



Serbian Council of Great Britain  
Српски савет Велике Британије

# Annual Newsletter

## Feb 2024

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[www.serbiancouncil.org.uk](http://www.serbiancouncil.org.uk)



*Serbian Customs and Food*

*Family patron saint day ('Slava')*

Serbian customs and beliefs

Young British and Irish Serbs

Older British Serbs

Great British Serbs

British Friends of Serbia

*HM Queen Elizabeth II, Serbia and Yugoslavia*

[Serbian Month YouTube](#)

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

Credit Darko Savic



## Letter from our Chairwoman

It has been another busy year for the Serbian Council and one in which we have been forced to deliver our priorities with limited financial and human resources. This has meant that we have had to maintain our focus on those projects and priorities which we are best suited to deliver and which will have the maximum impact and benefit for the Serbian community in Britain. As in the past this means a focus on:

- \* 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 accompanies it Month Catalogue

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

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

We could do so much more if we had more people involved feeding in new ideas and taking forward new and exciting priorities. We are keen to involve communities from outside of London in our work so that the Serbian Council is representative of all our communities and not just that of London. We need to engage with young people in our work because the future of our community depends on this. We want to be more active on social media so that we get the message out to more people. However, we have not been able to take these priorities forward because we do not have the people to do this. If you think that you could

make a contribution, however big or small please do consider standing for the Management Committee. We need you to secure the future of the organisation and the valuable contribution it makes to the Serbian community in Britain.

I am always astonished about how much we achieve with so little money. With more money we could do so much more. The easiest way of increasing our finances, and putting the organisation on a stable financial footing, is to increase our income from membership fees. The fees are very modest £24 for adults and £15 for those aged between 18 and 25 or over 65. Please become a member.

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. How Maya does it with all her other commitments I really do not know but we all owe her a great debt of gratitude for all that she does.

Olga Stanojlović,  
Chairwoman Serbian Council of Great Britain

# The Round Table

<https://www.serbianrt.com/>

One of the main priorities of the Serbian Council is supporting and strengthening the Round Table of Serbian organisations, which it was a driving force in establishing several years ago.

The aim the Round Table is 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. The Serbian Council believes that this type of collaboration strengthens the impact of the Serbian community within wider British society and with Serbia.

The priorities of the Round Table remain the same as in past years the promotion of the teaching and learning of the Serbian language in Britain and Ireland and production of the Serbian Month Catalogue and delivery of Serbian Month. Other issues that the Round Table has addressed include commemorative events, suggestions for the use of the Creative Embassy by the Serbian diaspora and simplifying the process of the diaspora to vote in Serbian elections.

The other policy that that the Round Table has maintained over the years is that of electing two people to represent the Serbian community in Britain to the Office of the Diaspora and other Serbian and UK institutions, a democratic tradition that started with electing representatives to the Diaspora Assembly when it was in operation. This was particularly important this year because a Vidovdan



Assembly of the Diaspora was held in July 2023 to which the UK was allocated five representatives and Ireland three. At a Round

Table meeting held in June 2023 it was agreed that the Round Table should elect and endorse representatives to the Vidovdan Assembly and that the decision should be communicated to the organisers and copied to the Embassy. The meeting agreed that the UK should be represented by its two elected representatives, Dragana Tomašević, Jasenovac and Holocaust

Memorial Foundation and Lazar Vuković, Serbian Council and endorsed representation by Jadranka Dervišević- Kitarić, British Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Nada Hinić, Serbian Society and Michaela Mitrović, OSSCI .Lazar Vuković attended the Vidovdan Assembly and was called to speak at one of the sessions but it proved impossible for other UK representatives, who joined the meeting by Zoom, to contribute.

Other priorities that the Round Table has identified is how to engage young people in community activities and encouraging the involvement of communities from outside of London in the work of the Round Table. Unfortunately, little progress has been made in taking these issues forward because of the lack of capacity of members of the Round Table Steering Group who are responsible for managing the Round Table .

# The Serbian Council's work in the Serbian Language

The Serbian Council leads the Round Table's work in the Serbian language which began in 2011 with the establishment of the Round Table Working Group on the Serbian Language which aims 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.

The focus has been on older learners from 12 to 17 years for whom there was no provision following the withdrawal of Serbian qualifications in England in the early 1990s.

The Working Group has taken forward these priorities from 2019 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 for students of Serbian heritage living in the diaspora. Courses are delivered online and so can attract students from across the UK and Ireland. The courses are delivered over three or four terms, depending on the level of the course.

Last year 14 of the 16 students completed the courses successfully and they will receive their certificates from the writer and lecturer Lazar Dzamic, at an Award Ceremony on 24 February which will be combined with a talk and concert to celebrate Nikola Tesla. This year we have 15 students on the courses.

There are significant challenges in delivering courses for this age group and they are the ability to recruit sufficient students at each level to make the course financially viable, the level of fees that are charged in comparison to other courses, and the ability of students to commit to the requirements of the course because of school and other commitments.

**No matter where you live  
in the UK or Ireland,  
this Serbian language programme  
has been tailored just for you!**

Contact:

[olga.stanojlovic@btinternet.com](mailto:olga.stanojlovic@btinternet.com)



## The Future

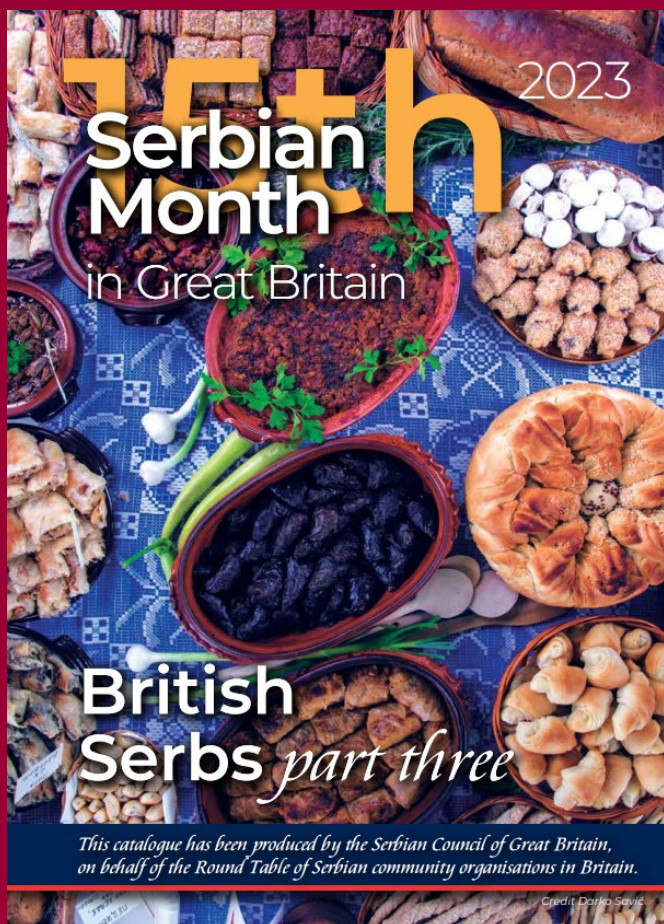
The landscape of Serbian language teaching and learning has changed since the Round Table Working Group started work in 2011 and the Working Group needs to review its strategy in the light of these changes which include:

- The possibility of developing a closer relationship with the St Sava Church School for Britain and Ireland which offers Serbian lessons for children aged from 5 to 12 and which from 2021 co-ordinates the teaching of Serbian language and religion across Great Britain and Ireland. This is possible because the school builds on programmes developed by the Azbukum Centre
- The re-establishment of the Dopunska Škola in 2019. It now teaches 255 students from 5 to 14 in Corby, Bedford, Leicester and London (Hammersmith and Dulwich), Newcastle, Oxford, Birmingham, Redhill and Surrey and with 5 online groups.
- The new policy of 'honorary' teachers that has been introduced by the Serbian Ministry of Education which allows the recruitment of suitably qualified teachers from within the Serbian diaspora to teach in the Dopunska Škola network. The benefits of this approach are that it is a cheaper model to implement, the teachers are paid by the Serbian Ministry of Education so courses are free and provision can be expanded and use is made of suitably qualified teachers in the diaspora. The important issue which is requires clarification is if there is flexibility about the way in which the language element of courses can be taught.

In these changed circumstances the Working Group needs to develop its strategy to best serve the needs of promoting the teaching and learning of the Serbian language in Britain.

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

Serbian Month in Great Britain was held for the 15th time from 26th January to 8th March 2023. Once again this was a large festival promoting Serbian culture, education, language, art and connecting and creating bridges between British and Serbian people. This year's extremely rich and varied programme included 40 live and virtual events, held in 11 cities (London, Aylesbury, Bedford, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Corby, Halifax, Leicester, Reading and Shrewsbury).



The third part of the now traditional catalogue of Serbian Month 'British Serbs' was published, with a new chapter dedicated to Serbian customs (including celebrations of the Slava, Christmas and Easter) and gastronomy as an intangible cultural heritage. Chapters from the previous year's catalogue on famous British Serbs, British Friends of Serbia, and Serbian

communities (Telford and Cambridge) also featured. The catalogue included articles from young and older generations of British Serbs, as well as an article about the relationship between Queen Elizabeth II and Serbia. Information about organizations, as well as successful academics, artists and athletes, is also included. The catalogue is available online and as printed material. To view 2023 catalogue please follow the link:

[https://serbiancouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SMGB-2023-web\\_compressed.pdf](https://serbiancouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SMGB-2023-web_compressed.pdf)

As part of the Saint Sava celebrations, celebrated in several cities (London, Bedford, Halifax, Reading, Leicester), we continued to promote our churches and landmarks. This year, we published a video about the Church of St. Prophet Elijah in Corby, available on the YouTube channel Serbian Month:



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmFirlwVvYqDP7PrXmsgVbw/videos?view=0>

This year, the St Sava's Ball was again held under the auspices of the Hilandar Monastery with the presence of Archimandrite Methodius, as well as famous artists, trumpeter Nikola Mijajlović, soprano Tamara Radjenović and others.

Musical events included a concert by the klezmer-Balkan band She Koyokh at the famous Wigmore Hall in London, the Vremeplov band in Birmingham, as well as classical music concerts performed by accordionist Miloš Milivojević, soprano Silva McQueen, tenor Leonel Pinher, pianists Maya Jordan and Mina Miletić, cellist Nicola Tait Baxter and the popular London Tango Quintet. Our actresses Sandra Siladjev and Ela Dorman-Gajić dazzled the stage with their talent. Painter George Perendia exhibited his works at an exhibition in Bookery Gallerie. Writers Jelena Nolan Roll and Živojin Ivković, a guest from Serbia, led a discussion on writing in the diaspora at events in Bristol and London, during which the book 'Talking About Blocks' was presented.

The Serbian Council organised several events. A lecture by Nik Ilić, former military attaché at the British Embassy in Belgrade was held on ZOOM and a large audience heard about the role of the British in Yugoslavia in WW2.

['The role of Britain in Yugoslavia in WW2' \(youtube.com\)](#)

Another very well attended event was held at the Serbian Embassy following our AGM. The British writer Nick Allan, inspired by Rebecca West, presented his book 'When Dreams Collide: A Journey Through Yugoslavia with Rebecca West'. The Serbian Council in cooperation with Jasenovac and Holocaust Memorial Foundation presented a screening of the documentary film "The Story of the Cherry Tree" produced by Astra

production from Pirot about the fate of the Jewish citizens of Pirot in WW2. The event was enhanced by an interesting talk on history of Jewish population in former Yugoslavia given by historian Dr Bojan Aleksov (Associate Professor at the UCL SSEES).

Other Serbian Month events included a presentation by the Raymond Nicolet Trust charity of its work in Serbia over the past year at a virtual event; a discussion with Professor Bogdan Lubardić and Professor Mark Chapman on the cooperation and friendship between Serbia and the Church of England dating back to the First World War; Dejan Zagorac outlined the gastronomic treasures of Serbia; Vesna Trifunov Collins summarized the new immigration law and how it affects the citizens of Serbia; Nenad Obradović and Goran Mašanović shared their knowledge about photography, and in addition collected funds for Serbian language schools; members of the British-Serbian Medical Association discussed nutrition, mental health and other current health problems.

Zvezdana Popović made sure that we do not forget the legacy of Dr. Elsie Inglis, and Dragana Tomašević organized a commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day this year as every other year.

The artistic ensemble of the Serbian Ministry of Defence "Stanislav Binički" finished its British tour with a concert in the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks as part of the Serbian Month.



**THE BRITISH IN YUGOSLAVIA**  
**1940-45**

A journey into the past through the words and pictures of The Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.) and others who were there.

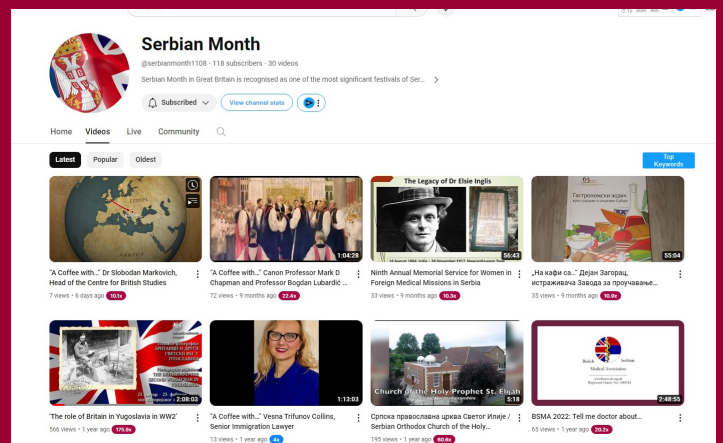
**NIK ILIĆ**  
FORMER BRITISH DEFENCE ATTACHÉ IN THE EMBASSY IN BELGRADE

Nick Ilić

## Serbian Month YouTube Channel

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.



## SERBIAN MONTH CATALOGUES

Catalogue 2021: click [HERE](#)

Catalogue 2022: click [HERE](#)

Catalogue 2023: click [HERE](#)

Catalogue 2024: click [HERE](#)

# JUST GIVING SUPPORT SERBIAN MONTH IN GREAT BRITAIN VISIT OUR JUSTGIVING PAGE

[https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/serbian-month?utm\\_term=4dzg2NP7P](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/serbian-month?utm_term=4dzg2NP7P)

Please join our Just Giving campaign to raise funds for Serbian Month and Serbian Month Catalogue.

Serbian Month in Great Britain, held in February of each year, is one most significant festivals of Serbian arts and culture in the Serbian Diaspora. It showcases artists from Serbia and British Serbian artists in all fields. Over the past fifteen years it has raised the profile of the Serbian community in Britain and shown what a positive contribution we make to British society.

Since 2018 a Serbian Month Catalogue we also produce a catalogue to accompany Serbian Month. It tells our story in Britain and helps us and others understand our history and how we nurture and celebrate our Serbian cultural heritage in Britain.

We could do so much more if only we had more funding - bringing artists from Serbia to perform here, funding events by British Serbian artists, holding more events outside of London and organising events for our young people. If you care about our British Serbian community and want to see it flourish please do donate to our Just Giving campaign.

Every donation however big or small will help!

# 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.

We appreciate your support!

[info@serbiancouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@serbiancouncil.org.uk)



[www.serbiancouncil.org.uk](http://www.serbiancouncil.org.uk)