

## **SLOVENIA, CROATIA, BOSNIA, MONTENEGRO, KOSOVO AND MACEDONIA in 2004 by PAT RHYS-JONES**

In September 2004, Les and I set off to travel through Europe. Our journey began with our son, Grant, and his wife, who were living and working in London. Grant introduced us to his friend Alon, who was living in the Netherlands, and he kindly assisted us in purchasing a small mobile home. We travelled through many European countries and, whilst in a caravan park in Hungary, we met an English couple who could speak Dutch. They read our green card and advised us that it allowed us to travel into Bosnia and Kosovo; the radar went up and away we went.

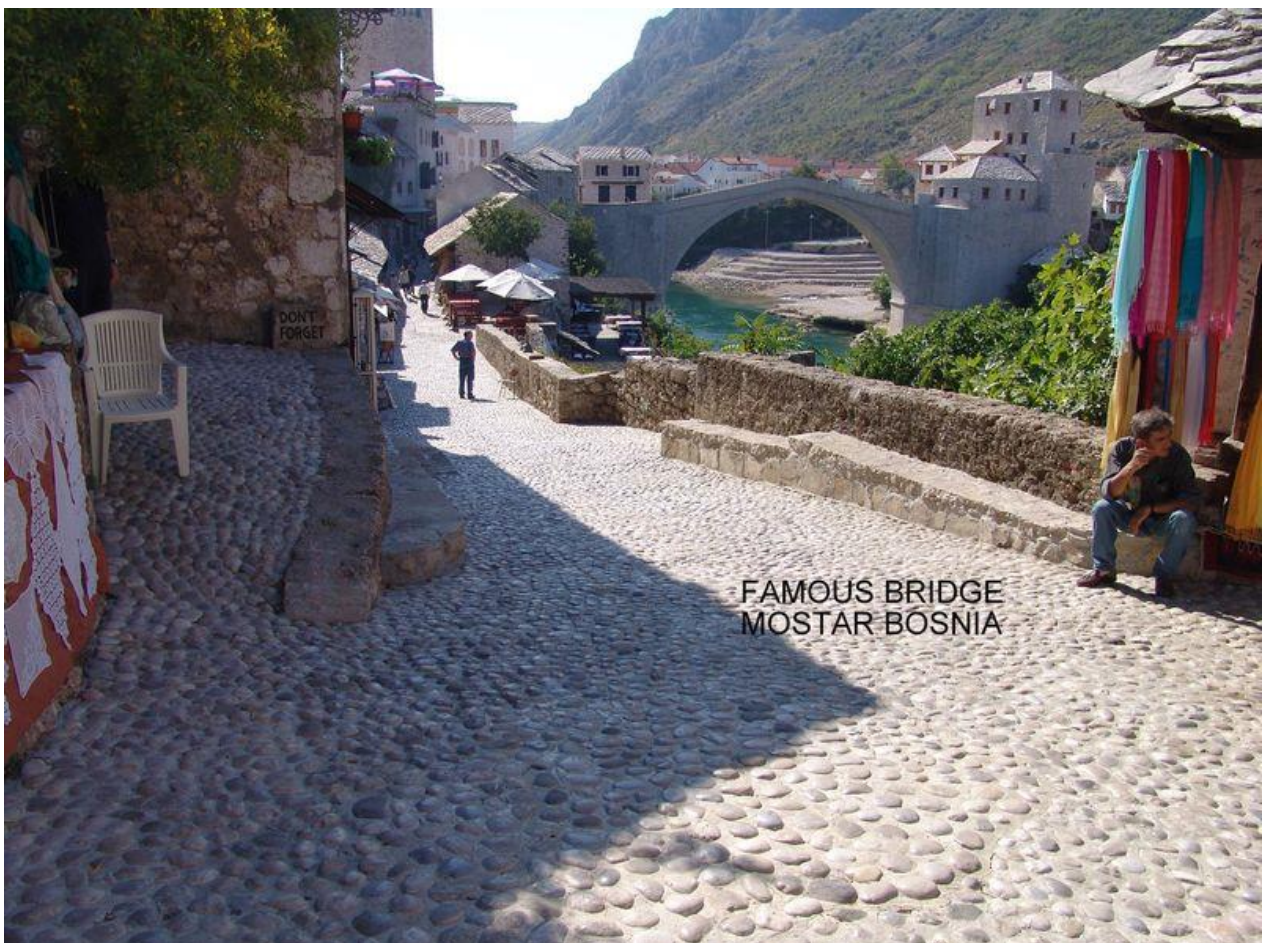


On our way we travelled through this small country of Slovenia, with its beautiful Lake Bled. Its capital is Ljubljana (I loved saying this name), a modern town with many cafes lining its winding river. We enjoyed taking a train ride into the Postojna Caves.





And the coastal country of Croatia, with it's beautiful harbour and beaches and unusual coastline, unusual because it is split in two. Part of it is in Bosnia, apparently this strip of the coast having been given away by Dubrovnik to the Ottoman Empire as a buffer against an attack by the Venetians (I think that's about how it goes). Anyway, it was a bit of a nuisance having to go through two borders, Croatia to Bosnia and then Bosnia to Croatia.



Mostar Bosnia's famous bridge that was destroyed during the Bosnian war and since re-built.





Mostar Bosnia ruins from the war.



This is the road on the Montenegro Moraca Canyon. This was the worst drive I have ever had. There was a steep drop off with dozens of floral tributes and photos of the people who had dropped over the side and died. The road was turreted by the weight of heavy vehicles, way worse than Melbourne tram lines - once in them we had trouble getting out. There were cars overtaking cars, trucks overtaking cars and even trucks overtaking trucks, all on blind corners. It was a nightmare and now I won't even go into unlit tunnels.





We spent the night here in a Montenegro car park.



We went through 5 border controls before entering Kosovo.





This was our last border control. It was nice to see a Blue Beret.



This was a bit heart pounding. Whilst nowhere near as scary as driving through that damn canyon (see 5<sup>th</sup> photo), it was scary enough for us to want to spend as little time as we could Kosovo, just using it as a transit to Macedonia. We did see a lot of war torn damaged buildings and also a lot of homes being re-built. Once, when we managed to get ourselves lost in a small town, a man wearing a black hat and a long dark coat approached us and all we could do was to point at our map - he kindly pointed us in the right direction.





On our way we passed these reassuring vehicles.





We spent our first night in Macedonia here in Skopje. Macedonia was a good country and we enjoyed our time there. There was, however, only one caravan park and it was closed as it was off season. This was a continuing problem for us and so we spent a lot of nights in odd places and going to bed fully clothed just in case.





I just loved this elderly couple, we saw many older people leading what seemed like simple lives, driving horse and carts, sitting on stools minding their chooks, this is why I travel, to meet with these people and see how they live and try to converse with them, almost always with sign language..... well I just love it.



Lake Ohrid, just beautiful

I will say no more.