

The Norfolk & Norwich Novi Sad Association Jan 2011

The Paul Cross Memorial Concert

The Association has acquired the reputation of putting on a concert that is interesting and unusual.

This year proved no exception with a concert entitled 'From West to East' given by the Early Music Studio of Belgrade. We are grateful to the four singers, Predrag Djokovic; Nenad Ristic; Milan Stancic and Vojslav Despotovic who gave of their time and talents to help us raise funds for the Milan Petrovic School in Novi Sad.

The success of the concert as a performance can best be described by quoting from the report in the Eastern Daily Press but the music critic Christopher Smith:

"...the concert took the form of a journey across Europe through a thousand years of music. Much of it was unfamiliar, and all the more delightful for that.the four soloists showed disciplined talent as they switched mood and manner time and time again with a minimum of conducting and not the least fuss. The bass set the foundation of the ensemble and the other voices were strong enough and combined well without any sign of strain"

The response from members of the Association in the 'take-up' and early purchase of tickets contributed significantly to the success of the concert.

It is too early to give a definite figure as the final accounting has not been completed. However, the Treasurer is confident there will be a good sum available for the school.

As Always the Association is grateful to all those who make donations and give support to the concert.

Feb. 2011

February visit to Novi Sad

The chairman, Doug Underwood, and Peter & Diana Beckley were in Novi Sad for the celebrations on February 1st – the Day of the City. Representatives from places that have a connection with Novi Sad are invited to this event and we were pleased to meet people from many places in former Yugoslavia, Russia, Romania etc.

Diana gives this report:

While we were in Novi Sad we took the opportunity to have several visits and meetings. Members may be interested in some of these.

February 1st itself started for us with observation of a Fire Brigade training exercise at 8.00am! This particular exercise involved the evacuation of 1300 people from the large Naftagas building, dealing with a 'fire' in the lecture theatre and rescuing some people from

a high up terrace – as well as many of the fire appliances from the city brigade and the refinery fire section.

Later we were taken to the Matica Srpska. This is a very significant organisation that collects and researches information about Serbian culture and history – a bit like a cross between the British Library and an archive centre. We were made very welcome and told about the history and development of the institution.

The evening held receptions, presentation of the prestigious February prize and a concert given by many of the music and folklore groups involving young people from Novi Sad and finally a meal in the renovated Tito apartments in the fortress. A 'large' and enjoyable day.

Our meetings included a visit to EHO to meet friends, hear about their latest projects and get a report back about the visit of the Director and one of his staff to Norwich last summer and another visit to the Milan Petrović School.

EHO continue to impress with the range and professionalism of their projects. Of particular interest was a long-running project with a group of Roma people living under very difficult conditions in a settlement known as Bangladesh. After 5 years of working with this group, their living conditions have been transformed, every dwelling now having a sound shell and a kitchen and bathroom. Electricity and water have been connected and an unsanitary pool of water drained and cleaned. The most important aspect of this is that all the work has been a cooperative effort between EHO and the Roma people. Other achievements at this site have been to prepare most of the children for school (not easy when there is no tradition of schooling) and to train some of the adults in building and other skills so that they can earn a better living. EHO have been awarded an international Diaconal award for this achievement which has also been seen as a blueprint for ways of helping other Roma settlements.

Some of you met the Director of EHO, Vladislav Iviciak, and Eva Berenji at our 50th Anniversary reception. They were in Norwich as guests of the Norwich Novi Sad Churches Group to study non-medical aspects of cancer care and information in Norwich. Visits to the Big C, Voluntary Norfolk and other organisations provided them with a wealth of information which they put into practice immediately on their return home. As an example of this, they now have 5 oncology nurses who are available on Fridays to help people who are living with cancer with advice and support. This has been much appreciated. Eva, who runs the Cancerinfo project, was very pleased with her visit here when she learnt such a lot that is not available in Serbia.

Our welcome at the **Milan Petrović School** was as warm as ever. We explained that our donation from the concert may be smaller this year – they were very sympathetic! At present they have no particular project in hand but later when the new Secondary School is finished they will have lots! We were taken to see the new buildings which are due to be finished in a couple of months and which will be really splendid and well-planned. The

building is quite large and modern and built round a courtyard. It is divided into sections such as the classroom part, the workshops, the kitchens and dining room, offices, boarding school etc. Most sections can be entered from within the building or through an outside door making deliveries and so on very easy. We were very impressed with the whole scheme which will enable the school to bring several of their departments into one building.

The Novi Sad/Norwich Association.

A meeting was held with a representative of this Association with a view to getting closer cooperation between the two voluntary organisations. Close contact has always been maintained with the 'committee' members of the NS/N Association but there is a need for a more structured cooperation. The structure and organisation of our sister organisation is significantly different to the Norwich pattern.

ANNUAL VISIT TO NOVI SAD

THE VISIT TO Novi Sad this year is planned for May 14th –May 21st

COFFEE MORNING

Wendy will be holding a Coffee Morning on 18th March from 10 am onwards at 6 College Road, Norwich. Please bring some books for a 'book-swap'. There will be a raffle for some exciting prizes.. All proceeds to go to the Milan Petrović School in Novi Sad.

Please come if you can and let Wendy know on Dwendyquinn@googlemail.com or Tel:01603 458665 as this will help with estimating the number of cakes to bake!

The Norwich/Novi Sad Churches Group.

There has been a meeting of the Norwich/Novi Sad churches group where the success of the visit last year was discussed and the future programme of contacts was planned.