

Another Ambulance Goes and is Making a BIG Difference

On this leg of the trip

Steven Robinson - IFRA Events
Iain Brown - IFRA Diageo
Alison Closs - Senior Lecturer Edinburgh University

This trip has seen another of our patient transport ambulances going to the Dr Dragan Herzog Special Elementary School, Belgrade, Serbia. The vehicle will be used to take disabled children to school for the very first time. As I write this now the ambulance is already making a major difference to the lives of the children of Serbia.

12th June

The crew assembles at Rosyth Fire Station along with a team of well wishers coming to wave off the fifth vehicle going abroad. The tea is made by DO McFarlane while the paperwork is checked for the last time and I am handed the map. We then set off to the Ferry terminal where we get special permission to get a photo of the group and the ambulance with the ferry in the background. [CLICK HERE PHOTO](#)

The first part of the journey begins with customs getting us the paperwork required as we wait in sweltering heat, eating an array of sweets in jovial mood. We get through customs and the regimental boarding of the ferry in an hour or so then it's up to the cabin and on to the bar. As the ferry waits to depart The Diagonal Trio (of two) play some classy tunes and it's off we go. A tremendous view of the Bridges and Fife, Iain's camera snapping frantically. The crossing was calm allowing us to enjoy a good buffet meal a few fizzy pops and the Diagonal Trio belting out a Turkish Tina Turner.

13th

We get up early and a more detailed map of the drive is purchased allowing a plan of attack to be formed. A complex route was drawn up where we would get on the E40 and stay on it as long as we could so we wouldn't get lost. Stevie takes the wheel for the first drive and were off about 11am. We find the E40 and luckily as were running on fumes the first services are not too far. The ambulance is running a treat as we make our way across Belgium towards the German border. A spot of lunch and a change of driver see Iain getting some hours behind the wheel and Alison getting some practice in for the 2nd part of the journey.

We cross the German border and decide to spend the night in Siegen, where we get booked into a hotel for the night. A well earned shower then its out to look for a suitable dining place. Alison gets straight into the lingo getting an older couple to show us to a grill. Kebabs all round hit the spot; Alison takes a well earned rest back at the hotel while Iain and I are of to find a suitable Pub to watch the England France game. We come across an Irish bar run by a German Turk and it was then time for the lads to try and order a drink. "Becks" I say thinking German beer "none" says the barkeep, "Fosters" Iain replies as he spies the poster on the wall, "none" says the barkeep as he proceeds to pour us some German local brew. We then point to the TV saying ENGLAND FRANCAIS the barkeep nods switches on the box and says "You England" NO replies Iain "SCOTLAND" to which the barkeep replies "aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah BERTIE VOGHTS".

At this point we are being plied with some Dutch fizzy pop and are getting into the lingo ourselves this is when Iain comes out with the golden nugget of German "TWO MARE BEERS BIG FELLA". We watch the game with a few beers and its back to the hotel for an early start in the morning.

14th

We get up early and are away for 9 am, deciding to see a bit more country side we go cross country for the first while taking in some great scenery and then return to the E40 in the afternoon to try and make a bit of progress. All is going well until we stop for fuel, the starter motor packs in and we can't get a response from the engine. The old faithful bump start was brought in to play and she fired up. With the motor not starting a decision was made to try and make Prague that night without stopping, this would give us extra time there to try and find a reputable mechanic and get it sorted before Alison starts the second leg of the trip.

We set off with gusto and a heavy foot on the accelerator making good time, not to many vehicles going past us that day and those that tried ended up in this picture [CLICK HERE](#). We manage to get to the Czech border early evening and get through the checkpoint without any problems. As it starts getting dark we make our way towards Prague and have a close encounter with an extremely large hare and an evasive manoeuvre sees us just missing a large deer. A few stops to ask directions see us arrive at the Hotel Krystal for about midnight ready to crash out. We get to our room and Iain and I look at each other as we realise the double bed has only one single size duvet and one pillow. So it was either going to be an extremely cosy night or we would have to scour the hotel for more bedding. Hence during the scouring process!! a further duvet was found along with a pillow, I wish I had also found some ear

defenders as a strange tractor like noise bellowed through the night “nuff said”.

15th

We get up and luckily for us Alison has a contact Zuzana Kaprova who leads us to a garage. An absolute stroke of luck as its NOBLES garage [CLICK HERE](#) it looks a lot better after the fire. We leave the ambulance then head into Prague where Alison does a great job of showing us round. We have dinner and return to the hotel enjoying the experience of the metro and tram. We then meet up with the Zivorad Miladinovic who will join up with Alison and drive the rest of the journey to the School in Serbia. As Alison interprets we get an idea of what the onward journey will be like.

We also get some good news that the ambulance is fixed and we can pick it up early morning.

As it was our last night in Prague it was only right that Iain and I went for a few more fizzy pops and sampled the atmosphere as the Czechs play there first game in Euro 2004. An absolutely brilliant night was had including some Salsa, drinks for 50p and the traditional Kebab. We barter with the taxi driver and get a fair price for a lift back as we missed the last train.

16th

We start with breakfast then straight out to Nobles to pick up the ambulance where it starts first time and all was well for the second leg of the trip. At this point we do the official handover and say farewell to the ambulance before we rush onwards to the Airport to catch our flights home.

In the next newsletter you will find out what happened when Alison took the Ambulance to the Hospital.

All in all this has been a very successful trip taking our fifth vehicle overseas in just over two years. I believe this is a tremendous achievement and all IFRA members should be proud of our achievements so far.

However there are no plans to slow down as a number of trips are being planned for the near future, so if you have not had a trip yet now is the time to put your name forward to Dave.

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