

The Life and Journeys of the Moti

A sustainable way of living in the Apuseni mountains of Romania

What I did

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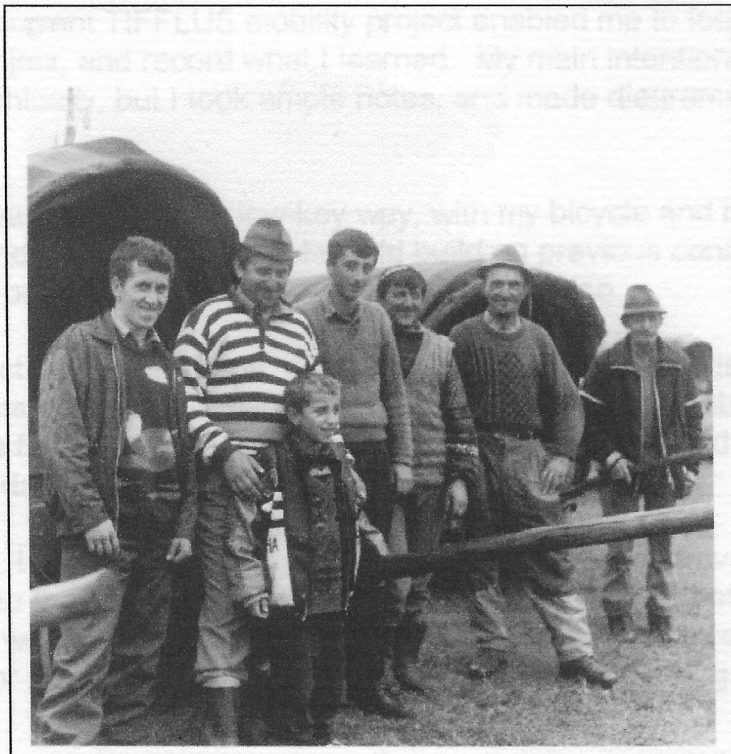
The Moti live by mixed farming and forestry, in a low cash economy. They travel with horses to the plains in summer selling their wood products and purchased goods, and purchasing grain for the year's bread supply and animal fodder.

Thus the project in PLUS broadly planned enabled me to focus my attention on the subjects and record what I learned. My main intention was to do this photographically, but I took ample notes, and made diagrams as I went along.

My plan was to travel with my bicycle and my camera, and make friends with local people, and stay with them.

The project was to be in the high mountains of Romania, but domestic life. I was to be in the high mountains of Romania, but domestic life.

Secondly, I was to be in the high mountains of Romania, but domestic life. I was to be in the high mountains of Romania, but domestic life.



I am pleased to say that both parts were achieved, and that I have been able to accompany a "traseu" or journey for the selling of "scandure" or wood products.

My sister accompanied me. She is an artist, and drew pictures while I photographed, and used a video camera to ask questions. She also took down names, and took photos of people we photographed, so that we could send them postcards. During the traseu, we were tolerated with some wariness by the men. We tried hard not to impose on their privacy, while we welcomed the security of their presence in the night time camps.

What existing skills of mine did I use?

My interest is in helping to value lifestyles which do not damage the planet, and which satisfy human needs. If I have any skill in gathering information, and imparting it to others, that is what I am using on this project.

I am also a dedicated photographer in a modest way, having completed an HNC course, and part of a degree course. I took my old-fashioned medium format Rolleiflex camera, my modern Canon EOS 300 SLR, and a Canon

Bridget Gubbins
October 2001

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What I did

The way of life of the Moti in their Carpathian upland settlements demonstrates sustainability, without any intention on their part to do so. This fascinated me, in two or three previous visits to Romania.

The Moti live by mixed farming and forestry, in a low cash economy. They travel with horses to the plains in summer selling their wood products and purchasing grain for the year's bread supply and animal fodder.

Thus the current TIFFLUS mobility project enabled me to focus my attention on the subject, and record what I learned. My main intention was to do this photographically, but I took ample notes, and made diagrams as I went along.

My plan was to travel in a low-key way, with my bicycle and my camera, and make friends as I went along. I would build on previous contacts, and stay with local people, but would develop new friends too.

The project was in two parts. Firstly, I would stay with families in the high settlements above the upper Aries River valley, and learn about domestic life. I was fairly sure it would be realistic to arrive there, and find accommodation without prior planning.

Secondly, I was very keen to travel with a horse-drawn convoy on the journeys to the plains bordering Hungary. I was not sure before I left how easy this would be to achieve, because I am female and foreign, and whether or not the men would want a granny traipsing along with them on a bicycle.

I am pleased to say that both parts were achieved, and feel privileged to have been able to accompany a "traseu" or journey for the selling of "scandure" or wood products.

My sister accompanied me. She is an artist, and drew pictures while I photographed, and used my modicum of Romanian to ask questions. She also took down names, ages, and addresses of people we photographed, so that we could send them pictures. During the traseu, we were tolerated with some wonderment by the men. We tried hard not to impose on their privacy, while we welcomed the security of their presence in the night-time camps.

What existing skills of mine did I use?

My interest is in helping to value lifestyles which do not damage the planet, and which satisfy human needs. If I have any skill in gleaning information and imparting it to others, that is what I am using on this project.

I am also a dedicated photographer in a modest way, having completed an HNC course, and part of a degree course. I took my old-fashioned medium format Rolleicord camera, my modern Canon EOS 300 SLR, and a Canon

compact camera. I used 25 or so black and white films, and 15 or so colour.

This was the first major project I had done in medium format. As the camera is very old-fashioned, I liked to use it. I don't like to appear too much like a rich tourist. I had to rely on an exposure meter. This aspect was challenging to me. I used the Canon EOS 35 mm with all its automatic settings and flash as back-up, and kept colour film in the compact camera so that I could take pictures for the people I was working with, for presents.

I can't compress all I learned into 2000 words, or even twice that. Selections from my notebooks follow. After a short introduction, the first section is about life in the upland pastures. The second section describes an actual journey with five men and their horse drawn wagons from the mountains to the plains, selling wood. The third section is discussion.

Visual material

- Figure 1 Sketch map of area in this report
- Figure 2 A Cobles homestead
- Figure 3 Drawings by Adrian of wooden utensils
- Figure 4 Standard measurements and uses of wood

Photos Section 1
Photos Section 2

- Figure 5 Route map of our journey
- Figs 6 – 12 Route maps of Moti we met
- Figure 13 Market days in the plains towns