



CLARENCE HOUSE

Ladies and Gentlemen, I can only apologize that I am unable to be with you here in person in Sibiu this evening, but it gives me great pleasure to join you in spirit, at least, and to send my warmest congratulations in celebration of Monumentum's second anniversary.

As you may know, I have the greatest admiration for all the efforts made to restore Romania's wonderful heritage and today is particularly encouraging as it sees the official launch of The Carpathian Villages Preservation Project in which Monumentum, the Global Heritage Fund and the Anglo-Romanian Trust for Traditional Architecture (A.R.T.T.A.) are partners. There are also several initiatives that support the work of this project, including the launch of the Romanian Bank of Credit loan programme, providing a more affordable line of credit dedicated to the restoration of traditional houses and, here today, the launch of Jan Huelsemann's wonderful book describing in beautiful detail Romania's traditional architecture and methods for its restoration.

It should be noted that these initiatives are, in part, made possible by the dedicated regional administrations and mayors who have been actively working alongside the Ministry of Culture and, indeed, the Ministry itself, which has been preparing up-to-date legislation for the protection of cultural heritage. I understand, for instance, that Mures County Council has made significant efforts to protect the traditional architecture of the villages in the Sighisoara area.

One particular initiative I would like to mention is the construction of a tile kiln, supported by Monumentum, which will provide a source of traditional roofing materials. The roof tops in the old Saxon villages of Transylvania are an integral part of the landscape and a constant source of delight and inspiration to myself and countless others. It is deeply dispiriting when the essential integrity of a street or entire village, or valley, is impaired by the unsympathetic rehabilitation of traditional buildings, for example with brightly coloured, machine-made tiles, or by the development of new housing that is out of context with its surroundings. Here, in Romania, there is a unique opportunity to modernize, and yet still to preserve the beauty of your stunning landscapes and townscapes.

During the last seventeen years I have acquired two small houses in Transylvania, which have been restored using traditional methods, with the aim of encouraging the preservation and development of traditional skills and, importantly, providing local employment. As part of this effort, I am particularly delighted to have been able to make my house in Viscri available as a training centre for traditional skills, with the help of the International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture & Urbanism, (I.N.T.B.A.U.), which is now being used by Monumentum in its "Veni, Vidi, Viscri" education campaign.

Romanians have so much to be proud of, and this pride should inspire you to do everything possible to protect your local identity and traditions, including your historic architecture. Being now a grandfather, and bearing in mind my great affection for this country and her people, I feel deeply for the future of all Romanian grandchildren and their unique cultural, spiritual and natural inheritance; we are honour-bound to ensure that this is preserved for future generations.

HRH The Prince of Wales