



Serbian Council of Great Britain  
Српски савет Велике Британије

Annual Newsletter Feb 2023

14th  
Serbian  
Month

in Great Britain

Great  
British  
Serbs

Prominent  
Serbs who  
studied in  
Britain

Serbia and Britain as war  
allies in the Great War

British  
Serbs *part two*

British  
Friends  
of Serbia

*This catalogue has been produced by the Serbian Council of Great Britain,  
on behalf of the Round Table of Serbian community organisations in Britain.*

20  
22

[Serbian Month YouTube channel](#)

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# Letter from our Chairwoman



It seems hardly possible that a year has passed since the last Annual Newsletter issued telling you about the work of the Serbian Council. It might be that I am getting old and time flies by, but I think it is also a reflection of the busy and uncertain world in which we live and the Serbian Council operates.

With the limited human and financial resources the Serbian Council has at its disposal it has to focus its efforts in priority areas which deliver its objectives and have the maximum impact and benefit for the Serbian community in Britain and the way in which it is regarded by the wider British public and key stakeholders in Britain and Serbia.

This means that we have focused upon four main areas which are the:

\*Round Table initiative which brings together Serbian community organisations to work together for the benefit of the Serbian community

\* Serbian Month festival of arts and culture and the Serbian Month Catalogue which accompanies it

\* Promotion of the teaching and learning of the Serbian language, particularly at the 12 to 18 age group

\* Engaging with young British Serbs upon whom the future of the community depends

You can read more about what we have done in each of these areas in this newsletter.

The success of the Serbian Council depends upon the hard work of its officers and members of the Management Committee. They give up their time and expertise on a voluntary basis and in these busy times this is a considerable sacrifice. I would like to thank them, on my and your behalf, for all that they do. In particular thanks are due to Ivan Miletić, our Treasurer and lead on securing funds from the Serbian government and Maya Jordan our Secretary, and the director of Serbian Month.

I would like to use this as an opportunity to encourage you to consider standing for the Management Committee because with more people we could do so much more and we also need new people to bring new ideas and to secure the future of the organisation. The responsibility of being a Management Committee member need not be burdensome and if you are interested, please do get in touch with us to discuss what is involved.

The other constraint on what the Serbian Council can do is the modest financial resources on which we have to operate. So please can I encourage you to become members of the Serbian Council because membership fees provide are the financial foundation of the organisation. The fees are very modest £24 for adults and £15 for those aged between 18 and 25 or over 65. I would also like to thank the individuals for their generous donations for our work in the Serbian language and Serbian Month and for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial support of Serbian Month.

Thank you for your support and engagement with our work.

Olga Stanojlović,

Chairwoman Serbian Council of Great Britain

# The Round Table



The Serbian Council plays a significant role in the Round Table which it initiated several years ago to encourage cooperation and collaboration between Serbian community groups and organisations across the UK and Ireland (UK&I) and to provide a forum to discuss issues of interest and importance to the Serbian community. Members of the Serbian Council are also active members of the Round Table Steering Group which is responsible for managing the Round Table and Lazar Vuković, a member of the Serbian Council management Committee is the elected United Kingdom and Ireland Representative.

The main priorities of the Round Table have been the promotion of the teaching and learning of the Serbian language and Serbian Month. Other issues the Round Table has addressed include commemoration the 20th Anniversary of NATO's war on Yugoslavia, using the census to help identify the number of Serbs living in the UK, submitting proposals for the use of the proposed Creative Embassy in London and protesting against the disenfranchisement of Serbian voters in Britain in the elections in Serbia.

In October 2022 the Round Table hosted the first visit by representatives of the Serbian Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region. Arnaud Guillon, Director of the Office was due to lead the delegation but had to withdraw at the last minute because of testing positive for covid. At the meeting Stefan Morović, Assistant Director and Vladimir Koturović, an independent consultant, were

briefed about the Serbian Diaspora in Britain and its achievements. The achievements highlighted included the creation of the Round Table, organisation of a Serbian Month of arts and culture for over fourteen years and the promotion of the Serbian language to children, young people and adults. The visitors then outlined the work of the Office for the Diaspora and its priorities and the meeting concluded with a question-and-answer session. The Round Table was followed by an Award Ceremony, where Vesna Goldsworthy, the acclaimed author, presented certificates to the students who had successfully completed Azbukum Centre courses delivered in partnership with the Round Table and a cultural programme showcasing the talent of British Serbian artists across the generations.

In order to raise its profile, the Round Table has set up a website ([www.serbianrt.com](http://www.serbianrt.com)) which provides information about the aims and objectives of the Round Table and its achievements to date.

For further information contact the Round Table Steering Group on [rtsteering-group@google.com](mailto:rtsteering-group@google.com).



# The Serbian Language



The promotion of the teaching and learning of the Serbian language remains one of the top priorities of the Serbian Council because the ability of young people and children to speak Serbian is critical to the future of the Serbian community in Britain and its ability to maintain ties with Serbia.

The Serbian Council takes forward this priority by participating in and leading 'The Round Table Working Group on the Serbian Language' which was set up to promote the teaching and learning of the Serbian language in Britain, to standardise the way it is taught and to obtain a recognised qualification in Serbian at GCSE and A Level.

Recently these priorities have been taken forward by entering into a partnership with the Azbukum Centre for Serbian Language and Culture in Serbia to deliver their Serbian language courses at beginner, GCSE and A Level. The courses offer qualifications which are accredited by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and are recognised across Europe and beyond. Students on the courses receive a Certificate of Knowledge of the Serbian Language and

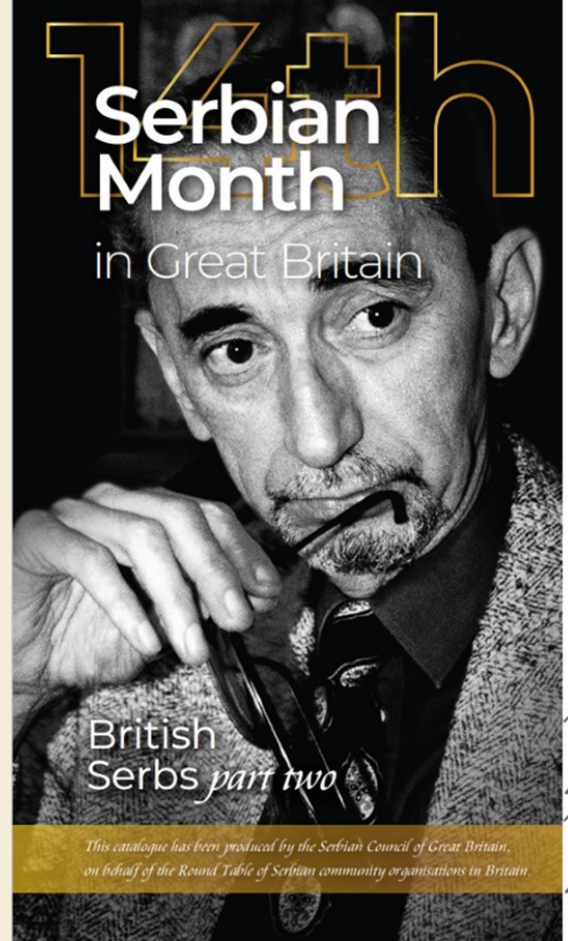
Confirmation of Attendance, official documents, which can be used for registration at universities in Serbia, or used to show knowledge of Serbian when applying for British universities or employment. The approach is that of learning Serbian as a non-native or second language and is designed for students of Serbian heritage aged between 12 and 17 living in the Diaspora. Courses are delivered online and so can accept students from across the UK and Ireland. The courses are delivered over three or four terms, depending on the level of the course.

Olga Stanojlović, Chairwoman of The Serbian Council and the Round Table Working Group on the Serbian Language is on the St Sava Sunday School Education Board to encourage a standardised approach to the teaching and learning of Serbian for students aged from 5 to 17.

The Working Group is also in discussions with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development to see how the different offers of Serbian language learning can complement rather than compete with each other.

# Fourteenth Serbian Month in Great Britain and the Serbian Month Catalogue

The beginning of the Serbian month is linked to the Saint Sava celebration on 27 January, and this tradition was followed for the beginning of the fourteenth Serbian Month. Due to the pandemic, in the previous year we organized events virtually using the YouTube channel 'Serbian Month' and we carried on that practice by combining live and virtual content. As part of the Saint Sava celebrations, we continued to promote our churches and landmarks in Britain, and published a video about the unique Lazarica Church in Birmingham. Father Nenad Popović presented the history of our parish and community in Birmingham and the construction of the Lazarica church. He also provided an introduction to the details of the frescoes and interior of the church, which is one of the most significant landmarks of Serbian culture in Britain. The video has over 650 views so far: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYI2lhMwLyY>



On the same day, the 2022 Serbian Month catalogue jointly edited by Maya Jordan and Olga Stanojlović was published with information about our community, active organizations, groups, schools, as well as successful individuals (academics, artists and athletes). In the previous year, 2021, the catalogue received a new form and theme 'British Serbs'. In the 2022 catalogue we provided information about the history and development of our communities in Bradford, Derby, Cardiff in Wales and Ireland, places which did not feature in the 2021 catalogue.



The catalogue is available at the following link:

<https://serbiancouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Serbian-Month-in-GB-2022.pdf>

The catalogue also provides an opportunity to present different aspects of the Serbian community to readers, and included articles from the younger generation who have grown up in Britain about how they perceive their Serbian origins and this year's catalogue included young people in Scotland. We also included new chapters, one of which was 'Great British Serbs' where we featured 12 famous Serbs who lived in Britain, including Dositej Obradović, Slobodan Jovanović, Čedomir Mijatović, Miloš Crnjanski, Borislav Pekić and others. There were also chapters on 'Prominent Serbs who studied in Britain' (Borivoje Nedić and Vladeta Popović) and made a significant contribution to Serbia on their return and 'British Friends of Serbia', such as Dr Elsie Inglis. In addition, there were articles on the alliance between Serbia and Britain during the Great War and the connection between the royal families of the United Kingdom and Serbia. The catalogues are available online and in print versions and are circulated to the Serbian community, the wider British public and to British and Serbian stakeholders including MPs on the All Party Parliamentary Group on Serbia and MPs in whose constituencies many Serbs live. The catalogue was well received and people felt that the content was interesting because it presented information that was unknown to the Serbian and British public. Copies of the printed edition are considered a valuable promotional tool presenting the richness and achievements of the Serbian community in Britain and the contribution of the British Serbs to British society. Due to its success, it is planned to continue producing catalogues in future year, until there is a comprehensive history of British Serbs up to the present day. Ideally we would like to combine the catalogues and publish them as the history of the British Serbs.

The programme continued with the Saint Sava Academy, which was held virtually on 27 January, organized by the Serbian Orthodox Church of Saint Sava in London. The guests were Father Miloš Vesin from Chicago, Dr. Đorđe Koldžić from Boston, Archimandrite Sava Janjić from the Dečani monastery in Serbia and the church choir. The Saint Sava celebrations were also held live on 29 and 30 January in London, Birmingham and Halifax with appropriate programmes performed by folklore groups and students from Serbian schools. We were very glad that Serbian schools and folklore groups were able to perform publicly again this year.

Painter Đorđe Perendia exhibited his works at exhibitions in the Avivson Art Gallery show, as well as in the Bookery Gallery - Schrödinger's Cat Exhibition during January and February.

The Curator of the Serbian House on Corfu, Dr. Ljubomir Saramandić, gave a lecture "Pilgrimage to Corfu", talking about the stay of Serbian soldiers in Corfu during the First World War. There was also a presentation of a virtual tour of the Serbian House in Corfu at the event. The event was organized by the Serbian Society on 5 February at the Bishop Nikolaj's Hall, St. Sava's Church in London. In the same place, on 9 February, the Jasenovac and Holocaust Memorial Foundation commemorated Holocaust Remembrance Day. The guest speaker was Prof. Ph.D. Gideon Greif, the author of the book 'Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans' and the event attracted a large audience and was one of the best attended events. On the same evening, the documentary film "Forgotten Genocide and the Sin of Silence" was shown, a film which received a prestigious award, in the category of Best Documentary for Social Justice in 2021 and 2022 from the American Synopsis organisation.



Members of the British-Serbian Medical Association covered various topics from different fields of medicine, including diabetes, autism, dementia and other fields, as well as the consequences of covid in a virtual lecture on 20 February.

The Serbian City Club organized a series of virtual interviews with guests from different fields: writer Živojin Ivković, actress Vesna Stranojević, writer and educator Biljana Krstović, Tatjana Dražilović from the Zvezda Centre for Social Integration of Children and Youth and Suzana Gvozdenović, editor of the RTS programme for the Diaspora. The guest of the virtual workshop organized by Liberating Cinema was director Goran Marković.

During Serbian Month, three theatre plays were performed, each with different audiences. The British theatre group Fetch Theatre, in cooperation with the Serbian Council of Great Britain, performed the play 'Hitleria Pizzeria' at the Stables theatre in Hastings on 16 February. The English playwright and actor John Knowles is the author of this comic drama, the actors are also British, while the play is set in an unnamed Eastern European country. This collaboration enabled us to have access to a British audience

and opened the way for further collaboration as the play was shown live and over the Internet via livestream. The recording is available on the YouTube channel and will be used for further promotion and cooperation with British institutions and individuals. Through this project we also plan to develop cooperation with other Serbian organizations in the Diaspora, primarily from the English-speaking world, and also in Serbia.

The play 'Trade' / 'Trgovina', the work of the playwright Ela Dorman Gajić, directed by Maddy Corner, is a collaboration between Serbian and British actors looking at the topic of human trafficking, which was shown at the Omnibus Theatre in London from 15 to 19 February. The play was available in both languages and received great reviews from the British media.

The play 'Milunka', performed by the actress Vesna Stanković (Yugoslav Drama Theatre), and organized by the Serbian Society in cooperation with the Serbian Council, was held in Serbian on 26 February in the St Cyprian church in London. The play was intended for a Serbian audience, both adults and children from 6 to 14 years old. A shorter version for children was performed as part of the graduation



# Hitleria Pizzeria

An absurdist play set in Serbia  
By John Knowles



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ceremony for students of the Round Table Serbian language courses at secondary school level (GCSE and A Level). This was an exceptional opportunity for young people to get acquainted with the Serbian history of the First World War. In addition to the performance, Zvezdana Popović also contributed her lecture on female heroes in foreign medical missions in Serbia, which was accompanied by an exhibition. The event was extremely well attended and very educational. In the evening, older viewers had the opportunity to watch a longer version of the monologue about the Serbian heroine Milunka Savić. The commemoration of the women of foreign missions was held on the same day in the morning after the Remembrance Mass in the Church of Saint Sava, making this a day dedicated to the heroines of the Great War.

The "Melody of Southern Sentiment" concert held on 22 February in London was an opportunity for members of our and the British public to gather together after a long break due to the pandemic. Soprano Silva McQueen and pianist Maya Jordan presented a diverse repertoire of songs from Italy, Spain, and Argentina. Serbian old town songs (starogradske pesme) were certainly the most popular part of the evening's programme, inspiring the audience to join the performers in the cosy atmosphere of the Rocket pub. Members of our community had the opportunity to hang out in the pub 'Paya & Horse' at the 'Belgrade Party' on February 5, with live music from the Balkans.

The British charity Raymond Nicolet Trust, which tirelessly collects funds to help schools in

Serbia, held a virtual meeting on 12 February. The organization presented its work and patrons, as well as the schools from Bajina Bašta, Sombor, Subotica and Crvena Reka with which it cooperates. The programme was enriched by music performed by violinist Miljana Popović Materni (Serbia) and pianists Patrick Hemmerle (France) and Viktor Maslov (Russia).

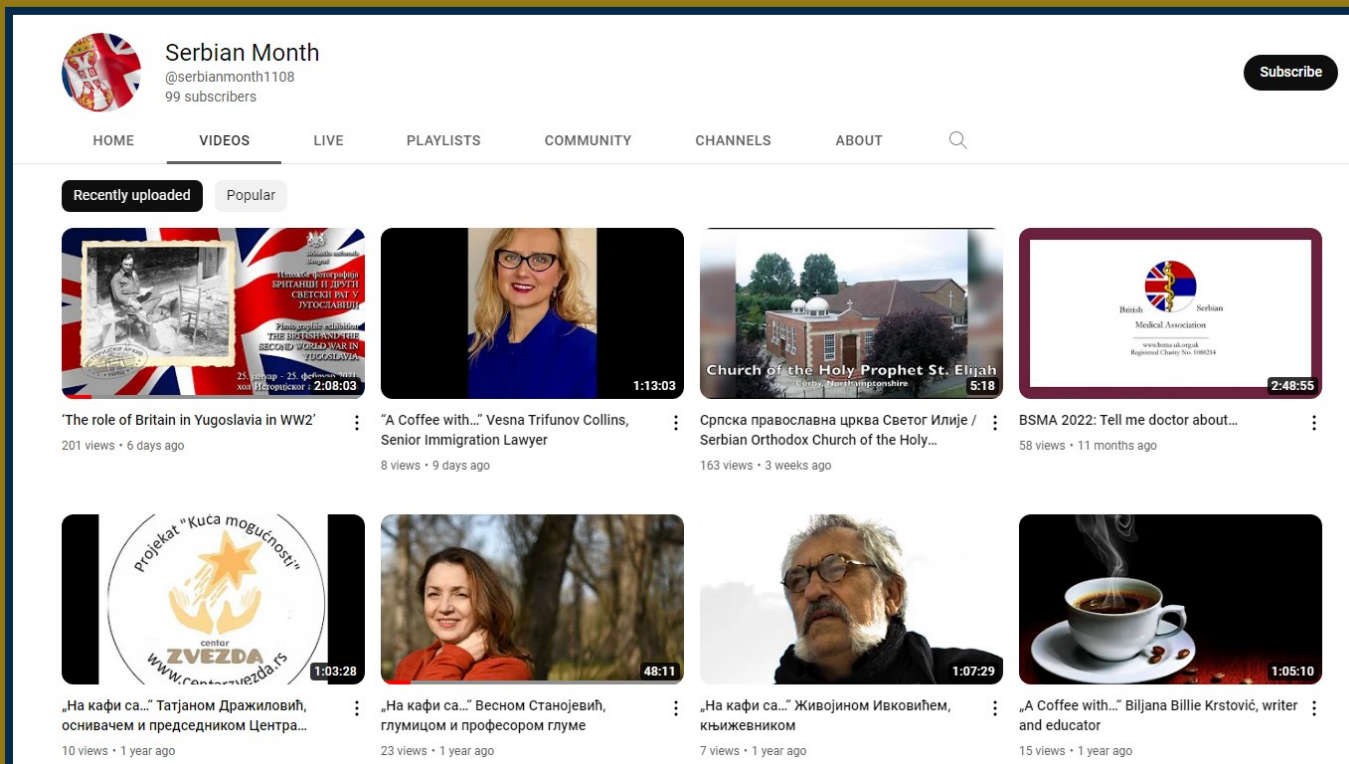
Dr. Jelena Nolan-Roll from Bristol organized a Diaspora-themed Writers' Workshop, with the aim of encouraging writers at all levels in their further work. The participants agreed to continue this kind of socializing and exchange of experiences in writing even after the end of the Serbian month.

The traditional Mini Book Fair, the ninth in a row, was held over two days, 26 and 27 February by ZOOM. The Serbian Library in London featured two authors. Dr Raško Radović, who has lived in Beijing for a long time, who presented his books in the fields of culture, science and psychiatry, as well as the history of cultural heritage. Viktor Lazić talked about the collection of unusual and rare books, his recent trip to Egypt and Sudan, as well as the library and cultural heritage ADLIGAT in Belgrade.

The Serbian Month programme ended with socializing with younger members of the Serbian community. It was an opportunity for the second and third generation of our diaspora to give the representatives of the Serbian Council their suggestions and ideas on how to attract the younger generation to actively participate in the work of our organizations, the promotion our community in Britain and connecting with each other.







Some of the virtual events are available on the Serbian Month YouTube channel, which is supplemented by additional recordings each year: [Serbian Month - YouTube](#)

Virtual events allow us to present our events to a larger number of guests from Serbia and the Diaspora and to supplement the archive of recordings that will be used in the future. It is

especially important to us that the younger generation of school age young people showed great interest in the event organized for them (the play 'Milunka'). Also, cooperation with British artists and organizations is a very important element of this festival, since it allows us to reach British audiences and we are glad that we were able to expand this cooperation.

## Membership and Donations

The Serbian Council encourages everyone who supports the work of the Serbian Council to become a member of the organisation because membership fees provide us with a regular source of income and a stable financial foundation for the organisation to function smoothly from year to year or to make donation.

The membership fee is modest **£24 per annum** or **£15 per annum for senior citizens, students or the unwaged**.

It can be paid in one go or by direct debit of monthly instalments. The organisation is considering ways in which it can enhance membership benefits but currently members are able to submit and vote on motions at the Annual General Meeting and to elect the Officers and Members of the Management Committee. Members are also entitled to a modest discount to Serbian Council paid events, priority booking and free drinks at some events.

To become a member, go to the Serbian Council website [www.serbiancouncil.org.uk](http://www.serbiancouncil.org.uk) and download and complete the membership form and return the completed form to the Serbian Council.

**Payments can be made directly to our bank whose details are:  
Lloyds Bank; Sort code 30-94-81 ; Account Number 01778337; REF: Membership or Donation**

**Cheques payable to the Serbian Council of Great Britain can be sent to:  
11 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BD.**