

Croatian Cultural Society Wellington Newsletter

June/lipanj 2025



This Issue

This issue includes: upcoming events, Taste of Croatia, members' experience moving to Zagreb, club cookbook, club news, a research study on young Croatian migrants to NZ, and news from Croatia.

Upcoming Events

Sunday 13 July (2-4pm), Taste of Croatia

- People asked for some sweets, so we'll be making a Croatian and NZ version of a similar slice/cake (Londoneri and Louise Cake).

Saturday 26 July (3-5pm), Language Cafe

- 3:00pm – 3:45pm – Fun and learning for the children
- 4:00pm – 5:00pm – Language class for adults of all abilities.

Taste of Croatia: Londoneri/Louise Cake

Our cooking sessions have been popular and we're aiming to have one each month from Jul-Nov. Besides the cooking, we'll have two other things to discuss at our 13 July session (2-4pm):

1. The club cookbook idea raised at the AGM – we're looking for people to help with the planning.
2. Our SlavFest stall on 6 Sep – SlavFest was great fun last year, and the club is looking for people who can help put together a stall to celebrate our community. *Contact Dave Guerin for details.*

Back to the 13 July cooking session, people asked for some sweets, so we'll be making a Croatian and NZ version of a similar slice/cake (Londoneri and Louise Cake).

- The NZ version is Louise cake (shortbread-like base, covered in raspberry jam, with a coconut meringue on top). Louise cake is world famous in NZ and some sources suggest it is NZ-created.



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- In Croatia and neighbouring countries, they make Londonske Štange and several other names – often the cakes are just called Londoneri or Londoners. They have a similar base, with apricot or plum jam in the middle, and a meringue with ground walnuts (and maybe hazelnut or dark chocolate).



Photos: Louise Cake: [Laoisecake83](#), Londoneri: [IndexRecepti](#)

I have no idea where the dishes actually originated from, but they're both tasty, and local cooks in Croatia used an ingredient they knew well (walnuts) in place of coconut.

The August session will probably be making fritule (thanks to Danica, for helping), with sarma the next month. I started fermenting some cabbages a couple of weeks back, so we'll see how that goes!

Let me know if you're coming to the 13 July session at dave@ed.co.nz or 021 404 334. This session should be nice and simple!

Dave Guerin

Moving to Zagreb

Rebecca Gaelic and Barnaby Nicholls joined our club just before moving to Zagreb, and they have agreed to share their experiences of moving to Croatia. Many of our members are interested in visiting, or living, in Croatia, and this seems like a good way for members to help each other.

It's coming up 3 months since we arrived, for the first time ever, in Croatia and it's been 3 months of constant education with all the highs and lows of moving to the other side of the world. Since many people in the club have been to Croatia before, we'll focus on what it was like for us to move here. No need to bore you with the series of (minor) unfortunate events leading to our first day here, nor the usual touristy delights and observations.

Weather

Compared to Wellington, it gets REALLY cold and REALLY hot. We thought that arriving in early April (spring!) would see a few cooler days, but nothing major. Then, we tried to visit Park Maksimir at midday only to be driven back inside by the 4 degree chill in order to model all our winter layers against the bitterly biting wind. Now, in late June, we are expecting a week of mid-30s hot, dry sun. This is the time that everyone in Zagreb flees to the coast.

Finding somewhere to live

Our first order of business was finding somewhere to live. We tried to stay in hostels when we first arrived to meet people and get used to the city, but it was still too cold for most tourists.

Due to taxes, longer-term (1yr+) accommodation is much cheaper than most short term options. Rental prices are significantly cheaper than Wellington, but they're not as cheap as (we've been told) they used to be. We saw several apartments before reaching out to what would become our 1.5 bedroom apartment in the leafy (and wealthy) suburb of Jarun. The rent is 800€/month excl. utilities - this is considered expensive by locals we've spoken to.

Also, if the landlord is working with an agency, then there is usually a month's rent PLUS 25% GST in agency fees on top of the standard one month advance and one month security deposit. Combined with the first month of rent, you're essentially paying three months of rent up front - for an €800-per-month apartment the payments before moving in would total €2000.



Photo of Barnaby and Rebecca

For location, the sense we get from locals is that few people live in the very centre of the city - especially since the two earthquakes in 2020. Most buildings in the centre are beautiful, but old and not earthquake safe. There's scaffolding around many of the larger ones - including the city cathedral, made from limestone that melts in the rain and was further damaged in the quakes. We're told it may reopen anytime from the end of this year to possibly 10 years in the future.

One local says it has been covered the whole 40 years she has lived in Zagreb, even when it was open briefly before the quakes. One of our tour guys said she dreamed of living in the city centre, but only lasting a year before moving to Maksimir and much prefers it there.

The suburban centres are a little further out from the central Ban Jelačić Square and Dolac Market. Many have flocked to be close to Jarun, with its artificial lake and run/cycle/rollerblade track, or the peace and space around Park Maksimir, or the convenient but somewhat gentrified Trešnjevka. Novi Zagreb, built in line with communist principles after the second world war, has residential towers spaced well apart, is surrounded by parks and excellent transport links, and is a little cheaper.

Many apartments are listed on the website Njuškalo (like trademe or ebay) and definitely worth a look. But if your knowledge of Croatian doesn't approach fluency, it might be worth paying for a relocation consultant to handle the bulk of initial communication. We found one through the Expats in Croatia organisation, and she was very helpful at organising properties for us to visit before we decided on a place. There's lots of English around Zagreb, so only in one case did we need the consultant on the phone with us to translate for a landlord who only spoke Croatian. Most people are forgiving of our English, but it has been a point of frustration for others.



Photo of Zagreb by Dave Guerin

Transport

Zagreb is a surprisingly car-centric city for a European capital and most locals seem to have them. The public transport is cheap (only 50 cents per half hour) and generally good across the city centre, with lots of trams and bus lines - but the trams are often delayed behind car traffic that shares their roadspace in many places through the centre. Any public transport trips that require a couple of transfers can blow out very quickly. Our apartment in Jarun is a 20-minute taxi ride from the airport, but a brutal 90 minutes with 3 transfers on public transport. A trip to the local Ikea is similar.

If we need to take a taxi, Bolt (or EkoTaxi for a local eco friendly taxi service) are the apps to use, although Uber is also available. Be warned, taxi drivers here offer a thrill ride - we had one drive the wrong way down a one-way street, and another take us 30km/h over the speed limit.

Intercity transport is currently pretty basic. After investing significantly into major roads across the country, the train from Zagreb to Split inexplicably takes 8 hours compared to a bus taking 5. If you want to see much of the country and don't want to spend hours in commercial buses, you'll want to get a car or at least hire one as needed, to cut those bus travel times almost in half.

More details will follow in a future newsletter.

Club Cookbook

An idea for a Club Cookbook has grown out of the success of the Taste of Croatia days. Members were reflecting on how much the making and sharing of food amplified the sense of community, helping bring people together and connect through the sharing of stories, experiences and knowledge.

The Club Cookbook would be a collection of members' recipes that have made the journey from Croatia to New Zealand, and the journey through the generations to now. Each recipe would have a story or few lines with it from the member or family sharing why they chose this recipe to share.

The idea of the Club Cookbook was discussed at the recent AGM with good interest in exploring the idea further, and seeing the rich Croatian food knowledge held by club members continue its journey into the future!

If you have feedback and/or would like to be involved in the planning for the club cookbook project, please contact Rose Moke at rosecook93@gmail.com as soon as possible (or by 10 Jul).



Club News

1. **Croatian Films** We are exploring how we could show Croatian films in Wellington, probably hiring a small cinema for a night. Dave Guerin has been looking into the options, and we'll have more details later. If you're really keen on Croatian film, there is a [Croatian Film Festival in Sydney](#) from 3-8 September.
2. **Membership Applications** A new membership application has been received from Martin Simcock. The 30 days for current members to offer any feedback on their nomination starts from today.
3. **New Members** Following the 30-day feedback period, the Executive Committee has confirmed Rebecca Gaelic, Barnaby Nicholls, Malina Momčilović, Renee Urlich, Nicholas Urlich, and Stephanie Matich as new members of the Club. Dobro došli and congratulations

to our new members and we know they will all be a great addition to our Kiwi-Croatian community!

4. **Clubrooms Hire** The club has been used for various member events over the years, and the Exec is keen to have the clubrooms used – please contact the Secretary if you'd like to use the clubrooms for an event. Charges will be reasonable.
5. **Membership Renewal – Final Reminder** Some members still need to renew their membership for the 1 May to 30 April year, and so it is time to renew your annual membership with the Club. The fee is \$40 per annum. Please reach out to a Committee member or email us at: secretary@croatianculturalsocietywgtn.co.nz if you need to talk about payment of this fee.

Account Name: Croatian Cultural Society Wgtn Inc.

Account No: 06-0561-0017339-30

Amount: \$40

Code: Initial and Surname

Reference: 25.26 Subs

6. **AGM Decisions** Here is an update on the motions voted on at the 25 May 2025 AGM. 35 financial members attended the AGM.
 1. The minutes and president's/treasurer's reports were accepted, the accounts were approved, and no auditor was appointed (as is usual). Members voted to discharge the historic mortgage security held by ANZ (the mortgage was paid off many years ago).
 2. Members asked at last year's AGM for the bar operations and life membership criteria to be reviewed. Members agreed this year to keep the status quo for the bar, and to approve more detailed criteria for life membership.
 3. Six motions were circulated prior to the meeting about the proposed language scholarship. While only one motion was passed, in an amended form ("that the language award process be transparent"), the concerns raised led the Exec to propose the following motion, that was passed unanimously.
 - "That we pause the awarding of the Language Scholarship and invite the Executive Committee to work with interested members to develop a more robust and transparent selection process by 31 July 2025." *A meeting was advertised in the last newsletter, and held on 4 Jun, and details will follow by 31 July.*
 4. A motion was passed unanimously to keep the club website up to date.
 5. The previous Executive was elected unopposed, and Phil Guerin was the only nominee for the two vacant positions, and was deemed elected.

News from Croatia

1. **Consular Services** The [Croatian Consular Portal](#) now allows people to book consular appointments online (e.g. for Canberra). It's a good step, and hopefully more such work shifts online.
2. **Flags** June 5 was declared as [National Flag Day](#) by the Croatian Parliament, marking the day in 1848 when a modern version of the flag first flew.
3. **Cro to go...is [promoting intensive language courses](#)** this summer (they have other online options too).

4. **Statehood Day** Croatia Week had good coverage of the Auckland Croatian Cultural Society's [Dan Državnosti \(Statehood Day\) celebrations](#).
5. **Conscription** More details are out on the [new mandatory military training approach](#).

Research Study

Sanja Lukic, a Massey University Master's student, is researching the experiences of young people (17-25 now) who moved to Aotearoa New Zealand from Croatia between the ages of 11 and 17. All the details are below.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS WANTED

Are you a young adult who moved to New Zealand from Croatia as a teenager?

We are looking for participants to share their experiences of identity, belonging, and adapting to life in New Zealand.

Who can participate?

- ✓ Aged 17–25 years old
- ✓ Migrated to NZ between the ages of 11–17

What's involved?

- ▶ A 1-hour confidential interview (in-person or online)
- ▶ Share your migration story, identity journey, and reflections on belonging
- ▶ Optional: review and edit your transcript to ensure your story is captured accurately

Why participate?

- ▶ Help amplify migrant youth voices
- ▶ Contribute to research on mental health, identity, and cultural belonging
- ▶ Support culturally responsive services for migrant youth
- ▶ Receive a summary of the research findings if interested

To participate or ask questions, contact:

Sanja Lukic – sanja.lukic.1@uni.massey.ac.nz
School of Psychology, Massey University

Ethics Approval: *This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics [Ohu Matatika 3](#), Application OMB 25/30. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact the Chairperson, Massey University Human Ethics [Ohu Matatika 3](#), email humanethics3@massey.ac.nz.*

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