

Update from the Head

I can't tell you what a brilliant week it has been at Balcarras. There has been so much going on and I have gone out of my way to try to sample as much of it as I could. I enjoy the busyness of school life and I love the rich variety of things that pupils get involved with from poetry to business, to sport, to music, to food, to trips and much else besides.

Last Weekend

Year 10 returned giving rave reviews of their food tasting trip to Sorrento. Mrs Ford is planning to put a report on the website. On Saturday Balcajazz performed at a packed-out Cheltenham Jazz Festival. It was a truly wonderful occasion—thanks ever so much for everyone who came to support them. Thanks also to their musical director Mr Dan Armstrong.



Young Enterprise Regional Final: Balcarras are the Champions!!!

Many congratulations to our YE Team, Grounded Origin, who this week were crowned South West YE Champions. They now go forward to the National Finals in June. See article here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1473>



Balcarras Pupils Shine at Cheltenham Poetry Slam

On Tuesday evening 4 Balcarras pupils performed at the Cheltenham Education Partnership's Poetry Slam. The pupils have been attending a poetry workshop and this event allowed all of them to perform their final poem. 7 other schools sent young poets to the event which was held at the Parabola Arts Centre. The evening started with a guest reading by the renowned poet Dean Atta. He read his most famous poem, *I come From*, as well as a selection of his other works. The Mayor of Cheltenham was in attendance also. Our four young poets, **Isaac Hellier** [8G1], **Tilly Danaher** [8G1], **Ellen Smith** [8G2] and **Grace Young** [8S1] were all brilliant. Below is a photo of our poets at the event with our Head of English Mr Sharkey. See article here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1472>



Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts

The Balcarras minibuses had a busy day on Wednesday. Mr Cadogan and I ferried Charlton Kings Infants School pupils to the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts at the Town Hall. It was lovely to have youngsters on board who were genuinely thrilled at the prospect of a ride on a minibus!

At 11.15 it was the turn of the Balcarras Chamber Choir and Boys Cantabile Choir. They seemed less excited by the bus but were in good spirits nonetheless. I decided to accompany them and I have to say I enjoyed it enormously. The

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quality of the singing was immense, and the combined Chamber and Cantabile Choir emerged as Best Choir in Category. I'm not sure there is anything quite as inspirational to watch than a group of young people—boys and girls from across the school—collaborating with one another and making such a beautiful noise. If you like the sound of this you should come to Midsummer Music on Friday 19th June. Both choirs will perform as well as many other musical items, bands and ensembles.



Berlin Parents Evening

On Tuesday Mr Constance met the parents of the Year 12 pupils going to Berlin at the end of the school year. Apparently the meeting went well. I love Berlin—it's a great city to visit and if you are interested in 20th Century history it sort of sits as a junction box with so many of the century's stories running through the city. We are approaching that part of the year when all sorts of trips are preparing to go out.

Sporting Highlights of the week

On Wednesday Balcarras won their tennis fixture against Cleeve School. On the same night Year 7 had their opening fixture in the Cricket County Cup. They got off to a good win beating Bournside School. Here is a nice photo of the match taking place against the backdrop of the Cotswold Escarpment and the team debrief led by Mr Niblett after victory was confirmed.



Year 13 Last Day

I've got to say it was an emotional day at Balcarras today as we said farewell to Year 13. Collectively they are a wonderful group and it has been a delight to teach them. Mr Leatherbarrow and Mr Constance led the assembly before the leaving BBQ organised by Mr Rothwell.



GITEP Receives Full Marks

It seems ages ago that it happened but we can now finally share the Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership's (GITEP) Ofsted report. GITEP is a teacher training provider run by a number of secondary and primary schools in Gloucestershire. The Balcarras Trust is the legal entity and I have for a number of years chaired GITEP's Board. I am absolutely delighted to report that GITEP achieved a STRONG judgement in each of the inspection categories. There is an article on the Balcarras website here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1471>

Happy Birthday to David Attenborough



David Attenborough is 100 years old. The Balcarras geography department celebrated his birthday this week.

That's the end of Update 30. It's been such a lovely week but I do feel a little tired. Plenty of rest for me and no football to worry about until Spurs-Leeds on the telly on Monday. I hope you have a nice weekend.

Dominic Burke

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