli, Spice Shop, and More**

But the adventure didn't stop at sweets. Eddie took us on a cultural immersion, visiting a Spanish deli and a spice shop. Each stop wasn't just about tasting, but also about understanding the stories, traditions, and influences that shape the diverse culinary landscape of London where we learnt the origins of the name portobello. It took its name from Porto Bello Farm which was built in the area which we now know as Golborne Road. The farm was named after the town of Porto Bello in Panama, captured by the British from the Spanish in 1739, as part of the War of Jenkins' Ear.





### Sweet Finale: Buns from Home

As our exploration continued, we found ourselves at Buns from Home, a place that boasted the most amazing cinnamon swirls and was amazingly born out of the pandemic where these delicious buns were conceived in the owners mums kitchen. Eddie's recommendation proved to be a highlight of the day as we savoured the warm, gooey layers of these heavenly pastries. The aroma of freshly baked treats lingered, making it a sweet conclusion to our culinary journey.

### Conclusion: A Taste of London's Richness

In conclusion, Walk Eat Talk Eat's Portobello Tales was more than just a food tour; it was a journey through the heart and soul of

London's culinary richness taking in popular culture such as the Nottinghill, blue door and book shop, iconic architecture like Trellick tower and of course the food. From savoury empanadas to artisanal chocolates and aromatic cinnamon swirls, each stop was a testament to the city's diverse flavours. For anyone seeking a flavourful, educational, and culturally enriching experience in London, Portobello Tales with Walk Eat Talk Eat is a must-try. It's a reminder that in every bite, there's a story waiting to be discovered.



## YEARBOOK – FINAL CALL

### ALAN & AMY SPRING WALLIS, YEARBOOK CO-ORDINATORS

Parents and carers of Y11 please upload your Y7 and baby photos here if you would like them to appear in the yearbook:

<https://baccarras.fireflycloud.net/yearbook/year-7-and-baby-photos>

The deadline is the end of the February half term holiday (Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February).



## CAREERS DEPARTMENT JILL LEWIS & VICKY BULL

The Year 10 practice interviews took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January and 1<sup>st</sup> February. Interviewers from Safran Landing systems, Ontic, HR Star, DWP, Hydro, RRA Architects, Astor Bannerman and Hartpury, Cirencester and Gloucestershire Colleges attended the event.

Practice Interviews are a fantastic chance for students to experience what a real interview would be like, in terms of format and questions, and provides them with an opportunity to practice their answers. A practice interview helps students to learn how to answer difficult questions, develop interview strategies, improve their communication skills and reduces stress.

Student reflections:



*'It has given me confidence of my skills and provided me with experience for future interviews'*



*'It helped me get a sense of how interviews work and it was nice to hear honest feedback about myself.'*

*'Helped me feel comfortable around a new person and understand the interview process'*



## SKI TRIP – FEBRUARY HALF TERM 2024

### MALCOLM DEAN, SKI TRIP LEADER

Everyone is getting very excited for our 6<sup>th</sup> Ski Trip to Myrkdalen (Norway) that departs at 05:30am on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February.

There has been abundant snowfall since November and it's going to be very cold!

Hopefully there will be a few sunny days to enjoy absolutely perfect skiing conditions and experience stunning panoramas as far as the eye can see.

Special thanks to **Mr Davidson & Mr Weller** who have had their work cut out this year arranging basic training for over 40 novice skiers.

All novices have progressed well on the dry ski slopes at Matson, and this will allow them to make swift progress to blue, red and even black runs by the end of our trip.

We have already made a provisional booking with Myrkdalen for February 2025.

Do not hesitate to contact me ([mcd@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:mcd@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)) if you wish your son / daughter to participate next year.

## NEWSLETTER



The newsletter will now be distributed by email and available to view on our VLE (Firefly) as well as on the school website.

It is incredibly easy and will save the school a lot of paper and the planet a lot of trees!

If you would still prefer a hard copy, please contact Karen Adkins  
[ksa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:ksa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

Follow us on X (formerly Twitter) @balcarras and Facebook, [Facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool](https://www.facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool) for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher





All vacancies are advertised on the Balcarras Trust website:

<https://www.thebaltarrastrust.co.uk>



## Teacher of History

Required for 1st September 2024

We are looking for an enthusiastic and inspirational teacher who will contribute to our future success of our History department.

Ofsted assessed Balcarras in 2005, 2009 and 2014 as 'Outstanding' in every category. Applications from both prospective ECTs and experienced Teachers are welcome.

Excellent induction and further professional development is available.  
Please read the letter to applicants and the applicant pack for further information.  
[www.thebaltarrastrust.co.uk](http://www.thebaltarrastrust.co.uk)

### Application

To apply, please send completed application forms to [jobs@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:jobs@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

Closing Date for applications: Monday 19th February 2024, 9am

Interviews will take shortly afterwards, week beginning 26th February 2024.

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above e-mail address.

*The Balcarras Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This role will involve regulated activity with children. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.*



## Teacher of Geography

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Interview date: Wednesday 28th February 2024

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above e-mail address.

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