

## Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April: Panama Canal Transit

Yesterday, Monday, all not entirely well. It was a sea day and a busy morning of activity for us both, but Nick has a developing cold and I have a painful left leg (possible strain) which gets nursed for a day, then recurs, so steep steps (and there are plenty on the boat) are painful. Nick ate by himself in the Garden Restaurant so as not to pass it on to our new, fellow diners, Derek and Betty, from Old Basing, Hampshire.



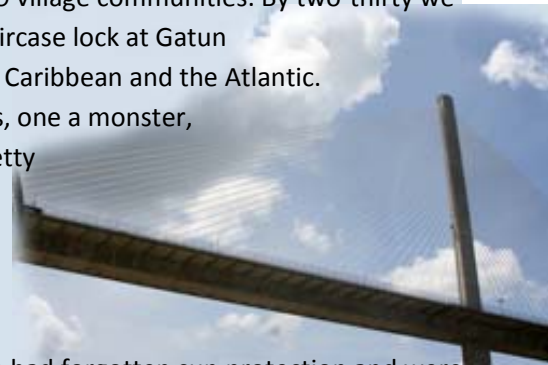
Nick was up quite early this morning, I was not, and I missed the approach into the Gulf of Panama and the gleaming, silvery towers of Panama City were off to the south west when I surfaced. Meanwhile, Nick had seen pelicans, frigate birds, boobies and cormorants accompanying the ship.



After a quick breakfast, we were approaching the Miraflores Locks which were to take us up the 80+ feet to the fresh water of the Gaillard Cut (an excavation which cuts thro' the Continental Divide) and along the summit. We passed under the beautiful Bridge – the north, south road, high above us takes travellers way up to Alaska



By midday we were passing thro' a huge lake (Lago Gatun) amid tropical forest where, before the canal there were 29 village communities. By two-thirty we were approaching the three-stage staircase lock at Gatun which was to take us out and into the Caribbean and the Atlantic. Soon after, we spotted two crocodiles, one a monster, basking in the sun on a beach, but pretty well camouflaged.



The sun shone all day and I believe that some gongoozlers who were on deck at dawn had forgotten sun protection and were consequently suffering.

By four o'clock it was all over, and the cuppa on the back deck was well appreciated.

We had listened to Electra (the two beautiful fiddlers) for twenty minutes previously and I was doubtful about a 45 minute show but all doubts were dispelled as they were splendid. The gypsy music medley and the West Side Story medley were so good and the show whizzed by before we realised how the time was passing!

We are presently heading for Cartagena, Colombia, where we have a day to explore what is supposed to be a lovely, historic Spanish city.