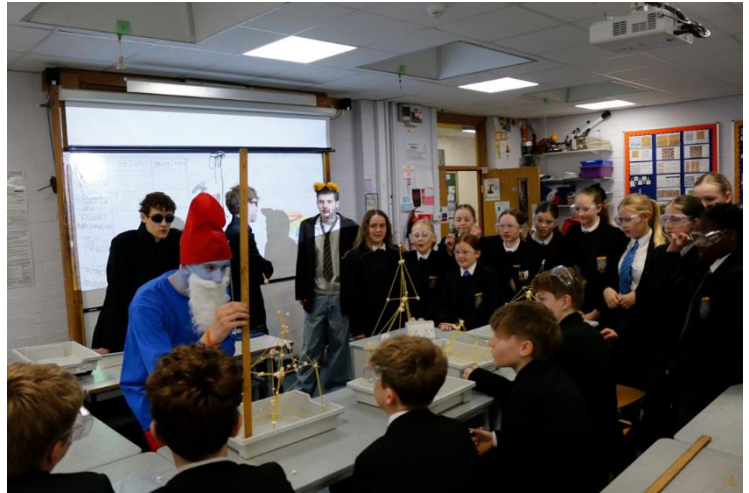


Update from the Head

Another week flies by. There is a real intensity and pace about these short terms—in one way I like it because it means it's not long before the next break—in another I don't because I sometimes struggle to know what day it is! Today is Friday and I'm pleased about that.

STEM Week

From Monday 9th to Friday 13th March, we celebrated British Science/STEM week at Balcarras. There were lunchtime talks from a range of professions and topics, competitions and themed activities in lessons for some year groups. All Year 7 science classes enjoyed a science lesson delivered by our very own Year 12 STEM ambassadors. Our ambassadors threw themselves in to the task with their meticulous planning, careful practice, assessment of risk and delivering the lessons with enthusiasm. The lessons were brilliant and enjoyed by everyone involved. My thanks to Mrs McRitchie for her superb organisation.



Logo Designers



I spent Monday breaktime with the Year 9 pupils who designed our 40th Anniversary logo. I congratulated them all and we spent time chatting over cookies and juice/tea. They are a lovely bunch of pupils and I enjoyed catching up with them. Mrs Swanepoel joined us as well.

Young Enterprise Final

On Tuesday both of our Year 12 YE Teams competed in the Gloucestershire YE Finals at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester. Both Balcarras teams (Grounded and CuppaByCalm) performed exceptionally well throughout the competition. After submitting detailed company reports, each team presented and pitched their business ideas to a panel of judges.

Team CuppaByCalm impressed the judges with their strong brand and strategy, proudly winning the Marketing Award.



Cuppa By Calm is a carefully curated box of four herbal tea infusions, designed to support the wellbeing and academic performance of students facing GCSEs, A Levels, and higher education exams.



Team Grounded achieved outstanding success, securing the prestigious title of Best Overall Company. They now go onto the Regional Final held in Taunton in May.

See article here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1447>

Balcarras has now won the Gloucestershire YE Competition for 11 of the last 14 years. We really are the Real Madrid of YE!

Lessons from Auschwitz

On Tuesday 6 Balcarras Year 12 pupils visited Auschwitz as part of the *Lessons From Auschwitz* project. They flew early morning from Birmingham Airport and travelled to Auschwitz in Poland. The visit is part of a wider project that the pupils are involved in to further understand the horrors of the Holocaust.

Governor Visitation Day



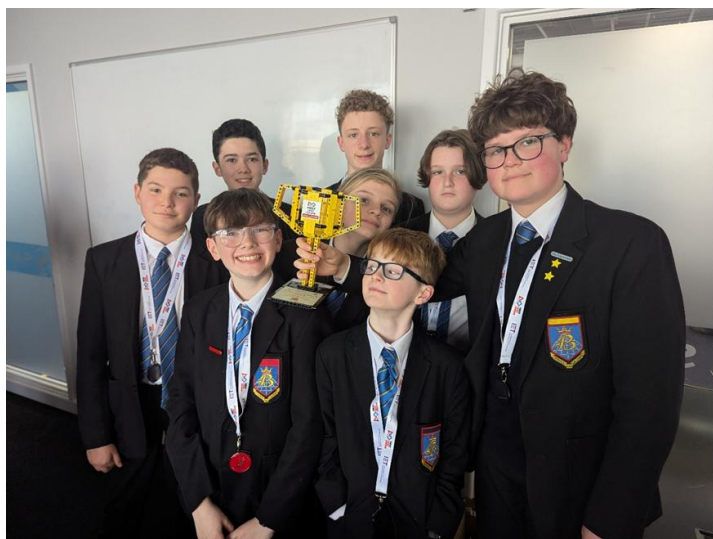
On Tuesday the Balcarras Governors spent the whole afternoon in the school before their usual Full Governing Board Meeting at 5pm. After a quick catch up and coffee with me we headed to the canteen for lunch. It was useful for the governors to observe how the canteen operates at lunch. Afterwards we popped into lunchtime clubs and spent some time walking the site. During period 5 the governors spent time in science and Modern Foreign Languages. At 4 o'clock we had a session looking at how the school is coping with the cuts being imposed by government. It was a very useful session. Here is a nice photo of the governors standing in front of the beautiful blossom trees outside of the Individual Learning Department.

GITEP Board Meeting

On Wednesday morning I chaired the latest Board Meeting of the Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership. GITEP is a collaboration of some 50 secondary and primary schools who collaborate to run a teacher

training course. I started the meeting by congratulating colleagues from GITEP on a superb OFSTED report. It is not quite ready for publication, but I will share it when it is. We also discussed recruitment of trainees for next year. We are slightly down on where we were last year. Teacher recruitment remains a tough environment.

Balcarras through to Robot Challenge Finals!



On Wednesday 18th March, 10 students from Years 7–9 attended the First Lego League Regional event in Gloucester, hosted by Safran Landing Systems. They competed in four challenges, winning the *Robot Performance Award* and reaching the finals of the Robot Challenge Knockout. Overall, the trip was a great success. All students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and gained valuable insight into STEM topics, teamwork, and competitive problem-solving. It was a rewarding and inspiring day for everyone involved.

Year 12 Higher Education Evening

On Wednesday evening Mr Leatherbarrow and the sixth form team hosted a meeting to inform parents about the process for post 18 applications. Apparently, it went very well.

Catering Committee

On Thursday morning the Balcarras School Catering Committee met. For our March meeting we always invite a group of pupils to the committee so that they can feedback their views on the catering service. I am very grateful to the 15 pupils who came along. It was really useful to hear their views.

Year 7 Careers Fair

During the Personal Development session on Thursday afternoon Year 7 visited a wonderful careers fayre in the main hall. The vast majority of the stands on display were provided by Balcarras parents. We are very grateful to those parents who gave up their time to showcase their careers to our youngsters.



40th Anniversary

Balcarras' 40th Anniversary Celebrations start next week. We have a wonderful concert planned for Wednesday evening. Tickets are available on Scopay. There is the football tournament on Thursday and our funding wall is open and ready for donations, thanks to all who have donated already <https://balcarras.hubbub.net/donor-wall/>

See all of the details here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1440>



Sporting Highlights of the week



Well done to the Year 11 Boys who beat The Cotswold School on penalties to reach the Final of the District Football Competition. Girls fixtures this week have been dominated by netball games between Balcarras and The High School Leckhampton. Apparently, they were all very competitive games. Here is a nice photo of two of the teams posing together:

Zac's 44 Legacy Match

There will be a Memorial Rugby Match in memory of our former pupil Zac Summers-Cameron on Saturday 4th April at Old Pats. All proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to Maggie's Charity, chosen by Zac's family as a charity that means a great deal to them. Please see news article on the Balcarras website here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1448>

Right, that's it from me. The weather has been quite lovely this week. I do hope that it continues for the weekend and if it does I'm going to get out for a walk. I'll be watching the TV on Saturday evening and just praying that Leeds can pick up three priceless points at home to Brentford. I hope you all have a nice weekend.

Dominic Burke