

Annual Report for 2020

It was an unusual and troubling year, and we thank science for vaccines that are returning us gradually to near normal life. It may be sometime before we travel without hindrance. But internet technology has helped us to hold events, and we are now working towards safe face to face events in 2021.

We moved our programme online from March 2020. This will continue in 2021, until government declares Level 2 / 1 Alert.

Our 2020 Annual General Meeting scheduled for 11 March 2020 was held by email exchange with members. As AGMs should not be more than 18 months apart, we hope to hold a physical 2021 AGM before September 2021.

This report details activities during 2020 and provides brief information on our finances, membership, policies, committee and other practical arrangements

1. THE BRITISH-CROATIAN SOCIETY IN 2020

By Peter Elborn

Of course it has not been a usual year for the British-Croatian Society - indeed for everyone and everything. Nevertheless we managed to continue to deliver a programme, continuing to respond to the interest of our members in knowing and understanding Croatia. This is especially important at a time when many things may not be possible.

The year started with a generous donation from Celia Hawkesworth of books of Croatian literature translated into English. They were quickly taken up by members. The availability of Croatian fiction in English does much to widen the audience for literature from Croatia and a deeper understanding of the country.

For the first part of the year we had our regular events programme. A memorable start was to hear the distinguished pianist Ivana Gavrić in conversation with the equally distinguished musicologist Bojan Bujić. Ivana talked about what she learned from her mother, the way piano was taught in Sarajevo and how she had to adjust to the very different techniques on arrival in the UK. Ivana and Bojan discussed the various traditions of piano playing.

In her career Ivana Gavrić has attracted considerable praise for her interpretations of Janáček, Liszt, Schubert, and more recently Grieg. Last year, Ivana performed Beethoven's Emperor Concerto to a sold-out Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Her recordings have also earned much praise. She created a sensation with her debut disc *In the Mists*, winning BBC Music Magazine Newcomer of the Year for 'playing of an altogether extraordinary calibre'.

The following month, Ivana gave a concert to raise funds for AMAC-UK that was all the more enjoyable for the insights gained at the 'in conversation' event.

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Our programme continued with Sir Nicholas Jackson who gave an updated account of his grandfather's visits to Croatia in 1882, 1884, 1885 and 1893 and the publication of his three volume travel diaries 'Dalmatia, the Quarnero' and Istria'. As always Sir Nicholas gave a splendid presentation illustrated with some of the pictures his grandfather painted.

Our ambitious programme with the British Library unfortunately had to be shelved. This included the launch in English of the seminal work by Predrag Matvejević 'Our Daily Bread', translated by Krsitina Pribičević-Zorić, and published by Istros Books. We had hoped to postpone this to a later date but eventually had accepted that a public event at the Library was unlikely to happen this year. We therefore opted instead for a podcast that was made available through the British-Croatian Society website.

Also cancelled at the British Library was an event to mark a new edition in English of Petar Hektorović's narrative poem, a masterpiece of Croatian Renaissance literature, Fishing and Fishermen's Conversations. The intention was also to highlight the British Library's Croatian collection. The library is open to everyone, for research, inspiration and enjoyment. These collections are significant and relevant for the Croatian community in Britain.

calendarCroatia 2021 is one of our activities that has been little affected by current constraints with an online exhibition on the British-Croatian Society website. The printed calendar can also be seen on the website where there are details how you can purchase a copy.

We initiated two new features to reach our members electronically. The first was a series of emails under the title culturalCroatia with 18 short features on a wide range of cultural issues, subjects ranging from music and literature to personal recollections. culturalCroatia can still be seen on our website - just click on Cultural Croatia.

The second new venture is currently under way to produce a series of five minute films where members of the British-Croatian Society are featured talking about what makes them 'British-Croatian'. This will also be available through our website.

Although our regular programme had to stop from March, we have continued to be in contact with members by email. A big part of what we do has always been to pass on information that might be of interest. So, to take some examples, we circulated information about the disastrous effects of earthquakes and floods on museums, we brought to our members attention the annual report of the International Trust for Croatian Monuments, and we provided amusement by reporting that one of Japan's oldest universities uses 'U boj, u boj' song from Ivan Zajc's opera Nikola Zrinski as its university anthem.

The British-Croatian Society has supported the 'adopt a clock' project to help the Museum of Arts and Crafts (Muzej za umjetnosti i obrt) in Zagreb. The project helps to restore some of the damage to the exhibits by the earthquake. One of the damaged clocks has an early 18th century movement by Richard Colley, an 'eminent maker' from one of the great periods of London clockmaking, in a slightly later German rococo case. The Society has a limited funds but we responded by 'adopting' this clock with a British connection by contributing towards

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the cost of the restoration of the Colley movement. The restored clock features in an exhibition at the Museum and the support from the British-Croatian Society is acknowledged.

As this year the Society has been unable to hold its annual dinner at which each year money is raised for a deserving project in Croatia, the Society is encouraging its members to consider making a donation towards the costs of repairing the Richard Colley clock mechanism. If you wish to add to the Society's contribution of £500 (the total cost of restoration is £3,000), please email britishcroatiansociety@gmail.com for detail of how you can do so.

We look forward to continuing our programme in 2021 in whatever circumstances we find ourselves faced with, providing opportunities to get to know better the culture of Croatia.

For further information, please go to: www.britishcroatiansociety.com

2. MEMBERSHIP

We have 184 subscriptions representing 244 individuals. Membership is holding up. Standing orders are renewing as usual and a small number of new members are joining.

	Jan-21	Jan-20	Jan-19	Jan-18	Jan-17	Jan-16	Jan-15	Jan-14
Number of subscriptions:	184	180	173	125	123	114	97	69
Number of individuals:	244	239	224	168	165	148	128	92

3. FINANCE

The Society is not spending significantly. There is £2,400 on Pay Pal and £3,700 in the bank- altogether £6,100, with £100 allocated to Most, and £500 for the Clock repair fund.

Our accounts will be uploaded on the web pages.

4. COMMITTEE

During 2020 we held one normal meeting in February, then in June a meeting by email and in October by Zoom. Our established process for urgent and important decisions to be made by the Chair in emails consultation with Committee members helped the Society's business to continue relatively smoothly.

5. 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.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Our website has 18 entries under the Cultural Croatia programme of virtual events. It also carries announcements, details for charity giving, and formal information such as reports, our Objectives, Policies, Rules and much more.

Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram reaches over 2,400 followers with announcements about our events and matters of interest to Croatians. It proved especially important for immediate information about the Earthquake in December 2020 including details for donations.

7. CONCLUSION

We hope to return to a physical programme in 2021, observing government advice carefully, and taking advice from our UK based Croatian professional epidemiology contacts. Please keep an eye on our web pages, and social media for further announcements.

8. PATRONS:

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

9. TRUSTEES & COMMITTEE

Lana Đurđa joined the Committee in October 2020, with the other members rolled forward from the 2019 AGM. Stefania Stefania Grbčić leaves the committee at this 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
Tihana Borovčak
Lana Đurđa

Robert Dolata
Secretary