



## BALCARRAS SCHOOL

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Dear Parents,

Easter Greetings from Balcarras! I am sure that all of the pupils and staff are looking forward to a well-earned break. I certainly am and tomorrow I will be heading to Paris where I intend to eat quite a lot of French food!

It has been a great term at Balcarras and it has just flown by. So much has been going on it seems almost impossible to pick out the highlights. One of them certainly was the Sixth Form Debate Final held earlier this week. I would like to congratulate the champions Erin Dutton and Rachel Purnell (Year 13) who defeated Issa Buttle and Matthew Bennett (Year 12) in the final. It was a great tussle and was incredibly close. The whole season of debates has been just brilliant and I would like to thank the sixth form team and in particular Mr Sexton for putting the programme together.

Another highlight was last week's Spring Concert which was just wonderful. I was so blown away by the quality of it that I felt the need to write to everyone involved. It was truly a special evening and it just underlines the quality of musical talent that we have in the school.

During my time as Head only two Balcarras teams have made it through to a National Schools Final in sports: Badminton in 2017, Girls Squash 2022 and 2023 and now golf. Last week the Balcarras Golf Team won the County Golf Championship for the first time in our history. They now go forward to the National Schools Final at Woodhall Spa in July. My congratulations to everyone on the team and to Mr Perry for managing them. There have been a number of other incredible wins on the sports field recently. Too many to mention here but you might be interested to look at the sports news page on our website:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=2>

The final highlight I would like to mention is this year's STEM week. My thanks to Mrs Taylor and all of the colleagues in science, maths and technology for putting on such a great series of events.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all of our students on their conduct this term but particularly to those in Year 11 and Year 13. I am constantly amazed by their dedication and diligence. If you walk around Balcarras at 8am in the morning or at 5pm at night you will see pupils working and being supported by their teachers. This level of commitment helps to explain why the school's students achieve results that would be the envy of any school in the country. Year 11 and Year 13 are in a great place as we approach the Easter break. I know that they will want to complete revision over Easter but I would urge them also to have a break and recharge.

To all of our parents and families I would like to thank you for your ongoing support for the school. We are very fortunate to work in a school that has such committed and supportive parents. I hope you all have a lovely Easter.

## Duke of Edinburgh

Last week we were delighted to celebrate with over 70 of our Year 11 students who received their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award in a celebratory event with guest speaker Rich Whincup, who is a true inspiration. Congratulations to all those involved. Any year 11 who has yet to complete their Award can still add their evidence and receive their certificate.

Vicky Bull, D of E



## Activities Week

Many thanks for your positive approach towards the new system of Activities Week.

This has been most successful. The next stage now is to pay for the activities and this will be sent out to you in the form of an electronic invoice after the Easter holidays.

The only payment method available is via Scopay. Should you need any assistance with setting this up, then please email [sed@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:sed@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

With regards to the activities themselves, please email [ljm@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:ljm@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

There is much more information to follow, and this will be in the coming months in the run up to July.

Lyn Massey, Activities week coordinator

## Boost trip to Oxford, March 2023



Some of our current year 12 students enjoyed a day trip to St Catherine's College, Oxford, hosted by 5 of our alumni: Ted, Meg, Rachel, Sophie and James (pictured). They showed us around their colleges giving a flavour of what university life is like for them while passing on some of their wisdom and experience. We had a memorable day. Our current students had to think hard about all sorts of subjects, as well as about themselves. Rex, Pippa and Nisa led some thought provoking and moving discussions about how to face our futures.

Jeremy Niblett

## Incredible Balcarras Golf Team make history

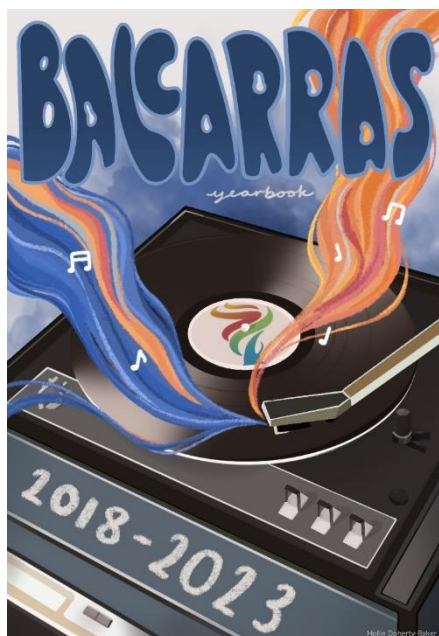


Seven players represented Balcarras at the English Schools Golf Finals on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The team consisted of Alex Williams, Sam Ellicott, Alex Perry, Freddie Coombe, Jacob Austin, Ben Warwicker and Finlay Richards. The conditions were extremely difficult with wind and rain resulting in high scores for all 22 schools that participated. However, some fine performances meant the Balcarras team had a chance of winning going down the last hole. Sam Ellicott managed to up and down on the last (from behind a tree) for the team to win by 1 shot. This is the first time in the 30 year history of the tournament that Balcarras had won. They will now go on and represent the school at the National finals at Woodhall Spa (the home of England Golf) on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July.

The number of junior golfers at Balcarras has been growing over the past few years (with the support of Lilleybrook GC) and golf at Balcarras goes from strength to strength. If your child is playing golf and would like to take part in this event next year then please contact Mr Perry via [lp@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:lp@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

Luke Perry, Golf Coach

## Year 11 Yearbook



The Yearbook Committee are very excited to have finished putting together this year's publication, which will be available for year 11s to collect on their last day before exam leave. This year's superb cover has been designed by Hollie Doherty-Baker of 11F1. The payment page is still open on Scopay for any year 11 families who have not yet purchased one. Thank you to the PTFA for their generous donation, which subsidised the printing costs.

Mr and Mrs Spring Wallis and the Yearbook Committee

## Green Group needs you!

At Balcarras we endeavour to reduce our environmental impact and try to promote sustainability with pupils. To achieve this we have a green group, who meet up once a term to discuss the implementation of green ideas. In the past we have organised events, such as 'thick jumper days' and 'empty car park days', we have planted trees, reduced plastics around the school, installed solar panels. This group is composed of teachers, pupils from the schools Eco-club, the headmaster, the finance and site managers, plus parents. It is a great way to get involved to look at practical ways in which we can keep moving forward as a school in terms of sustainability. If you would like to get involved please email Jon Pearce on [jwp@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:jwp@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk). Our next meeting will be on 26/06/23 3.45pm.

Jon Pearce, Eco Club

## Sports news



Daisy C in Year 10 competed last weekend in the British Dance Championships and WON! She is now the U16 British Dance Champion! She specialised in hip hop and street dance. Well done Daisy! What an incredible achievement! We are so very proud of you!

National Squash Championships - <https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=2&storyid=852>

May Dent Tournament - <https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=2&storyid=861>

Year 8, 9 & 10 Boys Football - Playing their district semi-finals this week (results RE finals at the end of the week)

House matches too! (Netball, Badminton and Boys Football)

## Year 12 visit Auschwitz

The Lessons from Auschwitz project begins with an online orientation seminar in which educators discuss pre-war Jewish life with 180 students (including teachers), and its relevance in understanding the Holocaust. As well as this they discuss antisemitism throughout history, and its evolution from a religious matter to one of, primarily, race.



A week after the seminar we (Nisa Aslan, Antonia Suditu, Ola Janisinska, Freya Webster, Pippa Hung and Isaac James) were all flown to Poland for one day which meant that we had to have an early start to the day to check in at Birmingham by 4am! Our first sight visit during our visit to Poland allowed us to see the impact of the Holocaust on Oswiecim, a town that went from having a 58% Jewish population to 0% today, revealing the huge impact it had on a local level. An interesting fact that we learnt from our group's ambassador was that the Germans changed the town's name from Oswiecim to Auschwitz in an attempt to 'Germanize' Poland.

The presence of absence. 1-6 million Jewish people owned businesses, which were dissolved in 3rd September 1939 when this city was occupied.

We came here first to humanise the victims and think about the absence. This city is just a microcosm, one example, which once used to host the innocent lives of the Jewish people.

After this we travelled to Auschwitz I, a site of 28 barracks which has been turned into a museum and was shown around by a tour guide alongside a member of the trust. Seeing the enormous quantities of personal belongings taken from Holocaust victims truly puts the scale of the human rights violation into perspective. Items of the prisoners which were found after the camp had been discovered and were put on display in these barracks. These items included suitcases, shoes, clothes, pottery and many more belongings of prisoners. There was a lot to take in from this tour, as it was very emotional and informative.

From Auschwitz I we travelled to Auschwitz II, the bigger of the two camps also known as Auschwitz Birkenau. Here the sheer size of this site of mass genocide is revealed. To finish the day, a Jewish ceremony is held, and memorial candles are lit in a moment of reflection of the tragedies that occurred.

A week after our visit, we re-joined our group of 180 students on zoom for a seminar in which we discussed our reflections on the visit and our ambassadors made sure that we were all ok as there wasn't a right or wrong way to react to the visit. During the seminar we also heard a testimony from a Holocaust survivor. Something that really impregnated in our memory was Frank saying: 'My parents were swimming in a sea of blood and I was floating, I was one of the ones washed off to the shore'. Here the message was that children did not feel hatred, they were living the present, because as Steve Frank said 'Hatred is a cancer of the mind'. Surely this struck everyone, as we were all expecting to hear something completely different. This puts us in a position where we question the real meaning of hatred and to what extent do we (who have never experienced the Holocaust) have the right to use it?

Written by Nisa Aslan and Antonia Suditu

## Music news

The Spring Concert was a huge success! Featuring performances from GCES and A' Level Music students (Years 11, 12 and 13), this was a truly inspirational evening. A huge variety of genres and instrumental and vocal styles were represented, in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. Presented and accompanied by Mrs Watts, the programme featured some of the items being prepared by our wonderful students for their forthcoming Performance exams.

Flautist, Matthew Arraya showcased one of his grade 8 pieces, for which he achieved a Merit.

Matthew Chestney performed at the concert on bass guitar, as he was taking his grade 8 trumpet the next day, for which he achieved a Distinction.

Every single item was beautifully polished and our performers excelled themselves... Mr Armstrong (Head of Music) was in charge of our student tech team (ably assisted by Mr Bennett and Mr Potter) and many members of our Visiting Music Teacher team were there to support the performers. A big thank you to everyone who came along to listen!

**Diary Date:** Don't forget Midsummer Music 2023 (MM23) which is coming up on **Friday June 23<sup>rd</sup>**. Starting at 6.30pm and going on till dark, this will be Balcarras' answer to Glastonbury, with two stages, outdoor lighting, a BBQ and refreshments....and great music! Don't miss it!

### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VISITING MUSIC TEACHERS AND STUDENTS FOR THE FOLLOWING EXAM SUCCESSES

#### Matt Bucher – Rock School Drums exams

Maia Evangeli Grade 2 - Merit

Nat Swift Grade 6 - Merit

#### Tracey Vacher – ABRSM Piano

Laura Cadogan Grade 3 Pass

#### Nathan King – Trumpet exams

Sam Heys Grade 1 - Distinction

Will Heys Grade 1 - Distinction

#### Nicola Hopkins – ABRSM Flute Exams

Edward Wheeler – Grade 2 – Pass

Jane Watts & Dan Armstrong  
Music Dept.

## CEP - WUKA

The Cheltenham Education Partnership is back! After having so many projects scuppered by the virus, Cheltenham schools are once again collaborating to provide opportunities for our students. Last week at Cheltenham College, Hasset, Josephine, Isaac and Jasper debated the threats facing the world today. They were lucky enough to meet and be lectured by Dr. Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury. And the week before that Rueben, Ella and Eleanor journeyed to Cleeve School where they met the equally inspiring Ruby Raut, founder of WUKA. Ruby is a successful pioneer in the field of sustainable period products, and was one of the most energetic and inspirational people that you could wish to meet. She aims to reduce plastic waste and help period poverty by supplying her range of reusable products. She asked me to pass on a discount code (WU20) if any Balcarras families would like to claim 20% off any WUKA products from their website.

Jeremy Niblett

## Ski Trip 2024 (February Half Term)

Applications for next year's ski trip can now be made.



To apply, please download a letter located on the school website (Extra Curricular > Ski Trips)

Or click [here](#).

Alternatively contact [mcd@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:mcd@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

Mr M Dean (Ski Party Leader)

## Judo news



Congratulations to Tommy Sherrin, Year 13. Tommy recently won the bronze medal having secured 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the British schools judo championships 2023 u90kg Years 12 and 13.

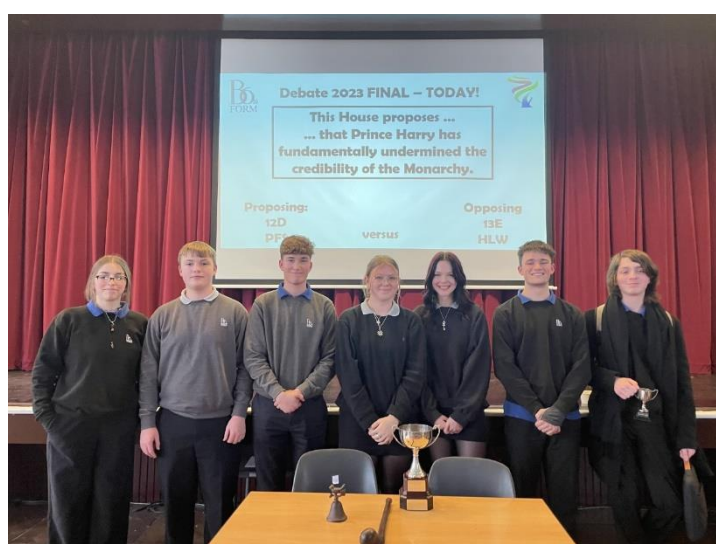
Tommy completed 6 bouts. He won the first, lost the second to the eventual gold medallist and then went into the reportage in which he had another 3 fights to reach the bronze medal fight which lasted 8 minutes! Tommy finally won by golden score after his toughest fight of the day. An amazing achievement - congratulations Tommy!

Darren Leatherbarrow, Head of Sixth Form

## Sixth Form Debate

This year's Sixth form Debate competition was contested on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March - and after an exceptional display of debating, Erin Dutton and Rachel Purnell of 13E were crowned winners. Their adversaries in the final, 12D, represented by Isaac Buttle and Matthew Bennett, were very tough opponents, and both teams demonstrated superb levels of skill, knowledge and persuasion as they debated whether 'the actions of Prince Harry had fatally compromised the credibility of the monarchy'? Congratulations to Charlie Macfadzean also - awarded this year's 'Best Questioner' for his consistently excellent and challenging contributions in the Questions from the Floor section of the Debates.

*13E worthy winners of the 2022-23 Sixth Form Debate Competition*



There is no doubt that the final was a fitting end to what has been wonderful season of debating, with several other teams unlucky not to have reached the finals themselves, and with some excellent participation from the student and staff audiences since the competition launched with an entertaining Staff demonstration debate before Christmas. Congratulations again to Erin and Rachel on this year's victory, and commiserations to Isaac and Matthew though they will be hot favourites for 2023-24!

### Sixth Form Dress up day 2022-23

Once again, the end of the Spring Term, and the signal that exams are on the horizon, was marked by a wonderful Sixth Form Dress Up Day. This traditional Sixth Form event once again demonstrated the ingenuity, humour and community spirit of the Sixth Form students. There were simply too many superb outfits and creations to mention all by name - but Mimi Davis' Maleficent was magnificent, and Tom Webster and Isaac Henderson were indeed 'Top Guns' as Maverick and Goose (plus their very own F-16. The Minions, Gru and Vector were far from being despicable, and the Big Yellow Self-Storage Boxes made for one of the funniest photos of the day!

Darren Leatherbarrow, Head of Sixth Form



When pupils return after the Easter Holidays, they may wear summer uniform if they wish.

Neil, Baxter, Deputy Headteacher

### Summer Uniform

During the summer term, pupils may choose to wear the summer uniform if they wish.

If a pupil chooses to continue to wear the winter uniform it must be worn in full.



For summer uniform the following additional rules apply:

- School white polo tops can be worn instead of the standard shirt and tie
- The polo tops do not need to be tucked in.
- Ties do not need to worn
- **Blazers must be worn** with the polo tops, until the Headmaster gives permission for blazers not to be worn. Blazers must be worn in the corridors and to assembly.
- **No cardigans or jumpers** (for this reason, on cold days, pupils are advised to wear winter uniform)
- No long sleeve tops or additional shirts to be worn under the polo tops
- Make up is not permitted
- Regulation skirts and trousers are still compulsory

All other rules remain the same as for the rest of the year.

### Blazers in the Summer

When it gets hot enough, Mr Burke will allow blazers not to be worn. Blazers must still be worn to and from school, and for assemblies, but they are no longer compulsory at other times.

## Year 7 Science exam

All Year 7 classes will have their Year 7 science exam in their lessons on Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> May. The exam will test their knowledge and understanding of all topics covered in science this year. More detail on the topic content and how to revise will be shared with students via the VLE.

## Balcarras School and Royal Institution Primary Masterclass series Spring 2023

The masterclass series invited Year 5 students from 7 local primary schools to attend after school workshops planned and lead by year 12 students from Balcarras School. The series of 6 workshops was completed on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Congratulations to the wonderful team of year 12 students who worked very hard and planned interesting and stimulating workshops. They were a credit to the school and great ambassadors for STEM learning.



## STEM week

STEM week celebrated all things Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. There was a packed programme of stimulating events and activities to be enjoyed by all. Year 7 students enjoyed Dr Sharp's amazing science shows, which was full of sparks and explosions.



Year 8 were introduced to Mobius bands in a maths lesson delivered by the y12 STEM ambassadors. Year 9 took part in the Pinewood Derby, where they designed, made and raced cars. We also welcomed Nicky Hennell (midwifery), Adam Ginns (cryptocurrency), James Hygate (green fuels) and Samantha Pearse (human factors) into the school to deliver talks open to all students. And finally... there were 2 competitions to enter. Try your hand at The Spy Challenge – see back of newsletter. A number of students managed to solve all 6 clues! Some students are working on their entries to the MARS Balloon Project. The winners will get to send their experiments up to the Earth's outer atmosphere to experience conditions similar to those on

Mars <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/futuremartians>

Jo Taylor, STEM Co-ordinator



## Site Management Assistant

Full time  
Point 3 – 4 £20,812-£21,189

**Required to start as soon as possible after successful interview**

We are looking to appoint a Site Management Assistant to undertake a range of maintenance and site operation duties throughout the school.  
The successful candidate should have an excellent work ethic and be physically able to carry out a range of demanding manual tasks. Previous experience of working in the areas of roofs, drains, gutters, electrics or other related sectors would be an advantage. Please see the Applicant Pack for further information.

### Application

To apply, please download an application form from our "How to apply" page and send completed application forms to [jobs@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:jobs@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)  
For postal applications, please use Admin, Balcarras School, East End Rd, Cheltenham, GL53 8QE. For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above email address.

**Closing Date for applications: Wednesday 19th April, 2023, 9am**  
(This position may close earlier than stated above should a suitable applicant apply.  
We encourage interested candidates to apply as soon as possible)  
Interviews will be on a rolling basis.

*Balcarras School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.*



## Teacher of Business and/or Economics

Required for September 2023  
Either 0.6 timetable or full time

We are looking for an enthusiastic and inspirational Business Studies and/or Economics teacher who will contribute to our future success.

Ofsted assessed Balcarras in 2005, 2009 and 2014 as  
'Outstanding' in every category.

Applications from both prospective ECTs and  
experienced teachers are welcome.

Excellent induction and further professional development is available.  
Please read the letter to applicants and applicant pack for further information.

### Application

To apply, please send completed application forms to [jobs@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:jobs@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

**Closing Date for applications: Monday 24th April 2023, 9am**  
Interviews to follow shortly afterwards

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above e-mail address.

*Balcarras School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.*

### Online Payment System

Balcarras uses a safe and secure online payment system which we ask parents to use to pay for **ALL** trips, music fees, lockers, book deposits and sponsored walk. All new pupils should have now received their unique online link code which is needed to register. Replacement codes for all pupils not yet registered can be obtained from Mrs Davis in the finance office, or by emailing your child's name and tutor group to [sed@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:sed@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

### Newsletter Distribution



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@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:ksa@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

### Reporting Absence

Parents of pupils in ALL year groups 7-11 should report an absence either by leaving a message on the Attendance Office voicemail (option 1 on the phone menu). Or direct dial on 01242 545114, or by emailing [absence@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:absence@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk) or [ljm@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:ljm@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

Parents should contact the attendance officer on the first day of absence and on any subsequent days. Any pupils arriving at school after registration must sign in at Reception, indicating the reason why they are signing in late.

Absence in **the Sixth form** should be reported directly to the Sixth form on direct dial 01242 545118 or by emailing [sixthformabsence@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:sixthformabsence@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

Please note that any requests for holiday should be directed to the relevant Heads of Houses/Head of Sixth Form and not to the Headteacher.

Lyn Massey, Attendance Officer

### Appointments during school hours

When pupils are attending an appointment during school time, parents must let school know beforehand. Please either send a letter with your child (who should show it to their tutor, then hand it in at reception when they sign out) or email [admin@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@baltarras.gloucs.sch.uk) detailing, the time, what the appointment is for, who will be collecting them and the expected time of return.

### Balcarras is on Facebook!

Alongside our @Balcarras Twitter you may also now follow Facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher





## Charlton Kings Tennis 2023

Our new season is fast upon us and we are pleased to let you know about our tennis coaching programme for this year.

We are based at Balcarras School and are known for being welcoming, friendly and providing a good quality programme for the local community. Our venue has seven outdoor courts.

Here's what's available:

- Junior courses
- Adult courses
- Summer holiday camps

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/CharltonKingsTennisPlace>

You can also become a member of our thriving club which gives you the following added benefits:

- book courts using our online booking system
- organised junior club and adult social tennis sessions
- fun tournaments and competitions
- membership rates for all coaching activities
- being part of a sociable, inclusive and friendly club

Memberships are only £60 per adult, £33 per junior or £130 per family for the whole season from April to October.

For further information about everything we have to offer visit [www.charltonkingstennisplace.co.uk](http://www.charltonkingstennisplace.co.uk) or email [tennis@charltonkingstennisplace.co.uk](mailto:tennis@charltonkingstennisplace.co.uk)

For further information about coaching please contact Denisa Davis on 07803 741 859 or email [DDtenniscoaching@gmail.com](mailto:DDtenniscoaching@gmail.com)

# The SPY challenge

There are 6 words to

1. Add elements to the grid to reveal the answer in the highlighted column.

1. 14
2. 96
3. 7
4. 3
5. 6
6. 74
7. 88
8. 43
9. 66

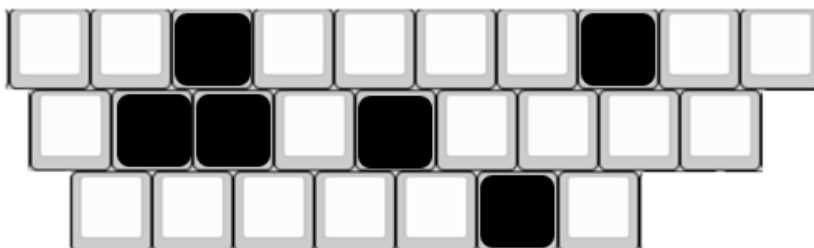
1.																			
2.																			
3.																			
4.																			
5.																			
6.																			
7.																			
8.																			
9.																			

2. Give it *sum* thought, and see if you can make it add up. Jot down your ideas from a different angle to reveal the answer.

		15	3		
		1	8		
6	10	-12	-15	11	7
4	5	3	-2	-6	11
		1	20		
		12	6		

*j o t t e r*

3. Can you work out this key word?



4. Gear yourself up to find this 7 letter word:

