

Sir Henry Grant de la Poer Beresford-Peirse, the 6th Baronet of Bagnall, was the founder and trustee of The International Trust for Croatian Monuments, which he founded, together with his wife, Jadranka, in the autumn of 1991. His sudden death, in January this year, is deeply felt not only by his nearest family, but by many friends from around the world and especially in Great Britain, Croatia and Portugal.



A portrait of Henry by his sister-in-law, Ljerka Njers

SIR HENRY GRANT DE LA POER BERESFORD-PEIRSE, BARONET **7TH FEBRUARY 1933 – 24TH JANUARY 2013**

Henry's connection to Croatia goes back to Christmas 1964 when he met his future wife, Jadranka Njers, for the first time, in his own home, in Bedale, North Yorkshire. Jadranka was studying for a post graduate degree in Semantics at King's College, London, sharing a flat with two other girls, Lucia O'Brien and Mary Smith – Dodsworth. Since it was difficult to go home to Zagreb for Christmas, Mary very kindly invited Jadranka to spend Christmas with her own family in Thornton Watlass Hall, very near Bedale. The two families were great friends, there was also a family connection, and everybody from Thornton Watlass Hall was invited to dinner at Bedale Manor on that Christmas Day in 1964.

As it happened, a proper Christmas Lunch had already been served at Thornton Watlass Hall and when the large party joined the Beresford-Peirse family in the evening, nobody felt very hungry. However, Henry and his father, who was a renown forester and instilled a great love and knowledge of trees in his son,



Sir Henry Grant de la Poer Beresford-Peirse, šesti barun od Bagnala, bio je osnivač i staratelj Međunarodne Zaklade za očuvanje hrvatskih spomenika (The International Trust for Croatian Monuments). Zakladu je osnovao, zajedno sa suprugom Jadrankom u jesen 1991. Njegova iznenadna smrt, u siječnju ove godine, teško je pogodila njegovu obitelj, ali i brojne prijatelje širom svijeta, posebno u Velikoj Britaniji, Hrvatskoj i Portugalu.



**SIR HENRY BARUN GRANT DE LA POER BERESFORD-PEIRSE,
7. VELJAČE 1933. - 24. SIJEČNJA 2013.**

Henrijeva veza s Hrvatskom počela je na Božić 1964. kada je prvi put susreo svoju buduću suprugu, Jadranku Njerš. To je bilo u njegovu domu, u mjestu Bedale u pokrajini North Yorkshire. Jadranka Njerš u to je vrijeme bila na magistarskom studiju iz Semantike na King's Collegeu u Londonu i dijelila je stan s dvije kolegice, Lucijom O'Brian i Mary Smith-Dodsworth. Kako je bilo teško otići kući u Zagreb za Božić, kolegica Mary ju je pozvala da provede Božić s njenom obitelji u Thornton Watlass Hallu, u blizini Bedalea. Obitelji Smith-Dodsworth i Beresford-Peirse bile su veliki prijatelji, a postojala je i izravna obiteljska veza. Te godine svi su bili pozvani na božićnu večeru u Bedale Manor.

Kako je već bio serviran pravi božićni ručak kod Jadrankine kolegice Mary, kada su se svi priključili obitelji Beresford-Peirse za večeru, nitko i nije bio jako gladan. Henry i njegov otac, koji je bio poznati šumar i koji je sinu usadio ljubav i znanje



had spent the day working in the woods, their preferred occupation, having had only a sandwich for lunch. As nobody in the evening wanted “second helpings”, Henry and his father, being the hosts, remained hungry that day, a standard joke in the family for years to come.

Henry and Jadranka were married in Zagreb in August 1966 and, after a spell in New York, settled in London, in Cadogan Square, the same address for all these many years. They were blessed by the birth of two sons, Henry and Johnny, whose first language was Croatian. Henry himself learnt to speak Croatian, working diligently from exercise books. When asked if Croatian was a difficult language to learn, he would reply, “Just like Latin and Greek”. Henry had a classical education and believed in working hard and systematically. Later, with plenty of practice, it all became easier. His postcards to his parents-in-law in Zagreb, from different corners of the world, written in impeccable Croatian, were greatly appreciated and admired by all and were a testimony to his commitment.

Henry spent his working life in the City of London, travelling much of the time, especially to the Far East; Japan, Asia, China and Australia. In the crucial year of 1991, the moment their younger son finished his schooling and there were no more expensive school fees to pay, Henry retired. He loved his home in Bedale, the woods and the farms, working outdoors, playing golf, and he wanted to spend as much time there as possible. However, 1991 was an unhappy year for Croatia, when his adopted country was brutally attacked. That autumn, Jadranka was going to join Henry, for the first time ever, on his last journey to the Far East. That was not to be. In September of 1991, when the first pictures of destruction in Croatia finally reached the media in this country, when it became obvious that monuments of culture were being particularly targeted, Henry and Jadranka, with the help of many people, including ICOMOS (UK), International Council for Monuments and Sites, founded The International Trust for Croatian Monuments, with the aim, first of all, to show to the public photographs of destruction and, secondly, to gather funds for their reconstruction. That autumn, the first of a string of exhibitions of photographs was shown at The Building Centre. Other exhibitions followed, as, for example, at the Royal Festival Hall, opened by the then Minister of Culture, Baron Renton of Mount Harry, The Courtauld Institute of Art and The Photographers’ Gallery. The costs of all these exhibitions, including invitations and postage, were covered by the named institutions, who



o drveću, proveli su cijeli dan radeći u šumi i imali su samo po jedan mali sendvič. Kako nitko navečer nije želio drugu porciju, Henry i njegov otac, kao pravi domaćini, ostadoše gladni. Taj događaj je poslije godinama bio omiljena obiteljska šala. Henry i Jadranka su se vjenčali u Zagrebu u kolovozu 1966. i nakon kratkog boravka u New Yorku smjestili su se u Londonu gdje, na istoj adresi, obitelj i danas živi. Rodila su se dva sina, Henry i Johnny, kojima je hrvatski bio prvi jezik. Henry je sam naučio hrvatski, marljivo rješavajući domaće zadaće iz brojnih udžbenika. Kada bi ga pitali je li hrvatski težak jezik za naučiti njegov odgovor je bio: “Kao latinski i grčki.” Henry je imao klasično obrazovanje i vjerovao je u marljivost i sistematičnost. Kasnije, uz mnogo prakse, sve je postalo lakše, i njegove razglednice koje je slao Jadrankinim roditeljima iz raznih krajeva svijeta, pisane besprijekornim hrvatskim, svedočanstvo su njegovog mara i angažmana.

Henry je većinu svoga radnog vijeka proveo u financijskom centru Londona, često putujući, posebno na Daleki Istok - Japan, Kinu, Aziju i Australiju. Godina 1991. mu je bila vrlo značajna. Te godine je otišao u mirovinu, čim je njegov mlađi sin završio školovanje i više nije trebalo plaćati skupe školarine. Henry je bio zaljubljen u svoj dom, Bedale, šume, farmu, rad u prirodi, igranje golfa i želio je tamo provoditi većinu vremena. Ista godina bila je posebno teška za Hrvatsku. Njegova druga domovina bila je brutalno napadnuta. Te jeseni, Henry je planirao svoj posljednji put na Daleki Istok i Jadranka se spremala poći s njim. To se međutim nije dogodilo. U rujnu 1991. vijesti o stradanju Hrvatske konačno su dospjele do medijskih stanica Velike Britanije. Kada je postalo jasno da se kulturni spomenici ciljano uništavaju, Henry i Jadranka, uz brojnu pomoć, uključujući ICOMOS (UK) - International Council for Monuments and Sites, osnovali su Međunarodnu zakladu za očuvanje hrvatskih spomenika, s ciljem da pokažu javnosti fotografijama uništenu baštinu i skupe sredstva za njihovu obnovu. Te jeseni, prva, u brojnom nizu izložbi fotografija postavljena je u The Building Centre u centru Londona. Ostale izložbe su slijedile, kao ona u Royal Festival Hallu, koju je otvorio tadašnji ministar kulture Baron Renton of Mount Harry, zatim u The Courtauld Institute of Art i The Photographer's Gallery. Troškove izložbi pokrile su ustanove koje su ih održavale i pokazale veliko razumijevanje prema stradanjima Hrvatske i njenih stanovnika. Sve izložbe su bile medijski opsežno popraćene.



showed great understanding and compassion for the plight of Croatia. All the exhibitions also had extensive news coverage.

At the same time, Henry and Jadranka made numerous telephone calls, wrote many letters, to family, friends, people they did not know, people of note, including His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, whose interest in heritage is well known. His Royal Highness replied quickly, asking why care about monuments of culture when people were dying and there was urgent need of food and medicines. Henry replied to this letter and it gave him much pleasure in later years that the Prince of Wales graciously agreed to become the Patron of the first piano recital by Ivo Pogorelich in the Royal Festival Hall in 1992 in aid of Dubrovnik and consequently supported the work of the Trust financially. The message from His Royal Highness published in the programme for the recital also contained the following: "That we should have to witness such heart-rending, ethnic and cultural genocide in an important part of Europe is an outrage against humanity and we should condemn over and over again those who are responsible for something so dreadful."

Henry was instrumental in the work of The International Trust for Croatian Monuments, always ready to help, whatever it might be, sticking stamps, delivering letters by bicycle to save postage, doing the accounts, entertaining many people at home after all major events. Most of the costs of running the Trust were born by him. It gave him real pleasure when young people, students in conservation in different fields, came to England under the Trust's auspices and learnt not only their chosen skills, but to speak English fluently, to work with computers, just then becoming more widely used, and, most importantly, they learnt about the way of life in this country and took their experiences back home and passed them on to others.

When the second major donation from the Headley Trust arrived for the Cathedral in Trogir, Henry's relief was palpable. Together with Dr Anthea Brook and Jadranka he had tried to translate the highly technical, endless sheets of paper which were arriving by fax and which had to be presented to the Headley Trust in support of the plea for help. He and Jadranka were in Trogir, with this wonderful cheque firmly in their hands, when the benefactors, Sir Timothy and Lady Sainsbury, presented it to the priest, Don Tomislav Čubelić. This initial, generous donation to the Cathedral in Trogir from the Headley Trust through ITCM led to





Henry i Jadranka na Hammersmith mostu, ljeto 2012.

U isto vrijeme Henry i Jadranka pokušavaju proširiti potporu nazivajući i pišući obitelji, prijateljima, onima koje nisu poznavali, ali i brojnim uglednicima, uključujući i Njegovo Kraljevsko Visočanstvo The Prince of Wales. Odgovorio je vrlo brzo pitajući zašto briga za spomenike kada ljudi umiru i nedostaje hrane i lijekova. Sir Henry je poslao pismeni odgovor i bilo mu je posebno zadovoljstvo poslije pridobiti Princa da bude pokrovitelj prvog dobrotvornog koncerta Ive Pogorelića za pomoć Dubrovniku u Royal Festival Hallu 1992. Poruka koju je Prince of Wales dao u predgovoru koncertnog programa sadržavala je sljedeće: “Da moramo biti svjedoci ovakvog beščutnog etničkog i kulturnog genocida u srcu Europe je nasilje nad čovječanstvom i moramo osuđivati one koji su odgovorni za takve zločine.”

Henry je bio nezaobilazan u radu Zaklade, uvijek spreman pomoći, bez obzira je li to bilo lijepiti marke, dostavljati pisma biciklom da bi se uštedjelo na poštarini, ili biti domaćin mnogima nakon svih važnijih događaja. Većinu troškova Zaklade podmirivao je svojim sredstvima. Posebno se radovao studentima koji bi došli u Englesku, pod okriljem Zaklade, i samo u studiju, nego i u znanju engleskog jezika. Najviše mu je značilo da su naučili nešto o životu u ovoj zemlji i ponijeli nova iskustva i saznanja u svoju domovinu.



others, from other sources, thus enabling the conservators in Trogir to begin and accomplish much of the urgent works on the Cathedral. The first, major donation from the Headley Trust, to repair the shell damage to the dome of the cathedral in Sibenik, enabled the then Bishop of Sibenik Msgr Srecko Badurina to commence these important works in 1996, just before his sudden death.

Henry enjoyed his trips to Croatia, visiting different places where the Trust had commitments. He embraced his new friends and felt that the Trust was well served by all in Croatia who were on the receiving end of contributions from the Trust. His knowledge of the language was good, but due to his modesty, when there were important meetings, Henry did not wish to be present, saying that the people would feel obliged to speak in English, which may lead to misunderstandings. In any case, instead of sitting in an office, he much preferred a long walk and, while in Dubrovnik, would often walk to the top of the Srdj mountain and enjoy the magnificent views of the sea and the City. Climbing down was always more perilous!

Tributes to Henry have poured in from many quarters in Croatia. They talk of his interest in the prosperity of Croatia generally, in everyday life of people who he met there, his modesty, sense of humour, most importantly, common sense and advice. He did not like some of the megalomaniac restoration projects undertaken in some of the places and was not afraid of voicing his opinion. He will be greatly missed by many and will not be forgotten.

His death leaves the International Trust for Croatian Monuments without an important trustee. However, both his sons, Henry and Johnny, will now become trustees and will, no doubt, follow in their father's footsteps. A friend of very old standing, Peter Stormont Darling, also becomes a trustee. Peter has supported the trust financially since the beginning and he has now given a substantial donation in memory of Henry which will be used for a special project for the benefit of future generations of Croatia.

The Peirse family motto, *Non sine Polvere Palma*, which can be freely translated as "Nothing without hard work" and the Beresford motto, *Nil Nisi Cruce*, "Nothing without the Cross", is a true reflection of Henry's character, including his commitment for the success of the work of the Trust for Croatian Monuments which he founded with such enthusiasm.



Kada je dobivena druga značajna donacija od Headley Trusta za obnovu trogirске katedrale, Henry je zajedno s dr. Antheom Brook i Jadrankom prevodio izrazito tehničke, beskrajne stranice tekstova koje su dolazile faksom i koje je trebalo prezentirati Headley Trustu kako bi se dobila financijska sredstva. Henry i Jadranka došli su u Trogir s velikim čekom, u pratnji donatora, Sir Timothyja i Lady Sainsbury, koji su ga predali svećeniku don Tomislavu Čubeliću. Ova prva, znatna donacija trogirskoj katedrali vodila je prema novima od drugih donatora i omogućila je konzervatorima da obave većinski dio najnužnije obnove katedrale. Prva značajna donacija The Headley Trusta bila je za obnovu bombardirane kupole šibenske katedrale i omogućila je tadašnjem biskupu Srećku Badurini da započne s radovima 1996. godine, neposredno prije svoje smrti.

Henry je volio svoje posjete Hrvatskoj, pohađajući različita mjesta gdje je Zaklada imala obveze. Veselio se novim prijateljima i učinkovitosti svih koji su primali pomoć. Iako je njegov hrvatski bio dobar, na važnim sastancima nije želio biti prisutan, da se ne bi svi osjećali obaveznima govoriti engleski, što bi moglo dovesti do nesporazuma. Volio je duge šetnje, puno više nego boravak u uredu, tako da mu je odlazak na Srđ, za boravaka u Dubrovniku, bila omiljena šetnja i prilika da uživa u prekrasnom pogledu na Grad i more.

Zahvale za njegov rad došle su iz svih krajeva Hrvatske. Isticale su njegovo zanimanje za opći napredak Hrvatske i ljudi koje je tamo sreo, njegovu skromnost i smisao za šalu, a najviše razboritost i savjet. Nije volio neke od megalomanskih projekata obnove i nije se bojavao to reći. Nedostajat će mnogima.

Njegovom smrću Zaklada ostaje bez svoga utemeljitelja, no njegovi sinovi se spremaju preuzeti njegovu ulogu. Još jedan stari i odani prijatelj, Peter Stormont Darling, također postaje jedan od staratelja. On je novčano pomagao Zakladu od samoga početka i sada je, u spomen, dao značajnu donaciju koja će se upotrijebiti za posebne projekte u korist budućih generacija u Hrvatskoj.

Moto obitelji Peirse *Non sine Polvere Palma*, što znači “ništa bez uporna rada” i moto obitelji Beresford *Nil Nisi Cruce* ili “ništa bez križa” ocrtali su se u njegovu karakteru kao i u odlučnosti da Međunarodna zaklada za očuvanje hrvatskih spomenika bude uspješna i korisna sadašnjim i budućim generacijama.

