

One day, long long ago my son David phoned me at my work, “Dad, do you have a week’s holiday to get? If so you are going to Serbia with an ambulance” Well you could have knocked me down with a fire engine, “WHAT! SERBIA that’s miles away” I replied “Its at least the other side of Fife” but I was to find out it’s a little bit further on , So on the 6th of November Graham Sutherland Allison Closs and I started on a weeks adventure to darkest Europe.



The first days driving was a massive half a mile to the docks to board a ferry to Zeebrugge , once we had got all the paperwork done we explored the ship and that’s when Graham informed me that he gets travel sick on a boat. Its not like it’s the ferry to South Queensferry, its all bloody night and half of tomorrow and the forecast was for a rough sea, Oh great. We all went for a meal and afterwards for a wander round the ship, by now the ship was rocking a bit but not bouncing off the wall, only you can’t walk in a straight line without hanging on to something, Graham and then Allison went to their cabins and by about 7pm I was on my own. Next morning only Alison and I turned up for breakfast and the ship rolled on It was about midday when we got ashore and started driving though Belgium, BLOODY HELL they all drive on the wrong side of the road and they’re all foreigners, David didn’t tell me about that. We drove through Holland and into Germany, I drove the first stint and Graham took over when we stopped for tea. Our first night was in a hotel on the outskirts of Wurtzburg in Germany. In the morning we checked the ambulance over before we set off on at long days drive to Prague in the Czech Republic. During the day we all took turns of driving and apart from a few hold-ups with traffic the day went well. We were to meet one of Allison’s friends in the Ikea car park on the outskirts of Prague and she escorted us to the flat that was to be ours for the night. After a meal we were taken into the town for a sightseeing tour, it’s a lovely city then back to the flat. In the morning her friend and I went for a 3 mile run in the hills behind Prague then it was back on the road again. We headed south only stopping to pick up fuel and a meal and drove straight through Slovakia and into Hungary; we had some snow showers but nothing that would slow us down. We stopped for the night near the Serbian border and on the TV that night were pictures of all the drivers stuck in snowdrifts on the

road we had come on that day. Next day we headed for the border where we were to be met by members of staff from the school we were going to, and at the checkpoint I was told to pull into a side lane while they checked the documents then sent back over the border then back through a different part of the checkpoint. It took about 2 hours to sort it all out and because the ambulance was staying there we had to remove the number plates and tape on temporary paper plates with its new Serbian number on it. Then with our escort of staff we were able to get to our destination Subotica.



Graham and I were put up in the local hotel and to say things were basic would be an understatement, but it was adequate, over the next 2 days we were treated like lords, the children at the school put on a show for us and the local TV station interviewed us and we had a great time. We had an outing to the fire station where they showed off their two latest fire engines, they couldn't use them as they had the wrong hose connections and were going back to get them changed they had one turntable ladder that went up to five floors, it was built in the 1960s and got less than 4 miles to the gallon its tank held more than 100 gallons of Petrol that's just what you want under a fire.



Then it was time to leave we were driven to Belgrade airport about 5 hours drive and we were on our way home. I think we were very lucky that nothing went wrong and I'd do it all again anytime

My thanks to Alison and Graham without them it couldn't have happened