

## **Part 7 Europe 2025 for Cathy's blog**

**Thursday 10th April, 2025.**

We are unpacked and on board. It was a quiet night with no engine noise.

Our day began with breakfast at 6:30. There is everything you expect at the buffet. You can have champagne, or Irish Coffee. You can order from a menu with particular eggs, lamb chops, steak, chicken etc. Brewed coffee is brought to the table, but you can order Lattes or whatever. It is too easy to eat for the sake of eating.

We have tours in Amsterdam this morning. Our tour met at 8:00 am, and two buses of Australian (and New Zealand, American, Canadian and Chinese tourists) drove out of Amsterdam and into the Dutch country side.

As you know, many parts of Holland are below sea level. The fields are drained by channels and the water is collected into the canals. The windmills are used to pump the water (which recollects in the fields) into the canals.

These very low fields can only grow grass.

To make fields or land for farming, a canal is built around a swamp. The windmills work to pump the water out of the field. Once the field is “dry”, most of the windmills are moved to somewhere else. A few are kept there to continue to pump out the water that collects.

The windmill can be stopped by securing the sails. They are tied off by rope and the sails are rolled up on the big wooden frames (like sails on a ship). If you want the sails to turn, you have to secure them, climb on the lattice framework and unroll the sailcloth.

The turning sail moves the central post, a huge piece of wood, which in turn, turns the “Archimedes Screw” which lifts the water up. Typically windmills can lift water about 1m. If you need to move it higher, you need two or more windmills working together.



**Windmill at Schermerhorn.**



**Families could live in the windmill.**



We continued by bus to Alkmaar, which grew prosperous on taxing cheese. It is a very pretty town with canals and the three or four storey buildings along them.









**This is a statue to a lady who forged papers for Jewish children and pretended their fathers were German soldiers. In this way, they were saved from being sent to the concentration camps.**





**This is not the town hall. This was the cheese market.**





**More beautiful tulips, pansies and daffodils.**







**A glimpse of the tulip fields from the bus.**

We also saw ducks, geese and swans, but the photos just aren't good enough.

Back on board and we had our emergency drill, while sailing along the Amsterdam Rhine Utrecht Canal.





Western Europe has had not much rain this spring.

There is concern over the height of the rivers. If they are too shallow we can't go through. Even as it is, we will have to get off the ship (and it will pump out ballast water to not lie so deep in the water).

The hull is flat, 11cm thick, and may even scrape a little on the stones (other Scenic ships have 9cm hull and would not be allowed to go through).

Just past the shallow river sections, we have low bridges. So the ship will have to refill with ballast water for us to be able to go under them.

We spent a pleasant afternoon in the sunshine on deck or in the lounge or in our cabin. Tea (dinner) is a sumptuous affair. There are chef's choices and alternatives. You can order a steak or chicken or fish, cooked as you choose, too. Wines are recommended too. There is full table service.

After tea there are activities in the lounge. Tonight it is music trivia (we were asked to join some of the New Zealanders and we helped a bit, but not enough!)

Drinks while playing, and then we take a cocktail back to our cabin. It seems a late night at 11:00 pm, and our first full day on the cruise has ended.

