

First Minister's Christmas Card

A beautiful array of flowers and plants painted by Dame Elizabeth Blackadder will help celebrate the forthcoming Year of Natural Scotland while at the same time benefitting four deserving causes, after it was unveiled as the First Minister's Christmas card for 2012.

The original image will be auctioned in the new year with proceeds shared by four charities and good causes – Breakthrough Breast Cancer, Dyslexia Scotland, the Scottish Steelworkers Memorial Fund and the Sick Kids Friends Foundation – a charity chosen by Dame Elizabeth.

The painting was unveiled by the First Minister at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh at an event attended by Dame Elizabeth and representatives of the good causes.

Since 2007, sales of original artwork and limited edition prints from the First Minister's Christmas cards have raised more than £131,000 for various charities across Scotland, including the Childrens Hospice Association Scotland, the RNLI and the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund.

The First Minister said:

“Throughout 2013, we will celebrate the outstanding and diverse beauty of this country in the Year of Natural Scotland, where we encourage people to get out and enjoy what the great outdoors has to offer.

“It is therefore fitting that my official Christmas card this year will feature a painting by Dame Elizabeth Blackadder, whose work is well known for its celebration of nature through its flower and plant motifs. I am absolutely thrilled that

Dame Elizabeth – arguably Scotland’s greatest living female artist – has agreed to be involved.

“Her beautiful image shows a vivid array of common flowers and plants that can be seen in the wilds or gardens of Scotland, and I am certain it will raise a great deal for the four very good causes selected to benefit from its sale.”

Dame Elizabeth Blackadder said:

“I was very pleased to be asked by the First Minister to paint the image for this year’s Christmas card and I’m delighted that it will help support the work of four good causes in Scotland.”

Audrey Birt, Scotland director for Breakthrough Breast Cancer said:

“We are delighted Breakthrough Breast Cancer has been chosen as one of the charities to benefit from the First Minister’s Christmas card. Through funding vital research into the causes of breast cancer and educating women in Scotland on prevention and breast awareness, we work tirelessly towards one day living in a world free from the fear of breast cancer. The First Minister’s support will help us towards that goal.”

Cathy Magee, chief executive of Dyslexia Scotland said:

“Dyslexia Scotland is absolutely delighted to have been selected as one of the four charities to benefit from the First Minister’s 2012 Christmas card. This is an excellent opportunity for us to not only raise funds to support our services but also to increase public awareness about dyslexia and what we do to help the one in ten people in Scotland with dyslexia.”

On behalf of the Scottish Steelworkers Memorial Fund, Tommy Brennan said:

“The committee was delighted to receive the news, that the

First Minister was supporting our fundraising efforts. It is our wish to erect a statue in the memory of those who lost their lives in the (Scotland wide) Steelworks. The statue will be erected close to the Ravenscraig Regional Sports Facility in Lanarkshire and this will hopefully help us get our project known across the country.”

Maureen Harrison, chief executive of the Sick Kids Friends Foundation said:

“We are absolutely delighted that the Sick Kids Friends Foundation will benefit from this lovely Christmas initiative. The funds will help us to ensure that sick children and young people will have even better care at the hospital and that their families will be well supported too. Every pound raised really will help Sick Kids get better!”