

March 21st 2017

Dear Parents,

This is a particularly busy stage of the year as many of the students begin the countdown to the summer examinations. Whilst the school rightly has this as a high priority there has been an enormous amount of other activities going on since my last Newsletter. Last Wednesday I spoke at the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards ceremony. **59** students in Year 11 have passed the award this year, which is a record. My congratulations once again to them. *(See Vicky Bull's report below.)*

Two weeks ago I snuck out of the Senior Management Team meeting to watch the start of the Year 9 South West Regional Basketball final. The boys made a great start before going on to lose to their opponents from Bristol, thus missing out on a place at the national finals... it was their first defeat of the season. They've established themselves as the dominant force locally and we are genuinely optimistic they'll make the finals next year. *(See the full report below.)*

On May 6th I am going to Milton Keynes to watch the KS3 Boys Badminton team try to become National Champions. A few weeks ago they won the South West Championships in Bournemouth. Congratulations to them and well done also to the KS4 girls who came second in their section and the KS4 boys who came third – both narrowly missing out on a place at the national finals.

On Thursday I had the honour of being interviewed by the BBC Newsday Team. I love this event and I am looking forward to seeing their broadcast which should be on our website shortly.

Government Consultation on Fair Funding

I support the efforts of F40 (chaired by Alex Chalk) in trying to persuade the government to make changes to the new funding formula. I believe there are 3 key issues which need to be addressed:

- The overall level of per pupil funding has been set too low. The formula places too much emphasis on deprivation factors. Whilst it is obviously fair to allocate more funds to schools who serve areas of high deprivation it should not be done at the expense of schools who serve areas with a lower level of deprivation. ALL children deserve an excellent education regardless of their background. We are already one of the two hundred worst funded secondary schools (in terms of per pupil funding) in the country. It cannot be right to take £100,000 out of our budget and to transfer it to another school.
- The new formula includes a 3% floor so that schools are protected from big drops in income. Whilst that might sound like a good idea, in effect, it simply locks in the historical injustices that a new fair funding formula was supposed to address.
- Finally, I believe that this whole exercise might be equivalent to re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Of course we would like 'fair' funding but ultimately what we need is 'adequate' funding. Sooner or later someone is going to have to increase the overall size of the schools budget. We are being funded at 2010 levels but we're paying 2017 prices. You don't have to be an economist to understand that this is a recipe for disaster.

I would encourage you to take part in the consultation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/schools-national-funding-formula>

It closes tomorrow.

Nick Gibb visit

The Minister of State for Schools, Nick Gibb, was due to visit Balcarras recently. Unfortunately he had to postpone the visit at the 11th hours but his office have been in touch to re-schedule. I am keen to meet him to advance the case for comprehensive education and to press for changes to the National Fair Funding Formula.

Visits from European teachers

We have hosted three separate visits from European teachers in recent months. I think it's a great idea for teachers to visit other schools and if possible experience different education systems. The teachers who have visited recently have come from France, Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, Belgium and Italy. It goes without saying that they were all very impressed by their visit to Balcarras.

DofE News

Congratulations to Year 11 who have broken a school record by being the biggest cohort of pupils to complete the Bronze award in any one year group. On Wednesday 15th March **59** of the pupils were joined by guest speaker Rich Whincup to hear his inspiring story and celebrate achieving their Bronze Award. Well done to all of those involved in this and my thanks extends to parents, carers and staff who have so willingly given up their time to support this worthy cause.

Vicky Bull, DofE Co-ordinator

BBC School Report

On Thursday 16th March 10 Year 9 pupils took part in the BBC School Report News Day. The students were a fantastic team and worked tirelessly all day to create a website that they should be very proud of. Throughout the day the students managed to carry out interviews, write 4 articles and film multiple video reports too! You can see all of their hard work on our school website under the extracurricular tab.

Hannah Wranosky

All England Badminton Championships – Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

On March 8th we took a group of 45 students from our badminton club run by Mr Dundas to this prestigious competition to watch the worlds' greatest players in action.

This was our 6th year of attending the event, and we were lucky enough to see the world men's champion Chong Wei Lee of Malaysia, the world men's doubles champions v Shem Goh and Wee Kiong Tan, also of Malaysia, the women's world doubles champions Misaki Matsumoto and Ayaka Takahashi of Japan and our own Olympic bronze medallists Marcus Ellis and Chris Langridge.



Sara Roylance

6th Form Debating Competition

The 6th Form Debating Competitions is nearing to an exciting finish with the final on Wednesday April 5th. If you are interested in coming, please contact Reception and they will give you the details. It's at 1.30pm in the Hall.

Friday March 17th – Mufti

£500 of the money raised last Friday will be donated to the Disasters Emergency Commission to support aid work in East Africa. This area is currently experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises in many years, and the school community would like to show its support. Drought and conflict have left 16 million people on the brink of starvation and in urgent need of food, water and medical treatment.

The remaining monies given will be distributed among the houses so that we can continue to support a number of local and national charities.

Mark Constance

Thick Jumper Day

The total raised from our recent Thick Jumper Day was a terrific **£1,182.43**. It was a really good day, including a competition with prizes for the best thick jumper. The money raised has been donated to Water Aid who's work with local partners help to end extreme poverty through providing clean water and sanitation.

Jon Pearce and Mark Constance

SPORTS NEWS

Badminton South West Regional Finals

We took 3 teams of students to Bournemouth to represent Gloucestershire in KS3 Boys', KS4 Boys' and KS4 Girls' competitions. The KS3 Boys won their tournament, it went down to the last game in the final and they are now through to a National Final at the Home of Badminton in Milton Keynes in May. The KS4 Girls won silver and the KS4 Boys won bronze in their tournaments.



KS3 Boys – represented by Scott McKenzie, Ben Powell, Alfie Hancock and Connor Hay.

KS4 Boys – represented by Tian Lu, Oliver Powell, Sam Gibson and Harry Durnberger.

KS4 Girls – represented by Amelia Horne, Amelia Boskett-Williams, Jessica Kelly and Zoe Beard.

Well done to all of the teams!

Thomas Streeter

Balcarras Waterpolo Team

It may seem slightly unusual that a school without access to a pool might be participating in water based sports, but due to the large number of students at Balcarras training with local swim, syncro and waterpolo clubs it is actually easier than one might think.

On 14th March Balcarras Waterpolo Youth team played Cheltenham College Waterpolo team. The Balcarras team consisted of, Josh, Rueben, Ella, Bronwyn, Joe, Will and Ollie. Despite the age difference, our young players held their own and there was some excellent phases of play. The team were ably coached and managed by Ollie Marshall who provided a superb example of both play and player conduct. The Cheltenham college team were exemplary in both their conduct and sportsmanship.

It was a real pleasure to take part in such a good natured but extremely competitive event. Many thanks to Mr Streeter for organising the event and for his help at the match. Thank you also to Vicky and Cheltenham College for both the venue and cakes afterwards.

I shall be searching for additional players, particularly those keen on Rugby (waterpolo is a very physical game!) for matches in the future and hope to ideally field both a Youth (KS3/4) and Senior (KS5) team.

Please get in contact with me if you are interested in what is essentially rugby in the water!

Richard Cook

Football teams

As we come towards the semi-final stage of the district cups our football teams have had mixed fortunes.

The sixth form team beat Chosen Hill 6-0 but then lost two close games 2-1 against Pates and All Saints to miss out on the final this year.

The Year 11 team beat Prince Henry's and Tewkesbury School to book a place in the final on April 5th, well done boys.

The Year 10 team lost their first game but have won the last two and with two more games to go we are hoping that the boys can get through to the semi-finals for the second year running.

The Year 9 team have had a disappointing season, despite losing in the semi-finals last year they are yet to register a win this year with two games to play.

The Year 8 team have had a fantastic set of results drawing 1-1 with Cleeve but winning against Pittville, All Saints and Tewkesbury scoring 28 goals and only conceding 4. They have already made it through to the semi-finals the week before the Easter holidays.

Continued good luck to all of the teams for the remainder of the season.

PE Department

Year 11 Ball

The date for this year's ball is Friday 5th May, and it will take place at the Regency Hotel, Gloucester Road, Staverton, 7.30-11.00pm

The cost is £15 per head which includes a buffet, a disco, a welcome drink, professional photos (everyone will receive a CD with all the photos from the evening on) and a fun photo booth.

Payments can be made on line or taken to the finance office before the deadline of 28th April.

Sara Roylance & Karen Williams Holland

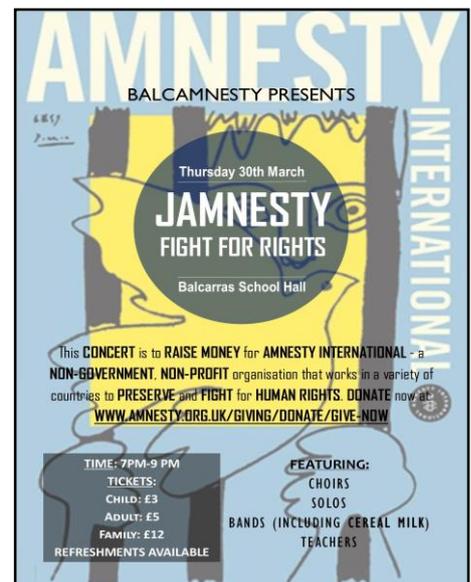
JAMNESTY – Thursday March 30th, 7pm

Balcamnesty would like to invite all parents and students to "Jamnesty", a concert to raise money for human rights charity 'Amnesty International'. The event will take place on Thursday 30th March at 7pm, and is sure to be an evening filled with spectacular musical performances from students throughout the school!

Tickets will be available from the maths foyer at lunchtimes, with prices at £3 for a child, £5 for an adult and £12 for a family (admits 2 adults and 2 children). Refreshments will also be available on the night.

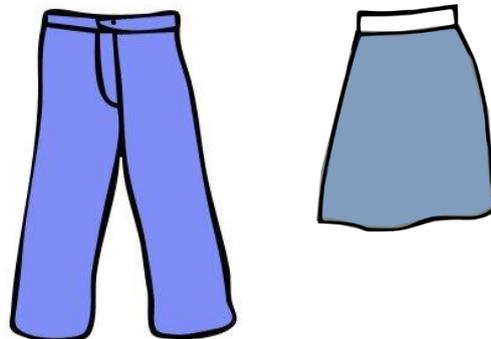
We hope to see you there!

Y12 students – Balcamnesty



March 2017 Uniform

For parents who are intending to buy new uniform over the next few weeks, ready for the summer when it arrives, this is an important reminder. Please make sure you buy the correct trousers or skirt, **only** from one of the school's recognised suppliers:



<p>Schooltogs www.schooltogs.com/balcarras 252 High Street, opposite Wilkinsons</p>	<p>The Schoolwear Company www.theschoolwearcompany.co.uk Universal Uniform Ltd, Unit V1 Kingsville Road, Kingsditch Trade Park</p>
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Please **do not** buy trousers or skirts from other suppliers, as they will not meet the uniform regulations of the school. If in any doubt about any uniform issues, you can view the school website, or, if you are still unsure, contact the relevant Head of House.

Neil Baxter, Deputy Head

Unwanted school uniform

The PTFA is looking for any unwanted school uniform in good, clean condition that parents would be willing to donate. Please send it in to school where it will be collected in Reception. They will then be able to sell it at future PTFA events. Thank you to all who have already donated their unwanted uniform to the school.

PTFA Event – Golf Evening

The PTFA will be hosting a Golf Afternoon/Evening at Lilley Brook Golf Club. Parents and Pupils are welcome. Please email Beccy Roberts directly to book a Tee time. bexroberts60@hotmail.com



Charlton Kings Tennis PLACE 2017

New season starts Saturday 1 April 2017 - open to all ages and abilities. Pupils, parents and friends can play after school hours during the week, weekends and school holidays until the end of September.

There are lots of things to take part in at the club including:

- Junior Easter holiday coaching course, starts 18 April for four days
- Junior club night (starts Friday 28 April - 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm)
- Cardio Tennis on Friday evenings at 6.30 pm starting 28 April
- Adult social tennis, evening and weekends
- Friendly competitions and tournaments including the popular parent and child annual tournament
- Group and individual coaching for adults and juniors from complete beginner to intermediate level
- Junior summer holiday course
- Online court booking system
- Social events including start of season quiz night
- Entry to Wimbledon Ballot for members



For more information about the coaching courses and becoming a member visit our website www.charltonkingstennisplace.co.uk or contact Ruth and Simon on 01242 527811, mobile 07952 791083, email tennis@charltonkingstennisplace.co.uk

Ruth and Simon Thomas

To parents of Year 10 pupils

Study leave and trial exams begin for Year 10 on Wednesday 3rd May. All Year 10 pupils will be required to attend school as normal on Tuesday 2nd May and will return from study leave on Wednesday 10th May. Thank you.

The Exams Office

Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers

We are collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers. If you shop at Sainsbury's, please could you get as many of these vouchers as possible and give them to your son or daughter to give to their tutor. We always use them to get a variety of resources for the school.

Mark Constance

Ski Trip 2018 - (Myrkdalen, Norway)

The ski trip will go ahead next February half-term.

60 places have been secured for pupils and, at the time of writing, 35 pupils have confirmed their participation, leaving 25 spaces available.

An Easter trip to the same resort is not viable at present.

Pupils who have paid a holding deposit of £50 need to make a 2nd payment of £140 to confirm their place on the February trip.

Pupils who had paid a holding deposit of £50 but cannot go at half-term need to see Mrs Davies (Finance Office) to ask for a refund.

Malcolm Dean, Ski Party Leader

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher

'Follow our Twitter account [@balcarras](https://twitter.com/balcarras) for updates about Balcarras and links to news stories about the school.'

