

An evening with Burns held in Kyiv

The UK's Ambassador to Ukraine has hosted a celebration of Robert Burns in defiance of Vladimir Putin at the British Embassy in Kyiv.

Top diplomat Martin Harris who is from Edinburgh toasted Scotland's National Bard on Wednesday at a poetry and music event at the British Embassy in Kyiv – despite the Kremlin having stepped up its drone and missile strikes on the Ukrainian capital.

Martin wore his kilt and a Ukrainian 'vyshyvanka' as around 30 guests celebrated Scottish culture and music with performances of Burns' work, as well as readings of Ukrainian poetry. Since Russia's war against Ukraine began, 95 Ukrainian writers and poets have been killed on the front line. The event began with a minute's silence to remember them.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited Kyiv earlier in the month to announce £2.5billion of military aid for Ukraine in 2024/25.

Foreign Secretary Lord David Cameron said: "Burns Night is a great opportunity to celebrate the important efforts of the many Scots working across the UK Government's global network, who are at the very forefront of delivering our foreign policy around the world.

"It says a lot about the passion for Robert Burns that events are being hosted in so many countries, not least in war-torn Ukraine.

“The £2.5 billion of military aid announced by the Prime Minister on his visit to Kyiv earlier this month shows that the UK is unfaltering in our determination to stand up to Vladimir Putin’s attack on freedom and democracy.”



Martin greets Ukrainian poet and publisher Ivan Malkovych



Martin with Ukrainian poet and publisher Ivan Malkovych



Martin with Ukrainian poet Lyubov Yakymchuck



Ukrainian poet & publisher Ivan Malkovych reads Robert Burns



Ukrainian poet Lyubov Yakymchuck at BE Kyiv Burns event



Ukrainian poet Anastasia Levkova addresses BE Kyiv Burns event



l-r Bagpiper Yevhen Dudar with Martin Harris and Ukrainian poet & publisher Ivan Malkovych



l-r Anastasia Levkova-bagpiper Yevhen Dudar-HMA Martin Harris-poet Lyubov Yakmchuck-poet Ivan Malkovych



Martin accompanied Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron on Kyiv visit