Update from the Head

Welcome back to the second half term of the school year. I think this is my favourite half term because it contains both the carol concert and the school production which are two of my favourite school events. Please do put them both in your diary. The carol covert is 7pm on Wednesday 2nd December at Holy Apostles Church. The school production of *Guys and Dolls* runs from Tuesday 9th December to Friday 11th December in the main hall at Balcarras.

Russian Languages Trip to the Baltic

During half term the Russian Department took 25 pupils on a Russian languages trip to Estonia and Latvia taking in both Riga and Tallinn. Apparently, it was a great trip—see article here:

https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1579








Congratulations to Pittville School and Richard Gilpin

On Tuesday morning I attended the grand opening of the "Richard Gilpin Sports Hall" at Pittville School. This state-of-the-art facility combines a full-size sports hall, an indoor fitness suite, a fabulous dance studio and an all-weather floodlit astro pitch. The Governors of Pittville School decided to name this new facility in honour of Richard Gilpin who retired in July after sixteen years leading the school. The building was opened by Steve Cotterill, manager of Cheltenham Town Football Club.



All of us at Balcarras would like to send our congratulations to the pupils and staff of Pittville School on the opening of this superb new facility and to Richard Gilpin on this well-deserved honour.

Visit of LIFT Schools

On Monday we had a visit from Harry Hudson who works for LIFT Schools. He was looking for best practice in sixth form education and chose to spend the day with us.

Excalibur Visit



In a similar vein on Friday we hosted 8 senior colleagues from the Excalibur Learning Trust which is a multi-academy trust of some 20 schools based in Bristol and Wiltshire. They contacted Balcarras some time ago and wanted to spend a day observing lessons and speaking to staff. It was a very nice visit.

Cheltenham Area Secondary Heads

I had to leave our colleagues from Excalibur early to attend the latest meeting of the Cheltenham Area Secondary Headteachers. We discussed ways we could better share best practice in our schools. It was, as ever, a most useful meeting.

Sue Ryder Charity Campaign



If you haven't seen the wonderful performance of *Remember My Name* then you must listen here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXV_pL9hMUo

If you would like to donate to Sue Ryder follow this link:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/balcarrasmusic

This week we had a communication from Sue Ryder to tell us that since 2003 Balcarras School has donated.....[add your own drum roll at this point]..... £39,306!!

Isn't that great.

Christmas Lunches

Believe it or not we are already getting ready for Christmas Lunch—see poster below. Please note that the deadline for ordering is Thursday 3rd December. We'll then work out how many birds we need.



Free Session with Elevate Education

The Sixth Form team have been working with a company named Elevate. Elevate have offered the session below to the whole school community.

If you are interested in the event that Elevate are running then please sign up.

How You Can Help Your Child Prepare for Exams
Tuesday 10th November 6:00-7:00pm (GMT)

Click here to register for free

Here's what Elevate will be covering on the night:

- ☑ Prioritising your child's high-impact work to maximise marks
- ☑ Improving your child's time management to avoid last-minute preparation
- ☑ Helping your child study effectively using past papers

Update from the Librarian

At the start of this term, Year 7s are coming back into the library for their second library lesson and I'm getting into the holiday spirit, handing out the books . One of my favourite programs is the Book Trusts Bookbuzz program. For the last few years, the library has started the academic year with Year 7s choosing a book from the Book Trust's list of 16 titles. It's a great way to start the year! Most students forget what they've chosen, so when the books arrive, it's a lovely surprise from their past selves. This year's top choices have been 'Cringe Club', 'Murder Academy', and 'Wildlands'. Be sure to ask your Year 7 what they chose!









Sporting Highlight: Balcarras Girls Come Agonisingly Close in EFL Community Cup



On Thursday, our Year 8 girls travelled to Tewkesbury School to compete in the English Football League Girls' Community Cup. The girls got off to a fantastic start, winning all four of their group-stage matches, beating Tewkesbury 5–0, Pates 3–0, Archway 5–0 and St Peter's 2–1. This impressive run saw them progress to the semi-final, where they faced Churchdown and secured another brilliant 2–0 victory. This took the girls through to the final, where they faced Bournside. Despite a fantastic effort, Balcarras narrowly missed out on the trophy, finishing as runners-up after a 2–0 defeat. For our first time entering this tournament, this is a fantastic achievement and something the girls should be incredibly proud of.

Right that's it…first week done. I fancy something nice for dinner tonight…but what?

Have a nice weekend.

Dominic Burke