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 Dr John Akeroyd, botanist, conservationist and writer, has studied European plants for over three decades. Since 2000 he has regularly visited the Saxon Villages and promoted the conservation of their ancient landscape, especially the wildflower meadows. He lives in Wiltshire, UK.

This book introduces the remote Saxon Villages district of southern Transylvania in Romania. One of Europe's least known cultural treasures, the countryside presents a remarkable survival of medieval landscape: fortified churches, unspoilt villages, non-intensive mixed farming in ecological balance with nature and wildlife, set amongst old-growth woodland and wildflower-rich hay-meadows. Such natural beauty and richness is no mere assemblage of fragments, but an intact, integral whole – of inestimable scientific, cultural and human value.

But with social and financial pressure for rural development, and as Romania enters the EU, the substance and atmosphere of this special place is gravely at threat. The special qualities of the Saxon Villages will only survive if tradition and innovation can be combined to yield a sustainable economic future and modern quality of life, while preserving a unique sense of place. Farming and quality food production, together with traditional crafts and eco-tourism, are at the heart of both sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity.

ISBN (10) 973-0-04533-X  
 ISBN (13) 978-973-0-04533-8

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THE HISTORIC COUNTRYSIDE OF THE SAXON VILLAGES OF SOUTHERN TRANSYLVANIA



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