

**Romanian Narrow Gauge  
Exploratory Tour  
August 2019**

**Blog 2**

**En route: Humberside - Bucharest - Cluj**

**Cloudscapes**

Flying from Humberside into Amsterdam, there were some very attractive views of clouds out of the window. After a bit of editing, here are the best 3 views.





## **Bucharest**

The city still shows many signs of its past and is part well-kept and part run down.

### **Gara de Nord area**

Trams and trolleys survive outside Gara de Nord north side along with modern cars. The derelict Hotel Dunarea (Danube Hotel) has seen far better days. I wonder what is holding up work on this prime site?



A report in 2016 said (in translation):

The ruins of the Danube Hotel, built during the interwar period near the North Railway Station in Bucharest, will be transformed this year into a boutique residential project with 40 premium apartments. The investment in the renovation of the building will be 2.5-3 million euros.

[Google translate link](#)

I guess that didn't happen!

There is also an update in 2019 which states the delay is due to obtaining all of the permissions required and that work will start shortly and:

Built in 1935-1940, severely affected by the 1977 earthquake and abandoned for many years, the hotel is today a ruin.

Update

### **Railway Museum Gara de Nord**

Muzeul Cailor Ferate, Platform 14, open Wednesday - Sunday 10:00 - 16:00  
(last entry 15:30)

Access from the former roadside entrance is not possible.

I won't be able to visit during opening hours this trip.



This narrow gauge tank is plinthed on the (closed) road side of the site.



Does anyone recognise this Hungarian loco builder? And what does 1907 - 2010sz. mean? I assume that this is not an original plate.



Approach from Platform 14. Another narrow gauge tank is plinthed here.



**Bistro Nord** - Civilised place to eat and drink at Gara du Nord - at the north end of the station concourse although I suspect all the beers - local Bergembier, Czech Staropramen., Belgian Leffe and Stella are owned by InBev or whatever this multinational is currently called.

Travelling with hand luggage only means I couldn't carry a cork screw. All the Romanian wines I've seen have corks. Although the bar tender at the Bistro Nord couldn't sell me a cork screw he was decent enough to open a bottle for me that I had bought in the supermarket nearby

### **Nine Hour Train Ride to Cluj - First class for around £20**

[CFR Online Guide IR1745](#)

I'll comment on this train ride in the next blog

### **Feedback: Cluj and environs**

Jo (from New Zealand) writes:

Thanks for your Romania blog part 1.

We visited the Unitarian church when we were staying in Cluj. From the panels on the walls the church must have been supported by some wealthy families - I remember the symbol of a snake appearing in some of them.

Coincidentally, last week we went to the funeral of an old family friend who who used to attend the Auckland Unitarian Church, a rather nice old wooden building in Ponsonby.

While in Cluj we took the bus to Turda and visited the salt mine, hoping to learn some geology and some details about traditional salt extraction technologies. To our amazement (and not to say some disappointment) we discovered the 100m deep cavity has been turned into a theme park with a Ferris wheel, snooker and table tennis tables, children's playground and merchandising - all built with EU money I suspect. However looking up to wavy bands of the salt strata on the walls of this vast underground cavity was very impressive.

All feedback gratefully received.

**John**