



**BALCARRAS**  
From strength to strength

# NEWSLETTER

## Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the latest Balcarras School newsletter. There has been plenty going on in the school since the last issue. I love this time of year—there is so much to look forward to: midsummer music, house dance, sports day, summer sports fixtures, activities week, the cinema trip and of course the summer beyond. Before all of that we need to complete the public exam season. So far everything has gone without a major issue. My thanks to Mrs Harris and her superb team.

Last night we had the A level Art, Textiles and Photography exhibition. It was a fine vintage and a real pleasure to spend time looking around. The work is exquisite and is a real credit to the pupils and their teachers. It came hot on the heels of last term's GCSE exhibition which was also just superb.

Yesterday was a big day for our Young Enterprise Team, Grounded Origin, who went to the YE National Finals in Cardiff. They didn't win but they have been a superb team and finish the year as Southwest Champions. Well done to them.

Also yesterday...the athletics season began. Balcarras won the Year 9 Girls District Athletics and the Year 9 Boys came second. Well done to them.

Six action filled weeks to go and then the summer holidays!

**Dominic Burke**

Keep up to date on all our news:

[WWW.BALCARRAS.GLOUCS.SCH.UK](http://WWW.BALCARRAS.GLOUCS.SCH.UK)

Balcarras School



Just letting you know that Balcarras School are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment. Scan the QR code to start fundraising!

Thank you so much!

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## Perfect Name Labels Sent Out Same Day

**DUKE OF EDINBURGH**  
**JAMES BUTLER**

106 Y10 bronze DofE students completed their expedition over 2 days.

Students walked from Broadway Tower to Hayles Fruit Farm where they camped for the night. There was rain but everyone was in high spirits. Despite students being in bed by 10pm, Mr Butlers snoring kept everyone awake. The following day, students left camp and made their way up to Cleeve Hill. The students had collected a lot of things along the way; blisters, sticks, an affinity for poorly cooked pasta - but most of all, memories. I'm glad everyone had a great time. A huge thank you to the staff involved for giving their weekend to run the expedition.



## MUSIC NEWS

### MUSIC DEPARTMENT

#### From Nicola Hopkins, Visiting Flute Teacher:

During the afternoon of St George's Day (23rd April) we had a visit from four musicians from the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. This fabulous orchestra, which is based in London, works mainly without a conductor. They are directed from the violin by world-famous performer Joshua Bell. Their tours take them all over the world.

With the help of a legacy fund from Sir Neville Mariner they brought their inspiration to Cheltenham. Fourteen Balcarras students were involved in the chamber music coaching - and they raised their game to a new level. Visiting performers Sarah, Catherine, Louise and Rebecca started the session playing a wide ranging programme to us. The students were totally enthralled! After all the music-making there was time for questions, there was lot of talk about careers in music. It was exciting to hear our visitors talk about their adventures, but also to hear about the musical and career aspirations of the students.



#### From Mrs Watts: A Very Busy May!

Balcjazz played a stonkingly good set at the Cheltenham Jazz Festival on May 2nd. The crowd were so receptive and enthusiastic. A big shout-out to Anya Hunter for her wonderful solo!

Four days later, we were at the Town Hall for the 100th Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts. Chamber Choir on their own gained 89 marks (very high Honours) and then they were joined by Cantabile in a separate entry into the same class. This combined performance was awarded 91 marks (which is classed by the Festival system as Outstanding).





After all of the youth choirs had performed by the end of the Festival, we learned that Chamber Choir and Cantabile had been awarded the Youth Choirs Silver Plate, given to the youth choir with the highest marks across the whole festival. We're all delighted. A team photo will follow! For now, this is what the trophy looks like.

### Midsummer Music '26

The final couple of weeks before half term were full of auditions for MM26. All Breaks, Lunchtimes and After School slots are full of enthusiastic musicians, rehearsing for the Big Day! This promises to be a vintage year, packed with fantastic music-making!

If it's not already in there, please put it in your diary now! This year's Midsummer Music date is Friday 19th June from 6pm.

There's still a Midsummer Music sponsorship opportunity, so if you're interested in helping in this way, please contact [fundraising@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:fundraising@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

We hope to see as many of you as possible there on the night. It'll be a great evening!

### Exam Successes

Congratulations to the following teachers and their students:

Mrs Tracey Vacher - MTB Piano:

Emily Moriarty - Grade 4 - Pass

Sophie Price - Grade 1 - Distinction

Seth Fraine - Grade 3 - Merit

Fin McCanna - Grade 6 - Merit

Mrs Kate Skeet - MTB Violin:

Robyn Ellis - Grade 4 - Merit

Mr Matt Bucher - Rock School - Drums:

Andreas Leung - Grade 4 - Merit

Oscar Smith - Grade 2 - Merit

Davi Tsang - Grade 2 - Merit

**Y13 Final Day:**

On Friday 8th May we bid a very emotional farewell to our Y13 students as they started their study leave for their final exams. The year group is the largest Sixth Form cohort group we have had with 238 students. On their last day, the students enjoyed their final few lessons, followed by our traditional leaver's assembly from Mr Burke, Mr Leatherbarrow and Mr Constance before heading out into the sunshine for a delicious BBQ, courtesy of Mr Rothwell and the Y13 tutor team. We are very much looking forward to seeing all of the students at the upcoming prom which is being held on Tuesday 30th June at Manor by the Lake.

**A-level Exams:**

Final A-level exams are now fully underway for Y13 students and we are immensely proud at their conduct, many students are making full use of the study suites and Sixth Form meeting room for their revision and its lovely to see them around school, collaborating with their peers on their revision. Many Y12 students have also had final exams - including many of our Heritage Language students who have sat an A-level including some that have sat exams in subjects that aren't taught at Balcarras, our Y12 Food Tech students have also sat an exam this week and our Health and Social students sat an exam a few weeks ago.

## Balcarras students triumph at South West Young Enterprise final



Students from Balcarras School have achieved outstanding success after being named Best Overall Company at the South West Young Enterprise Regional Final. The event took place on 5th May 2026 at the Taunton Conference Centre in Somerset, bringing together top student businesses from across the region.

The Young Enterprise Company Programme challenges students to create and run their own businesses over the course of an academic year. At the regional final, eight teams competed in a range of categories, including Innovation, Marketing, Sustainability, Customer Service, Financial Management, Creativity, Teamwork and Best Presentation.

Balcarras' winning team, Grounded Origin, impressed judges with both their product and business approach. Their company produces eco-friendly plant pots made from chaff (a by-product of coffee production that is often discarded as waste). When planted, the pots naturally decompose into the soil, releasing valuable nutrients such as nitrogen, potassium and magnesium, helping to improve soil health.

As regional winners, the team will now go on to represent the South West at the UK Company of the Year Final in Cardiff on 3rd June.

Managing Director Noah Roscoe described the experience as "absolutely amazing," highlighting the hard work and perseverance of the team throughout the year. He explained that the journey had helped everyone develop important skills, particularly in leadership and teamwork, and said they are excited for the next stage of the competition.

Anyone wishing to support Grounded Origin can explore their products online:

<https://grounded-origin.co.uk/>

Support from the community will play an important role as the team continues its journey at the national level.



## 2026 Sixth Form Admissions:

**BALCARRAS SIXTH FORM INDUCTION DAY**  
**30.6.26**  
**8.45AM-12.30PM**

Please join us on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June for our Sixth Form Induction Day!

During the day you will get to sample each of your A Level subject choice during a 30 minute taster lesson, you will also learn about our timetabled study lessons and have an assembly with Mr Leatherbarrow, Head of Sixth Form.

We will also host a refreshment break and a freshers fair, where you can learn about all of the extra curricular activities we offer in Sixth Form.

Uniform is not required however we advise smart casual and to bring a pen, paper and bottle of water.

We look forward to seeing you!

We are delighted to announce that we have delivered all of our conditional offer letters to all 550 applicants for next academic year entry to Sixth Form. We are looking forward to seeing the applicants at our upcoming induction day, which is held on the morning of Tuesday 30th June. If you would like any further information, please contact [cc@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:cc@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk).

## UCAS 2027:

Our Y12 students have now begun their post-18 preparations, prior to half term, we hosted two visitors - one from Cardiff Met and one from Gloucestershire University, each to talk about post-18 options including how to choose a course if they wish to continue with full time education and also degree- apprenticeship opportunities. In addition, we have met with all of our Y12 students that wish to study medicine/veterinary and had an external speaker visit to talk about UCAT testing and the application process. We also worked with the students to set up their UCAS login details during our most recent PSHE sessions and talked them through the UCAS application process. In addition, we will be attending the UCAS Post-18 Convention at the Birmingham NEC on Tuesday 23rd June with all of our Y12 students. Please ensure you have purchased your ticket on Scopya.

## Sixth Form Trips:

It's been a busy half term - our Y12 product design visited the Mini plant in Oxford, the Environmental Science students compiled some research at a local river and visited a sewage works, the Health and Social students visited Gloucestershire university and some of our music students performed at the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts at Cheltenham Town Hall.

## Sixth Form Uniform:

We have made an amendment to our Sixth Form uniform - from September, if a Sixth Form student wishes to wear a skirt, it must be of a long length - such as midi or maxi. Short skirts will no longer be permitted in Sixth Form. Black or grey trousers are also permitted. Please see our website for further information.



Y12 Final Day of Term:

Y12 students will finish for the academic year on Friday 3rd July. The following two weeks of the academic year will be spent off-site for Y12 students. The Y12 Cultural Trip to Berlin will take place during w/o 6th July with 45 students from Y12, DofE will also take place during w/o 6th July. In addition, all Y12 students have that two week period to conduct some work shadowing of their choice, we look forward to hearing about their work experiences when they return to Y13 in September. Please note the first day of Y13 will be Thursday 3rd September.

FLAG COMPETITION

AMY SEARLE, HEAD OF GEOGRAPHY



Back in the autumn term, the geography department ran a competition to design a flag for Antarctica. We had 2 winners at Balcarras - Izabella Ford and Sophie Massey both from 7S2. They were each given a token for the Balcarras book venting machine and a 'geographer' badge in recognition of their efforts, and their flags were then sent to the UK Polar Network who took their designs to Antarctica. The attached photos show them at Heard Island in the Southern Ocean!

This is an annual competition so there will be the opportunity for anyone in KS3 that is interested to take part again next autumn.



## PTFA NEWS

PTFA Second hand uniform sale

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026

5-6.45 pm

\*new time\*

School reception are happy to receive any donated uniform in advance of the sale.

We are looking forward to Midsummer Music, Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June at 6pm.

If you are available to help on the bar or in any capacity on the evening, please email [ptfa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:ptfa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

## 2WISH

## MARK CONSTANCE, CHARITIES



Just before half term, we received a certificate from the charity 2Wish to thank Balcarras for their donation of £924.64. These funds were raised by students celebrating Buddy's 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday with a delicious lunchtime BBQ. 2wish support families and friends of people who have suffered sudden bereavement of child or young adult. We also supported this charity through our Sixth Form Dress Up Day earlier this year.

## PE NEWS

## MARK HARVEY, HEAD OF PE

Before half term, the PE department took 45 students from years 8-12 to the Prince of Wales Stadium for the Cheltenham District Athletics Trials. This is the first stage of the English Schools Championships in which students attempt to achieve times, heights and distances that progress them through from the district rounds to County, Regional and then National Championships. Well done to all of the athletes who competed but a special congratulations to the 21 athletes who have made it through to the County Rounds which take place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June in Gloucester. We think it may be a record number of students achieving the district standards in recent years. Good luck in the next round!!

**Senior Girls:** Blue Heath-Smith 400m and Jess Asquith shot and javelin.

**Inter Girls:** Katie Whitfield 300m, Rosie Atkins and Evie Avery 800m, Olivia Avery 1500m, Naomi Kelly Javelin and Bonnie Shirlaw in three events 80m hurdles, javelin and long jump!!

**Junior Girls:** Suraaiyah Morgan 100m and long jump, Lucy Vaughan 200m and Isla McRitchie 80m hurdles and high jump.

**Inter Boys:** Aidan John 100m, Alex Joice 400m, Patrick Paul 1500m, Ethan Hendry 3000m, Reuben Wiltshire high jump, Austin Harris long jump and George Iddon Discus.

**Junior Boys:** Dylan Jones 1500m, Ru Bridges high jump and Joseph Sheppee Javelin.

## JUNIOR MATHS CHALLENGE

### SIMON CRITCHLEY, HEAD OF MATHS

This year, 126 students from Year 7 and Year 8 took part in the Junior Maths Challenge. Consisting of 25 multiple-choice questions, the challenge tests students' ability to apply and combine different areas of mathematics to solve problems creatively and logically.

Our students achieved an impressive 34 Bronze, 30 Silver and 12 Gold awards. The Gold award winners are pictured in the attached photograph and all enjoyed today's presentation ceremony.

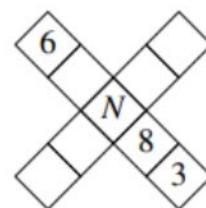
Congratulations to Margot Holland who top scored with a phenomenal 118 and also to the other 8 qualifiers for the next round of the challenge taking place on Tuesday 9th after half term.

Why not have a go at the final two questions from the paper yourself? They are great fun!



24. The diagram shows nine squares arranged so that they form two lines, each consisting of five squares.

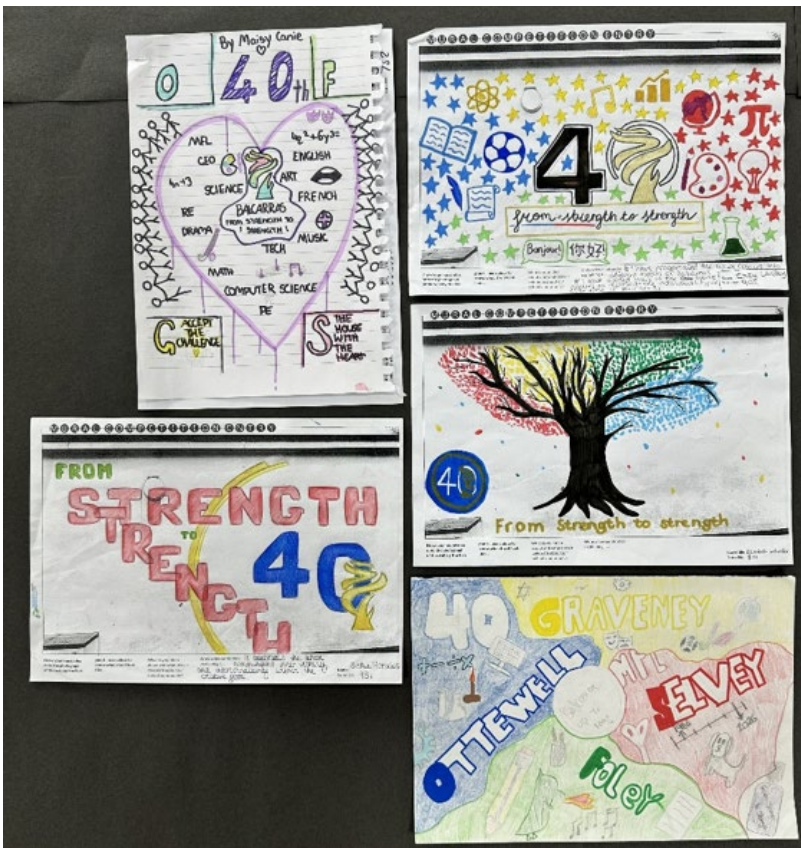
The squares are to be filled with the positive integers from 1 to 9 inclusive so that the totals of the five numbers in each line are equal. Three of the numbers have already been placed. What is the sum of the different values which the central number  $N$  can take?



- A 17                      B 21                      C 22                      D 25                      E 28
25. Four runners entered a race. We are told that at most two tied at the finish line (and were therefore given the same finishing position). How many possible finishing orders were there for the race?
- A 30                      B 60                      C 75                      D 81                      E 84

## MURAL COMPETITION

### SARAH LEACH, ART TEACHER

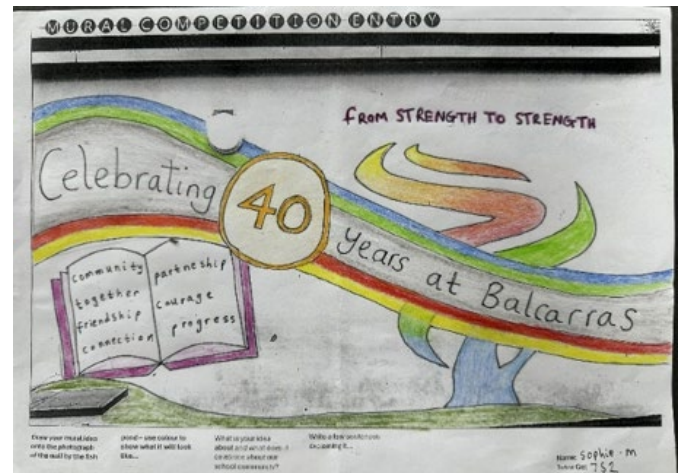
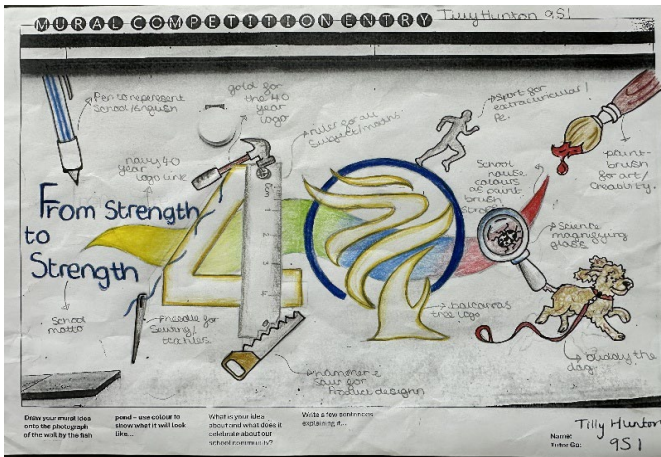


As part of the 40th anniversary celebrations of Balcarras School, a student competition was launched to design a commemorative mural for the wall next to the beautiful fishpond area. The objective was to capture the spirit of our school community and celebrate this milestone. Entries were required to feature the 40th-anniversary logo, the four house colours, and the words 'From Strength to Strength'.

Given full creative freedom, our students truly delivered! We were blown away by the exceptional standard of the entries and extend a huge well done to everyone who took part. Following careful deliberation, the judges selected five winning designs.



Many congratulations to Tilly Hunton, Isla McRichie, Evie Beard, Evie Gilbride and Sophie Massey. All 5 of the designs met the criteria perfectly and aspects of each winning design will feature in the final mural.



## 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 for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dominic Burke", with a horizontal line underneath.

Headteacher





Hello from British Heart Foundation charity shop in Cheltenham High Street.

We are currently in need of stock and we are just trying to share the message as far as we can  
And advertise not only our free collection service, but also a NEW list of all the things we accept.

This is our aim not only to help us fill our donation bay, but also to stop so many things going to landfill that we can recycle through the companies we use at BHF.

We are also open 7 days a week for dropping off donations. Easy access at the back of the shop.  
Turn into Grosvenor Terrace, we are just past Iceland car park. Open 7 days a week for donations!

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**DD: [01242 285 910](tel:01242285910)**

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Scrap gold & silver  
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Pictures & frames  
KIDS/BABY CLOTHES  
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A ST MARY'S 'COME & SING'  
EVENT

JOSEPH  
AND THE  
AMAZING  
TECHNICOLOR  
DREAMCOAT

SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JUNE | ST MARY'S CHURCH | REHEARSAL: 10AM-12PM  
PERFORMANCE: 2PM

FREE TO PERFORM & LISTEN

Inviting people of ALL AGES to join us for this fun (and free!) performance of a medley of songs from this hit musical! Join us to sing from 10am or just to listen at 2pm!



If you would like to come and sing with us - register your interest here



FOR MORE INFO - CONTACT JOHN CLIFT (DIRECTOR OF MUSIC)  
ORGANISTSTMARYS@GMAIL.COM



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KWIK CRICKET

ULTIMATE TENNIS

ESCAPE & EVASION

BADMINTON

BENCHBALL

STORY

ADVENTURE

ROUNDERS

DANCE

FOOTBALL

TRI-GOLF 6+

TEE BALL

TAG RUGBY

CAPTURE THE FLAG

...AND MUCH MORE!

**Example day:**

8:30 - 9:40	☑ Drop off & morning welcome
9:40 - 10:30	🎯 Activity 1
10:30 - 10:50	🍌 Break
10:50 - 11:40	🎯 Activity 2
11:40 - 12:30	🎯 Activity 3
12:30 - 13:30	🍌 Lunch
13:30 - 14:20	🎯 Activity 4
14:20 - 15:10	🎯 Activity 5
15:10 - 15:30	🍌 Break
15:30 - 16:20	🎯 Activity 6
16:20 - 17:15	🕒 End of day & pick up

Extended day pass available from 8am to 6pm

AGES 4-5

Tailored, introductory timetable delivered by Early Years specialists

AGES 6-7

Mix of sports, games and creativity to burn off boundless energy

AGES 8-9

Additional, exciting activities for the 8+ including archery, zorby and fencing

AGES 10+

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If it's your first time using holiday childcare, we understand how important this choice is. Our programme for 4-5-year-olds offers fun, age-appropriate activity and care that supports their social and physical development.

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## ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE

For ages 7-12

A 4-day Alice in Wonderland inspired musical theatre course of drama, dance and singing, sparking creativity and imagination all leading towards the end of the week star dazzling performance!

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CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

ROLEPLAY

EMOTION & EXPRESSION

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

STORYTELLING

STAGE PRESENCE

...AND MUCH MORE!

## ULTIMATE TECH

For ages 8-14

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ROBOTICS

MACHINE LEARNING

FITNESS DEVICE

MACHINE LEARNING

MICRO:BIT: GAMES

WEATHER STATION

PYTHON

...AND MUCH MORE!

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**Refer a Parent!**

Refer a new parent to book with us and get a free Camp day! Every referral earns you another free day!

**Friend Requests**

Make friend requests when booking or up to 14 days before Camp starts to maximise the fun!

Refer with confidence!

## DATES, LOCATION & BOOKING

**CAMP DATES**

SUMMER: MON 13 JULY - FRI 21 AUGUST

PERFORMANCE: MON 10 - THURS 20 AUGUST

TECH: MON 27 JULY - THURS 6 AUGUST

**Dean Close Prep School**

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## Cheltenham Canoe Club COACHED BEGINNER KAYAKING SESSIONS 2026

Come and have some fun and learn to kayak (pool sessions and river)

# Adventure



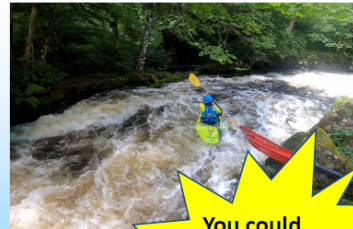
Great fun for adults and parents with their children aged 11+



**Taster Sessions** – Thursday evenings in the summer at Sandford Parks Lido 7.30pm-9pm. Please register your interest and we will be in touch: [coaching@cheltenhamcanooclub.com](mailto:coaching@cheltenhamcanooclub.com)

**Kayak Course** includes four coached development sessions – Three at Sandford Parks Lido from 7.30pm-9pm on Thursday evenings and one coached river trip to introduce you to calm, moving water. The Club will provide all equipment and coaching. If interested, please contact: [coaching@cheltenhamcanooclub.com](mailto:coaching@cheltenhamcanooclub.com)

Development programme for coached lido and weekend river trip* (*Location of river trip may vary)	Dates Beginner Course 1	Dates Beginner Course 2	Dates Beginner Course 3
Lido coached session 7.30pm-9pm	Thurs 21st May	Thurs 18th June	Thurs 16th July
Lido coached session 7.30pm-9pm	Thurs 28th May	Thurs 25th June	Thurs 23rd July
Lido coached session 7.30pm-9pm	Thurs 4th June	Thurs 2nd July	Thurs 30th July
River trip -River Wye or Avon TBC	Aug Date TBD	Aug Date TBD	Aug Date TBD



You could progress to this!

### Cost

Adults: **£98**  
 Juniors (U18) and Students (18+):  
**£75**

[www.cheltenhamcanooclub.com](http://www.cheltenhamcanooclub.com)



After your course, you may wish to join the Club where there is an ongoing programme of activities:  
 lido sessions (until the end of August), **river paddling** or **canoe slalom** throughout the year.



## Cheltenham Canoe Club TASTER SESSIONS 2026

Come and have some fun and learn to kayak (pool sessions and rivers)

# Adventure



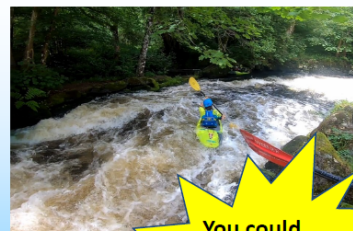
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Taster Session, get a feel of what Kayaking is all about.	Dates
Lido Taster session at the Lido 7.30pm-9pm	
Taster session for May	Thurs 14th or Thurs 28th
Taster session for June	Thurs 11th or Thurs 25th
Taster session for July	Thurs 9th or Thurs 23rd
Taster session for Aug	Thurs 7th or Thurs 21st



You could progress to this!

### Cost

Adults: **£30** per Session  
 Juniors (U18) and Students (18+):  
**£15** per Session

[www.cheltenhamcanooclub.com](http://www.cheltenhamcanooclub.com)



After your session, you may wish to join the Club where there is an ongoing programme of activities:  
 lido sessions, until the end of August. **River paddling** or **canoe slalom** throughout the year.