

Scottish Secretary reveals his official Christmas card

The Scottish Secretary has chosen his official Christmas card, designed by 12 year-old Amelia Marchenko from Ukraine who now lives in Edinburgh with her family.

Amelia is from the Donetsk region and her family had to flee the conflict both in 2014 and in 2022.



Merry Christmas
&
A Happy New Year
from
The Secretary of State
for Scotland

 Scotland Office

The Edinburgh branch of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB) ran a competition amongst the children and young people who attend activities in the Ukrainian Community Centre. Mr Murray met many of the young people who use the centre when he visited earlier this year.

Amelia was among dozens of young Ukrainian artists who submitted entries to the competition. Her winning design features a cherub with golden hair set against a backdrop of traditional Ukrainian and Scottish symbols, bringing together both cultures in a festive celebration.

Mr Murray said: "As we gather to celebrate this festive season, I am absolutely delighted that we are sharing this special Christmas card featuring artwork by the very talented Amelia Marchenko. All the designs submitted by the Ukrainian children were fantastic, but hers definitely edged it.

"Having visited Edinburgh's Ukrainian Community Centre's teens club in August, I was inspired by their creativity, resilience and spirit. Amelia's beautiful design represents not only the joy of the season, but also the warmth of Scotland's welcome to those Ukrainians who have made our country their home.

"I wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and a bright New Year."

The Christmas card competition is the first run by the Scotland Office and children were invited to submit their artwork in any medium capturing the essence of Christmas and the spirit of peace and goodwill.

The competition was open to children aged 5-16 who attend the UkrainianCommunity Centre. Participants were encouraged to incorporate elements of both their Ukrainian heritage and their new Scottish home in their festive designs. The judging panel, which included Mr Murray and representatives from AUGB Edinburgh, were particularly impressed by the creative ways the young artists blended both cultures in their artwork.

Electronic versions of the card with the winning design will be sent by Mr Murray to organisations and stakeholders across Scotland. Amelia received a congratulatory letter and certificate from the Secretary of State, and her original

artwork will be framed and displayed in the Scotland Office.

The Edinburgh branch of AUGB was founded in 1947 and has provided a social and cultural place to meet for the Ukrainian diaspora. Since the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, AUGB has worked closely in partnership with community and voluntary sector partners which have welcomed and supported displaced people from Ukraine that have called Scotland their home since the Russian invasion.

The Ukrainian community centre in Edinburgh provides a vital community hub, offering many services from language classes to cultural activities and support services.

The Ukraine Club in Edinburgh supports more than 500 people each week. The Ukrainian youth work partnership and the cultural programme at the Ukrainian community centre is funded by the UK Government and the National Lottery Community Fund. The National Lottery Community Fund is supporting the project with a £116,930 Improving Lives grant.

Amelia painted a separate image of a Santa hat and sleigh which Scotland Office Minister, Kirsty McNeill will use on her official card.

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year

from the
Parliamentary
Under-Secretary
for Scotland



Ian Murray and Amelia Marchenko



Amelia and her family with Ian Murray at the Scotland Office in Edinburgh