ROMANIA

Leaving Apuseni

The aim of today was to go north to be within striking distance of the famous painted churches and monasteries of Bucovina. The drive out was along a beautiful valley which was lined with residences, many of which have seen better days. Despite being famous for hiking and thus probably having many visitors, it has not been commercialised. But it is not the striking alpine village scenery one sees in places like Switzerland. Many houses, to our eyes, are very dilapidated and sit beside new builds in progress. The rubbish is the appalling part.

After leaving the valley and finally saying a fifth goodbye to Beata & Vlodek (we were going the same way for a while and kept meeting up again when we both stoped to take photographs) we entered a much flatter area. It had virtually no trees and was crossed by new roadworks that were leaving great scars on the countryside. Sadness on our part. A quick visit to Banffy Castle before we finally made it to our camp for the night, our spirits revived by the wonderful greeting we received from our farming hosts.

Emotions

Such a range of emotions raged through us today. FRUSTRATION at not being able to get our GPS to take the northerly route over the mountain. We went anyway and then realised with some trepidation that the GPS was probably right so we turned back to go the long way. SADNESS at saying goodbye to our relatives who had to go back to Poland today. DISGUST at the amount of rubbish strewn over the landscape and ending up in the raging river beside which we drove for nearly 3 hours. WONDER at seeing such differences in lifestyle to those we know at home - horse and oxen drawn vehicles, manual labourers on the roads and in the fields. UNCERTAINTY about whether we really want to be here in this country that is so hard to navigate and shows a degree of disrespect for the environment. HAPPINESS at finally finding that rare gem - a "camping car" place with the most hospitable couple who welcomed us in like we were members of their family. So far we have found the Romanian people to be absolutely fabulous. Maybe that is the lesson to learn from this country!?

TRANQUILITY Looks idilic except that when the ground is wet, it is "touch and go" to get out. And it was so VERY touch and go that Heather uttered a few expletives.

THAT LOOK It is only made of stone but the look says it all - probably saw so many horrible things in its lifetime.

SNAPSHOT Great photo of horse and cart spoilt by Heather's insistence on including the GPS holder.

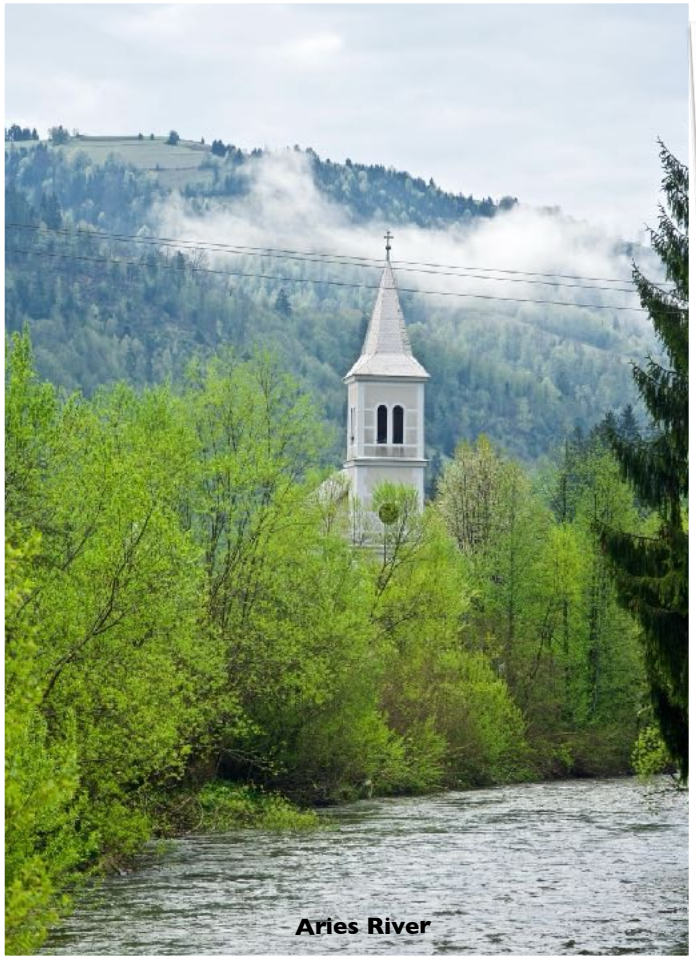
Not a tree in sight for kilometres

Romanian hay stacks

River rubbish

PHOTOS

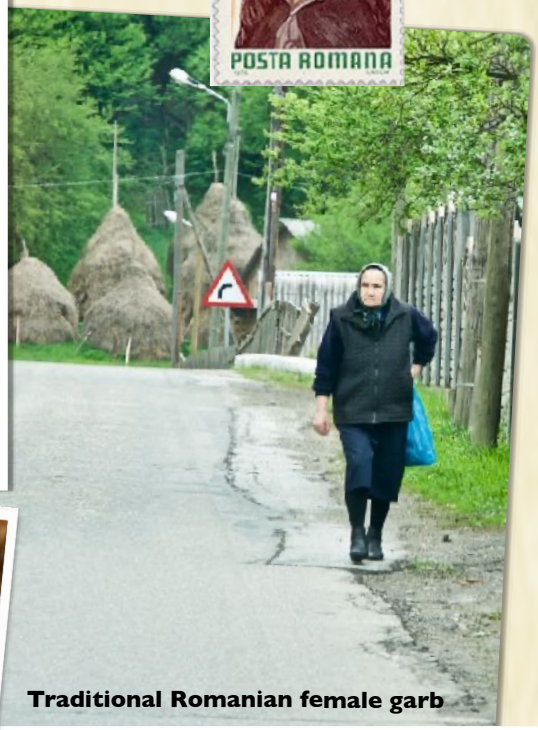
Banffy Castle courtyard



Aries River

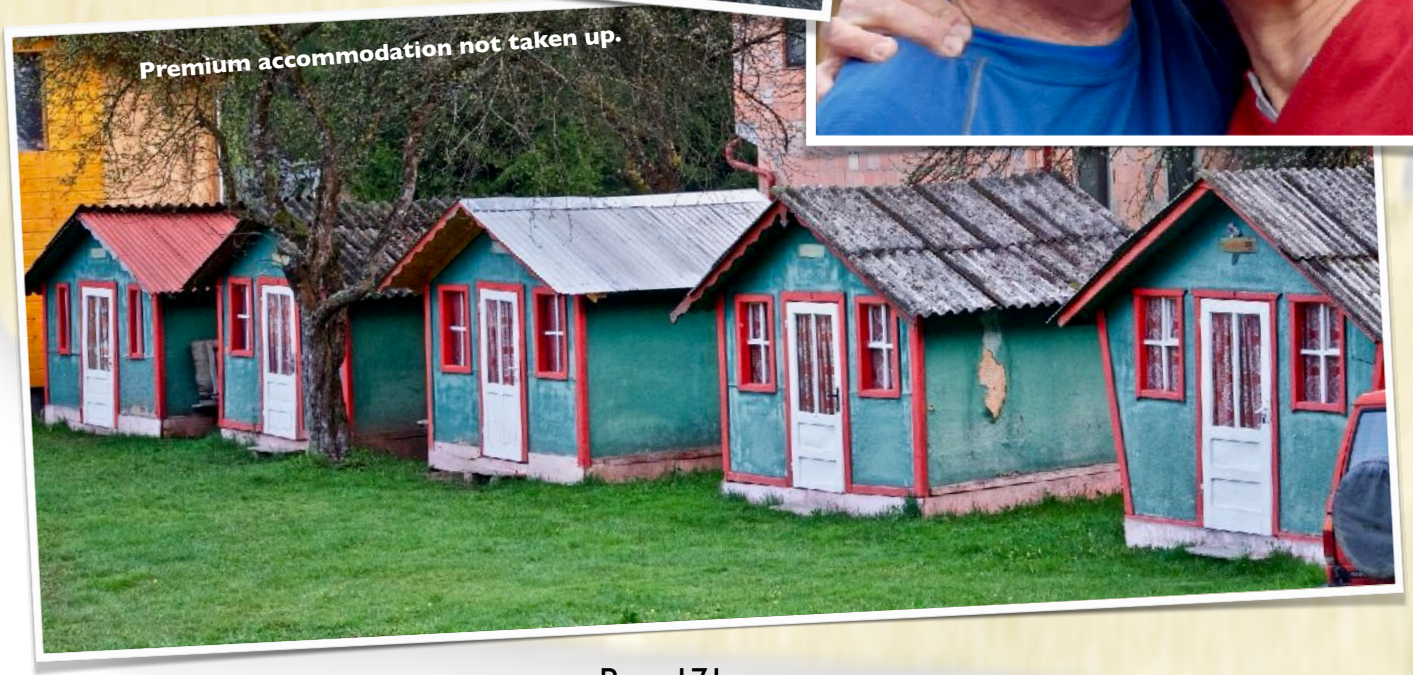
Grand entrance Banffy Castle

PHOTOS



Traditional Romanian female garb

Beata - 1st cousin, once removed.



Premium accommodation not taken up.