

Bucharest - Cluj: Observations along the way

On time departure at 06:05 from Bucuresti Nord. All seats reserved and train full until Brasov where it eased off a bit. It certainly pays to book a seat in August. I did that online via the CFR booking website but you can only book 30 days in advance.

Steam loco 230-039 (230 = 4-6-0 wheel arrangement?) plinthed at Sinaia km 121 from Bucarest

Small centre cab electric plinthed at Busteni km 129



Stork on nest and storks hunting after Brasov plus very slow running due to poor state of track but timetable has allowed for this.

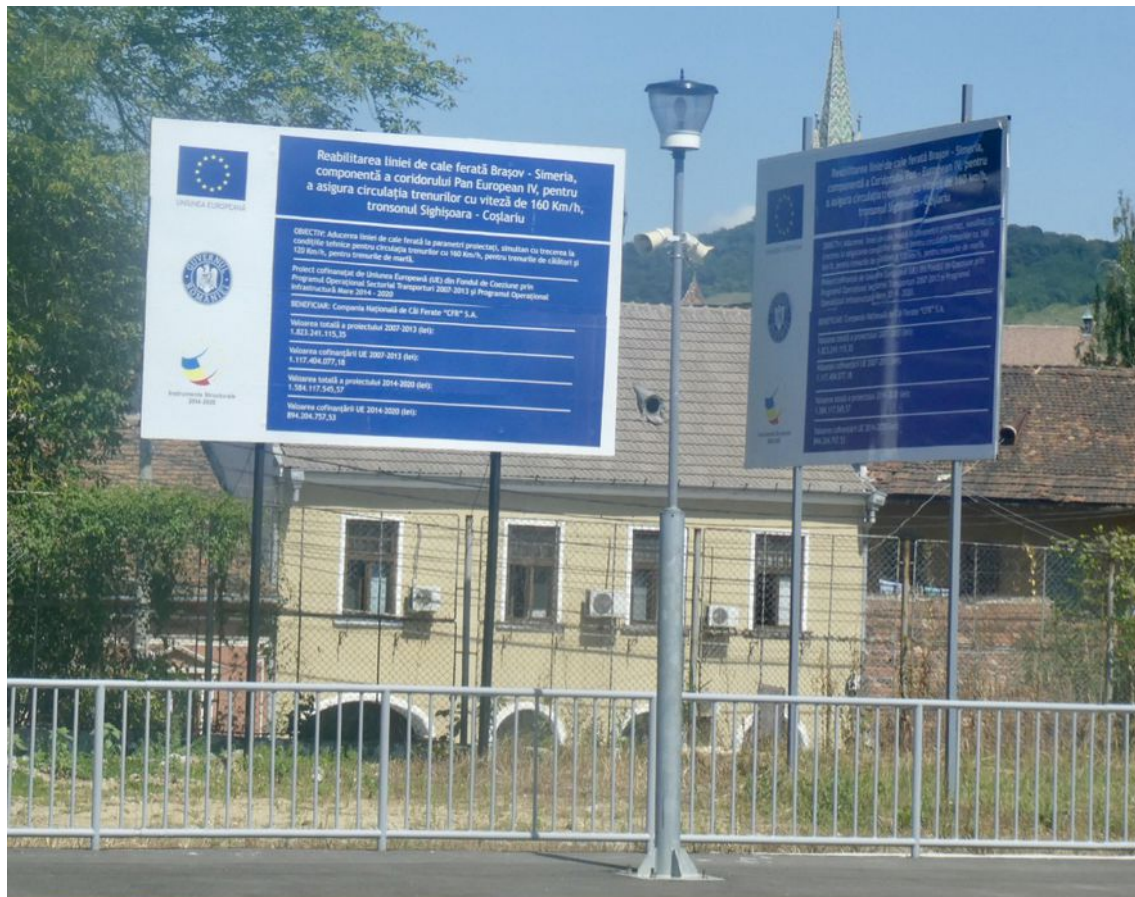
For example Brasov - Racos 60 km in 1 hr 21 = 45 kph

The overall average from Bucharest - Cluj is 50 kph so it will be a slow ride from here to Cluj to balance the higher speeds from Bucharest to Brasov.



A few attractive buildings were seen before Sighisoara but no attractive whole towns.

Sighisoara (km 294 from Bucharest) is the only visually attractive town so far. Set in pleasant scenery and reached at 11:58 (ten minutes late). EU signs posted denote money allocated to improve the railway and the roads around here. Sighisoara is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home of Count Dracula or Vlad the Impaler. The town looks well worthy of a return trip sometime. With the sun shining it doesn't look 'a forbidding silhouette of battlements and needle spires' (The Rough Guide to Romania p147). We are now in Transylvania, roughly 5 hours gone and 4 hours left to Cluj and we are on to improved continuous welded railway track and the prospect of higher speeds although we are only due to average 50 kph for the final section!



Upgrading Brasov to Simeria tracks for 160 kph running Sigisoara - Coslariu.
150-235 (2-10-0) plinthed at Teius attributed to Romanian builder Resita.



50-625 (0-10-0?) is plinthed at Razboieni



Dramatic gap between the hills on the way to Cluj.



Loco 150-139 plinthed at Cluj Station.

At Cluj, we were met by Ron on the platform. Ron, Rod and I sat in a station bar waiting for Chris and CJ who arrived soon after us. Then we either rode a tram or walked to town phot-ing trams en route.



Tram running between the town and the railway station showing the traditional buildings and the hills rising up to the south of Cluj.

Our hotel is the Hotel Agape - apparently a religious building converted to a hotel and our restaurant for the evening is Bistro 1568 in the old Unitarian Bishop's Palace.

Oh, and on the hotel guest list Norman Spalding one of our party appears as Normal Splading!

Here is the whole group at dinner tonight.



Around the table from the left: Rod, John A, CJ, Chris, John R (me), Ron, Norman, David and Selina

The tour proper begins tomorrow.

John