

Day 14 Aug. 7 – At Sea on the way to Invergordon, Scotland, Cruise Critic Lunch, Barbara Haenni

Since this was a day at sea without the excitement of a new port of call we slept in until about 7am. The seas were calm and the sky overcast. The temperature out on deck was comfortable with a light sweater. The Maasdam was covering the route between Iceland and Invergordon, Scotland where we arrive tomorrow morning.

At 9:30am we attended a port lecture about Invergordon, delivered by Tour Guide, Barbara Haenni. She covered the sights that may be of interest to us in both Invergordon and the nearby city of Inverness.

At noon today the clocks were all moved ahead one hour to 1pm to keep up with the time zone changes as we cruise to the east.

Mary Hits it Big: About noon we were passing through the casino when we heard the rare sound of coins being dumped into a slot machine payoff hopper. We checked out the scene and found that our table mate, Mary, was the lucky winner. She had hit it big on the penny slot machine! After she gathered her winnings we took this picture of her and the swag of Maasdam coins.



Cruise Critic Luncheon: Louise (happyglobetrotter) had made arrangements for lunch with a group of Cruise Critic friends. About 40 of us were seated as a group at tables near the rear windows of the dining room. We took pictures of the happy crowd enjoying the sumptuous lunch. Louise, who generously volunteered for the coordinator job is sitting with her husband, Brian, in this picture.



Here are pictures of Cruise Critic members at the other tables.





Barbara Haenni: The Holland America Lines has a policy where passengers can invite one of the ship's officers to dine with them on the formal dress evenings. Last week we discussed this idea with our table mates and decided to request that a ship's officer join us one night. We told the maitre d' about our wishes and he said arrangements would be made. This was a sea day, the dress for tonight's dinner in the Rotterdam Dining Room was formal and we got our wish. To our surprise and pleasure the ship's officer who joined us was none other than the Maasdam Tour Guide, Barbara Haenni. We love her descriptions of the ports we visit and the personal touch she gives by being on the dock to give last minute advice to passengers heading out into a brand new city. She was most gracious and a wonderful dinner conversationalist.

We tried not to talk shop but it was hard to avoid grilling her about highlights in the upcoming ports. She told us about her cruise assignments for the next year. We were very happy to learn that she will be the Tour Guide on the ms Amsterdam for the Grand Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific cruise coming up this fall. We are booked on that cruise and will look forward to having Barbara to tell us about the various ports. Of course, we couldn't pass up an opportunity to get a memento photo of this event. Ary, our waiter, took this picture of our table with Barbara Haenni in the center..



After dinner we took in the entertainment in the Rembrandt Lounge. The show was another Las Vegas style singing and dance productions with a theme of “Around the World”. They spared no expense on elaborate costumes and the performance was wonderful.

Returning to our room we found that, Yadi and Kamal, our stewards had prepared another one of their towel animals for us. This one was a little more elaborate than usual and Barbara couldn't keep herself from clowning around with it.



We arrive in Invergordon, Scotland about 7am tomorrow morning. On a previous visit we searched Loch Ness for Nessy and toured Urquhart Castle ruins. This time we are planning to just walk in to town and check out the local scene. In the port talk today, Barbara Haenni said there was a festival going on that sounded interesting.