

# Scotland Russia Forum – new website is worth a look



Which country sent the first human into space? Who was **Pavlov** (and what happened to his dog?) Was **Ivan the Terrible** really such a baddie? Where can you take a train journey that lasts **8 days** (and not because you're waiting for a connection...)? Where is the '**Venice of the North**'? And which famous author cried when he had to do Maths?



The country is of course **Russia**, and you can find the answers to all these questions on a new website created by the **Scotland-Russia Forum**, primarily for children aged 5-12 (though I must say I found it very interesting too). Realising that few schools currently teach the Russian language, the Forum decided to introduce children to aspects of the country's culture in a new way; the website [Find Out About RUSSIA](#) covers topics such as **Russian food, space travel, folk stories and the ballet** – plus a guide to deciphering the **Russian alphabet**. Contributors range from professional specialists to a 15 year old schoolgirl, with the emphasis on fun (there are **recipes, interviews with Russian children, a feature on the Russian New Year festivities**, and lots more).



Writing in *Scotland Russia Review*, Chairperson **Jenny Carr** says 'a subject not thought important enough for schools is likely to be dismissed as unimportant by the general population. And from that flows lack of coverage in the media, lack of discussion, and lack of understanding'.



Not only can you find out what life is like now – and was hundreds of years ago – in Russia – there’s also a **competition** with four activities to choose from. You might like to create a picture of **Baba Yoga**, a famous witch whose story is told in ***The White Birds***, a traditional tale that you can read on the website.



Artist: Ivan  
Bilibin

If you’d like to do more, you are invited to submit a series of six or more original artworks to illustrate *The White Birds* story – some may be used on the website. If art isn’t your thing, what about retelling a different **Russian folk tale** in your own (English) words? There are links and suggestions to help you choose a story on the website, and the best entries will be published online. Finally, if you can think up **ideas for extra activities** on ANY page of the website – from games and puzzles to topics for discussion – you can send these in too. The activities will be judged in three age groups, 5-6, 7-9 and 10-12 years, and there will be a prize for each activity in each group – plus, the first 400 entrants will each receive a mystery gift!



The entry form for the competition can be found on the website, or collected from **Blackwell’s, South Bridge** (Education department upstairs) while stocks last. All entries must be submitted by post by **1st July 2015**, so you’ve got plenty of time to come up with something.

The **Scotland-Russia Forum** is a registered charity: its dual mission is to raise interest and inform, both from as non-partisan and independent position as possible. The Forum arranges speaker events, social gatherings (including regular coffee and chat meetings at Summerhall, where the Scotland-

Russia Institute office and library is now housed), arts events and more; details can be found at [www.scotlandrussiaforum.org](http://www.scotlandrussiaforum.org)

