

Report to Annual General Meeting 11 March 2020 18:30 – 21:30 Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL

The Annual General Meeting will be followed by an informal social event with food provided by the Society's committee members

1. ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Membership continues to grow, events are well attended and finances strong. Our Annual Dinner 2019 raised £600 towards equipment for a premature babies unit in Croatia, and we have an ambitious programme for 2020.

2. BRITISH - CROATIAN SOCIETY A REVIEW OF 2019

by Peter Elborn

British-Croatian Society events in 2019

Stronger finances have allowed us to have a more ambitious programme bringing speakers from Croatia and to support events such as Bojan Čičić's Instruments of Time and Truth concert in Oxford.

As always, one of the key activities appreciated by our email contacts and members has been simply letting people know of Croatian events happening in the UK. We were able to tell people of 28 Croatian events during the year, in addition to events organised by ourselves.

Our 2019 programme started with the ex-British ambassador to Croatia, Sir John Ramsden, talking about his diplomatic career from Hanoi to Zagreb. He illustrated his talk with unique photographs of Hanoi now published in his book Hanoi After the War.

The outstanding violinist Bojan Čičić came to the Society to talk about his career and his music as an Oxford based violinist who performs internationally. He has been working to bring Croatian composers to the attention of the UK classical music public, including a new CD and a Croatia-focussed concert in Oxford at the end of November.

David Mlinarić and Ana Zenić, world-class interior designers, gave an illustrated account of bringing their aesthetic to their own houses in Dalmatia. Both have created houses of distinction while respecting the essence of the old stone buildings they converted. David's house was featured in the September 2019 edition of House and Garden.

Flora Turner gave a dazzling talk about Croatian cultural objects that have been returned to Croatia after having come up for auction in London and elsewhere in Europe. If you were not able to attend this event, you can see the text and illustrations on our website (In Search of Art for Croatia).

British-Croatian Society
Registered Charity in England and Wales (No. 1086139)

In the autumn our focus was on twentieth century Croatian architecture and we arranged two talks in co-operation with the prestigious C20 Society. Krunoslav Ivanišin came from Zagreb to bring the architect Nikola Dobrović to the attention of a UK audience. His Grand Hotel on the island of Lopud is an excellent example of 1930's European architecture applied to a Croatian setting.

This was followed by another architect from Zagreb, Darja Radović Mahečić, known for her monumental work on 1930's Croatian architecture. We are now working with her and the C20 Society to create an architectural tour to Zagreb in the autumn of 2021.

Two outstanding contemporary award-winning novelists, Marina Šur Puhlovski and Olja Knežević, were in conversation at an event that we held at Europe House. Marina worked as a journalist and a literary critic, before turning to writing exclusively prose. She has written stories, novels, travelogues, essays and literary diaries, and has been the recipient of several national awards for literature. Marina talked about her recently published novel, *Wild Woman*.

Olja Knežević lived in London for ten years, and has an MA in creative writing from Birkbeck College. She now lives in Zagreb. She is the author of two novels and one book of autobiographical short stories. Her novel *Ekaterina Great and Small* will be published in English in 2020.

The literary theme continued at this year's British-Croatian Society annual dinner at the Army and Navy Club on Pall Mall in London. The guest of honour was Celia Hawkesworth, honoured for her career long dedication to translation and bringing Croatian authors to the attention of UK readers. Social events also included a BBQ in the summer and regular meet-ups.

Our ever popular annual photographic event, *calendarCroatia*, took a slightly different form this year. At the launch party, in addition to showing a wide variety of images taken in Croatia in 2019, photographs by Dragan Tomljenović, Edo Skender and Ninoslava Shah were selected to be enlarged and framed to hang in honour at the Croatian embassy. You can see a selection of the photographs and the calendar on our website.

We will continue to work with other organisations as a way of bringing Croatia to the attention of people in the UK. In May 2019 our members supported a talk by the Tamara Štefanac, Director of the Croatian National Railway Museum, about Croatian railway heritage and possible railway tourism, hosted at the Kings Cross Model Railway Club. In addition to the C20 Society, we are arranging events in 2020 with the British Library.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Our membership continues to grow, and has become younger. We encourage payment by recurring standing order.

	Jan-20	Jan-19	Jan-18	Jan-17	Jan-16	Jan-15	Jan-14
Number of subscriptions:	180	173	125	123	114	97	69
Number of individuals:	239	224	168	165	148	128	92

4. FINANCE

The accounts as submitted for the last accounting period up to 31 March 2018, and the patterns of income and expenditure since, give a stable picture of income and expenditure with little major variation year on year. The most significant financial event, the Annual Dinner, has followed an established pattern for a number of years now with costs of around £4,000 and income slightly exceeding that figure. The total combined funds in the bank and PayPal accounts currently stand at £5,500. This is a little more than the agreed working reserve of £2,000 to £3,000.

5. COMMITTEE

We held 3 Committee meetings during 2019 plus email exchange and decisions, mainly about events. The Committee has adopted a process for urgent and important decisions between Committee meetings to be made by the chair in emails consultation with Committee members. The Committee are also arranging production of British-Croatian Society items for fund raising sale such as a BCS logo tie, scarf and a lapel pin.

6. POLICIES

Our policies on: Funding Decision Making, Risk Management, Data Protection, Safeguarding vulnerable persons and children and Decisions between Committee meetings are available on the web pages.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

The Society's web pages carry formal information such as event announcements, reports, our Objectives, Policies, Rules and much more. Through social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram we reach around 2,000 followers with announcements about our events and matters of interest to Croatians.

8. CONCLUSION

We thank our members who fund BCS activities with their subscriptions, to sponsors that support us and to all those come out to our events. Looking forward, we have a strong programme for 2020 and plan to extend our events outside London.

9. PATRONS:

Robin Harris, Andrija Kojaković, Sir John Ramsden, Sir Nicholas and Lady Jackson

10. TRUSTEES & COMMITTEE

The following were appointed at the 2019 AGM. New committee members are always welcome.

Trustee Committee Members

Boris Marelić	Peter Elborn
David Davison	Robert Dolata
Flora Turner	Suzanna Dolata
Nicholas Jarrold	Tony Brand
Paul Jenc	Željka Tomljenović

Committee Members

Alan Wilding
Nicholas Auger
Snježana Maclean
Stefania Grbčić
Tihana Borovčak

British-Croatian Society
Registered Charity in England and Wales (No. 1086139)

Robert Dolata
Secretary
20/02/20