



**Serbian Council of Great Britain**  
**Српски савет Велике Британије**

# Annual Newsletter

Feb  
2025



**Serbian  
Month  
YouTube**

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



## Letter from our Chairwoman

Time flies and it hardly seems possible that another year has passed and that it is time for another Annual Newsletter.

It has not been an easy year for the Serbian Council since the deadline for bidding for financing from Serbia passed without our knowledge and a bid for funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund was turned down. It has meant that we have to rely on membership fees, donations and sponsorship to deliver our priorities. Since these sources of income are modest it has meant that we have maintained our focus on areas which we believe can have the most impact and benefit for the Serbian community in Britain and not been able to develop new initiatives in key areas. As in previous years our focus has been upon.

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

\* Leading on the design and delivery of the Serbian Month festival of arts and culture and the Serbian Month Catalogue which accompanies it

\* Managing the promotion of the teaching and learning of the Serbian language courses for the 12 to 18 age group

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

The future provides many challenges, but also many opportunities. The financial situation is unlikely to improve in the near future and so we need to focus on building up our membership

since membership fees provide the financial foundation for the organisation and its future. We also need to develop a successor generation to take over the reins of the organisation from the current Officer and Management Committee and to feed in new ideas which will be of interest to the younger generation. Like many other Serbian community organisations, we are finding it difficult to do this. We want to get better at getting our message out, especially since we can no longer rely on the Britic magazine. This means making a better use of social media. Finally, we must attract members and deliver projects outside of London so we become a national rather than London based organisation.

To deliver this exciting agenda we need the people and the finances to do it. If you think that you could make a contribution, however big or small please do consider becoming a member. Membership fees are very modest £24 for adults and £15 for those aged between 18 and 25 or over 65. If you want to do more then please consider standing for the Management Committee.

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 Maya Jordan our Secretary and the Director of Serbian Month.

Olga Stanojlović,  
Chairwoman Serbian Council of Great Britain





# The Round Table



One of the main aims of the Serbian Council is to encourage Serbian community organisations in Britain to work together for the benefit of the community and to strengthen the impact the community has in Britain and with Serbia.

We have found that the most effective way of encouraging cooperation between organisations is the development of projects in areas that the community consider important. So far the focus has been:

- the teaching and learning of the Serbian language in Britain
- production of the Serbian Month Catalogue and delivery of Serbian Month festival of Serbian arts and culture in February of each year
- the election two people to represent the Serbian community in Britain to Serbian and UK institutions, currently Dragana Tomašević, Jasenovac and Holocaust Memorial Foundation and Lazar Vuković, Serbian Council

The Serbian Council recognises that the Round Table is not operating to its full potential or developing new initiatives in priority areas. In particular it is not engaging young people or communities from outside of London in its work. This is due to the lack of human and financial resources and the capacity of members of the Round Table Steering Group who are responsible for managing the Round Table.

The Round Table Steering Group is working hard to address these issues and to develop a constructive relationship with the Embassy and the new structures in Serbia responsible for relations with the Serbian Diaspora.

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

[@serbianroundtable](https://www.instagram.com/serbianroundtable)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61573203892465>



# The Serbian Language



**SERBIAN  
2024/2025.**

**for children and  
young adults  
in the UK & Ireland**

Round Table  
&  
Azbukum - Centre for Serbian Language



The Serbian Council recognises that the Serbian language plays a critical role in preserving the culture and identity of the Serbian community in Britain and this is why it has been proud to lead the Round Table's work in the Serbian language since 2011.

The church schools and now the Dopunska Škola have provided and continue to teach younger children and so we have focused so our efforts on older learners from 12 to 17 years for whom there has been no provision in Britain following the withdrawal of the Serbian O and A levels in the early 1990s. The Working Group has delivered courses for this age group by entering into a partnership with the Azbukum Centre for Serbian Language and Culture in Serbia because their courses are of a high quality and are accredited by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and offer qualifications which are recognised across Europe and beyond. Equally important is that their approach is that of learning Serbian as a non-native or second language which we believe is the most appropriate approach for students of Serbian heritage living in the diaspora.

Courses are delivered at beginner, GCSE and A Level and are taught online because this is much easier for this age group with its many school and out of school commitments and enables us to attract students from across Britain and beyond. Courses are now taught over two academic years so that students can better accommodate the demands of the course with the other commitments on their time.

The landscape of Serbian language teaching and learning has changed significantly since 2011 and the Round Table Working Group needs to review its strategy in the light of these changes to ensure that it best serves the needs of promoting the teaching and learning of the Serbian language in Britain.





16th

# Serbian Month in Great Britain and the Serbian Month Catalogue

The traditional festival Serbian Month in Great Britain 2024 was held for the 16th time from 27 January to 9 March 2024. The main goal of this festival is to promote Serbian culture, education, language, art and to connect and create bridges between the British and Serbian people.

Over 40 live and virtual events were held in 10 cities (London, Bedford, Birmingham, Bradford, Corby, Halifax, Leicester, Peterborough, Tunbridge Wells, Worthing). The programme included St Sava's celebrations, music and folklore, films, talks, charitable, fundraising and networking events.

The Serbian Council held several online events:

An interview with His Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia Mr Edward Ferguson on: relations between Serbia and Britain, the way people view Britain in Serbia and vice versa and the role of the Serbian Diaspora in UK and its contribution to the improvement of cooperation and relations between our countries.



The interview is available on the Serbian Month YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PycbbYEeLvA&t=333s>

*The British who defended Serbia during the Great War 1915-18* was the other very inspiring online event. Colonel Nick Ilić told us the story of Admiral Troubridge and the exploits of the British sailors and gunners in the defence of Belgrade and during the Great Retreat over the Albanian mountains to the Adriatic.

To hear a full story visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCCnH4ub5ns&t=8s>



Apart from online events, the Serbian Council cooperated with the St Sava's Church London in hosting a talk and a photographic exhibition on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024, *The Role of the British in Yugoslavia in WW2*. The exhibition's author and speaker, Colonel Nick Ilić, used a large number of previously unpublished images, reports and oral history accounts (held in the Imperial War Museum, the National Archives as well as the Serbian Military Archive) to bring this fascinating period of history to life.

The recording is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWigXSWcscE&t=364s>



## Serbian Month in Great Britain Catalogue

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

### *Serbia's Interaction with Other Cultural Communities*

By Dr David Norris



A talk by Dr David Norris on *Serbian Traditions and Cultural Change: Struggle, Negotiations* was held at the Serbian Embassy on 19<sup>th</sup> February. Dr Norris talked about the many challenges that institutions and individuals in Serbia with responsibility for the management of cultural resources have faced over the last 200 years. The challenges have largely been linked to the competing demands arising from the desire to preserve national cultural heritage and the drive to adopt foreign cultural models. This talk examined the competing claims as a more complex relationship between traditional and modernizing tendencies which were often closer than previously believed.

Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlHyU6UwsOE>

Mary Novakovich book promotion *My Family and Other Enemies: Life and travels in Croatia's Hinterland* was also held at the Serbian Embassy on 29<sup>th</sup> February.

An event to celebrate Nikola Tesla included an Award Ceremony for Serbian

Language students on the Azbukum and Round Table Courses, a talk on Tesla by Avram Balabanović and concert by guitarist/composer Branco Stojisin promoting his latest album *Whispers From The Sun*.



Tesla talk by Avram  
Balabanović

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsfVLFkoRBc>





#### Available online:

[https://serbiancouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Serbian-Month-2024-WEB\\_compressed.pdf](https://serbiancouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Serbian-Month-2024-WEB_compressed.pdf)

For the last 7 years, a catalogue has been printed alongside the Serbian Month programme, which since 2021 has had thematic content 'British Serbs'. The fourth Serbian Month catalogue with this theme was published on St Sava's Day at the start of the sixteenth Serbian Month in Great Britain. The focus of the catalogue was Serbian culture, covering music and folklore, areas of Serbian culture which our diaspora has actively promoted since the first generation of Serbs arrived in Britain after World War II.



Guided by this idea, the sequence of articles on music traces our musical heritage and the changes in the way it has been cultivated over the decades. The articles cover various musical genres including religious, classical, traditional and pop-rock music. In this chapter, we have also introduced bands who perform and promote our traditional music, as well as successful classical musicians who live and work in Britain.



## FOLKLORE

*Serbian Traditional Dancing*  
UNESCO Inscribed in 2017 (12.COM)  
on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

The second chapter is dedicated to the folklore tradition, providing an overview of the numerous folklore ensembles in Britain, as well as the personal experiences of members of folklore groups. Along with articles on the preservation of musical and folklore traditions in our diaspora, the catalogue also contains articles by Serbian experts in the field of music and folklore who aim to familiarize our diaspora and the British public with the history of traditional Serbian music and folklore.

A new chapter in the catalogue was dedicated to Tesla on the occasion of the celebration of the 80th anniversary of his death, with an emphasis on his connections with Britain. Since 2024 also marked the 25th anniversary of the NATO aggression on Yugoslavia, we published an article on organizations that were active during that period, as well as prominent British figures and groups who publicly supported Serbia in those difficult times.

We continued with the practice of having articles in the catalogue of famous British Serbs, British Friends of Serbia, as well as articles by young British Serbs. Information on organizations, as well as successful academics and artists, has been updated.



## 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: [HERE](#)    Catalogue 2022: [HERE](#)    Catalogue 2023: [HERE](#)  
Catalogue 2024: [HERE](#)    Catalogue 2025: [HERE](#)

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

[https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/serbian-month?utm\\_term=4dztg2NP7P](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/serbian-month?utm_term=4dztg2NP7P)

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 sixteen 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.

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

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

