

Danish Windmill Quarterly Newsletter

THE BREEZE

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SAVE THE DATE:
Annual Meeting
Monday, Jan. 26

 Nørre Snede, DK 1848-1975

Celebrating
48 years in
Elk Horn

Elk Horn, IA 1976-present 

Director's Message:

Dear Members,

Better late than never, right? We know it has been awhile, but we're happy to say the next issue of *The Breeze* is finally out! Don't miss out on all of the details from Shaun's return trip to Denmark and catch up on everything that has been happening at the windmill! Due to a printing issue from our last edition, the Granular History page has been repeated for our physical print readers that missed it last time.

Phase One of our *Back on the Grind* capital campaign has also been successfully completed and will be covered in the January newsletter. A full recap of the project will be posted at danishwindmill.org/grind soon.



As always, thank you for following along on our windy journey. We look forward to what comes next and thank you for coming along with us.

Mange tak!

Shaun Sayres, M.A.
Manager

In 1975, local farmer and Danish-American Harvey Sornson approached the Elk Horn community with an unthinkable idea: to relocate a windmill from Denmark to the United States. It was no easy feat, but to the amazement of most, Harvey's "impossible dream" became reality.

During the winter of 1975-76, an authentic Danish windmill from Nørre Snede, DK was dismantled, ferried across the Atlantic, and transported cross-country to Elk Horn, Iowa. Once arrived, community volunteers set about putting together the pieces one by one until eventually, the old Danish windmill towered over downtown Elk Horn where it remains to this day.

For nearly 50 years, the windmill has stood as a tribute to Danish-American heritage, agricultural history, and the power of community.



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Feature Story:

"A Return to Denmark"

Another year is flying by which means another holiday season on the horizon. Summer traffic came and went as thousands of visitors stopped by to tour the windmill, browse the gift shop, or just use the restroom. Out the door they went, and with them, the bulk of our Danish imports. It was time to order more, and with not having gone to market last year, we knew it would be beneficial to fly back to Denmark this year and become acquainted with any new or returning companies that we might bring back with us. This year I had the pleasure of my fiancée, Sarah, traveling with me. Sarah had been to Copenhagen before, but only there, so this was a first for her as well to travel about the Danish countryside. There is never a lot of time for a vacation with this job, so we opted to carve one out of this trip as we scouted out Danish exports and took in more of Denmark's rich attractions and history. It took some time and preparation to put this trip together, a mix of repeats from my last as well as some new adventures. The following is an account of what we did, what we enjoyed most, and what we look forward to when we inevitably return to this beautiful country. We hope our adventure inspires journeys of your own.

Our plane broke the cloudy barrier into Billund on a brisk, overcast day. The ground was wet, the air crisp, and we arrived tired from the 24 hours of traveling between the drive to Omaha's airport and three flights. We had plenty of time to kill, but little energy to muster as we set a course for Herning where we would be staying the night. As is often the best practice, we opted to stay awake as long as we could, so we kept ourselves busy exploring the walking streets of Herning before we could check in to the hotel. I had the pleasure of exploring Herning for the first time in 2022, and it was fun to show Sarah the different shops along the path. The city was alive, and bands were already setting up for the night's performances along with the



Nyhavn

restaurants bringing our chairs and tables into the outdoor plazas. The weather was fair, and fortunately remained so for most of our trip. We took another walk after some rest at the hotel, enjoying the vibrant nightlife of the city. After dinner we retired to the hotel where we could rest before attending the market in the morning.

After a refreshing continental breakfast of fresh breads, fruits, cheeses, and the sort, we made our way to the Formland interior and design fair. Our longtime followers know this is our most important exposition for Danish souvenir and décor vendors. We try to attend in-person every so often to reacquire with contacts, meet new vendors, and get a renewed grasp on Danish or Scandinavian trends. It's always a worthwhile experience, and Sarah tagged along this time to provide a second input on interesting products for the store. There is so much to see that it always helps to have another pair of eyes taking everything in.

But something did feel off this year, and some of the vendors we spoke to hinted at a similar feeling. There were far less people than when I attended in 2022. Several vendors pointed to the advances in online shopping and the development of online wholesale marketplaces as a driving factor in the lower turnout. While Formland's planners have taken many steps to incentivize both wholesaler and

retailer participation, attendance has dwindled. Some felt the future of the event might be in jeopardy, which is a shame given its importance for our own operation. Nevertheless, we had an enjoyable and productive time meeting with our contacts from a number of important vendors and seeing the latest trends.

One company we were happy to come across at Formland was IB Laursen who specialize in simple Nordic aesthetics including candles. We had been on the hunt this year to restock our Rustiklys tapered dinner candles, and had intended to get them from another company before running across IB Laursen's booth at Formland. As it turns out, we imported from them several years ago. We're excited to bring them back and restock our candles which are now made in Denmark. They also had a number of other items of interest to us and we particularly loved the woven heart cake tin which should be arriving soon.

Another benefit is to see what's trending, and a lot can be gleaned just from taking in a vendor's booth to see what kinds of products are highlighted. If we go by Det Gamle Apotek's booth, our largest Danish supplier, this was the year of the goose. Everything had geese on them from napkins to towels to advent calendars. After a day of orders and meetings, our shipping

container had been more-or-less completed, and it was time to leave. We were more than satisfied with the products we picked out for this year and cannot wait to see how they do when holiday shopping picks up.

That night we stayed in Herning, again. I had budgeted our time for a second day in Formland, but it wasn't needed. After a couple of hours organizing the business information for our shipper and consolidating the rest of our orders with companies that don't attend Formland, everything was ready to go. Unfortunately, a lot of items were delayed by various shipping and logistics hurdles this year, so we had no choice but to delay the shipment for a couple of weeks and split some orders into a second shipment by air for the items that weren't due for over another month. With Thanksgiving being later this year, we were okay with taking a little more time. We can only hope there aren't more delays during transit or with US Customs.

Following our second night in Herning, we began making our way to Århus, home of a number of major attractions including Den Gamle By and the ARoS art museum. Den Gamle By (The Old Town) was one of the main sites we hoped to visit on our trip. The site has been operating as an open-air museum since 1914 and consists of more than 75 historic buildings relocated from all over the country. Several featured structures date as far back as 1550 and reenactors mill about the town in period

clothing whether they are carrying a wooden bucket from the well or driving a mid-century coupe. Visitors travel through centuries of time walking through one building to the next as different areas of the site drift into different eras all the way to the present day. Hidden under the city is also an extensive museum dedicated to the history of Århus from the Viking-age through the 20th century. The entire complex is a treat to visit and there are a few period shops where you may browse and purchase goods from pottery to baked treats. Don't bother trying to find your way to the stubbe windmill in the distance, though. It can't be accessed from inside the museum.

After the museum, we toured the walking streets downtown in the city. We didn't have the energy to climb up to the rainbow panorama of ARoS, but instead enjoyed the tranquility of the canal that snaked its way along to a bustling harbor of ferries and water sports. This was where we would take the ferry to Sjælland, so we had some free time again to explore the harbor and relax along the water. Unlike Herning, Århus is a city you can feel the age of as you pass through it. Being able to study the transformations of its architecture at Den Gamle By before exploring the winding pathways first-hand really enhanced the experience. And we could think of few better ways to end our time here than a rooftop breakfast at the hotel overlooking the entire harbor.

Taking the ferries between the islands of Denmark can be a relaxing alternative to driving, but make sure to know which company to book with and which direction the ship is going. There are two companies that operate ferries between the main islands. Molslinjen operates ferries between Jylland (Jutland) and Sjælland (Zealand); Alslinjen operates between Jylland and Fyn. This is important for checking timetables and knowing which ports have ferries in service. Navigating the schedules is relatively easy, especially once you know that the port of Fynshavn is on Jylland, not Fyn! Driving on and off the boat is very easy, but it might be wise to get there early. Denmark is invaded by Germans every Summer, and vacancies on the ferry can disappear fast.

Coasting the waters from island to island, I wondered how the Vikings witnessed and experienced these same journeys over 1,000 years ago. These fjords aren't nearly as treacherous as the North Sea, but still the expanse of water appears daunting without the luxuries of modern navigation, cartography, and materials. We would soon see first-hand just how the Vikings made these voyages. Afterall, we were on our way to Roskilde and its famous Viking ship museum, a must-see for anyone interested in Vikings or maritime history.

The museum is an incredible experience. Their collection is based primarily on five hulls recovered from the fjord that once were active Viking ships 1,000 years ago. These are referred to as the Skuldelev ships, and they were scuttled (intentionally sunk) long ago to create a shipping barrier in the fjord near the village of Skuldelev. The timber-framed hulls are remarkably well-preserved and have been reconstructed to illustrate exactly how impressive Viking ships were. Far from the small rowboats of film, these were massive vessels capable of extensive deepwater voyages with the largest in the collection at nearly 52 feet long. To learn more about how these boats were constructed and used, the museum also has a live shipyard where carpenters are busy rebuilding these boats using the same types



Den Gamle By



The remains of the Skuldelev ships

of wood and tools. Extensive study and care has gone into how these ships are constructed, and tourists can even opt for a brief cruise around the fjord in one of the reconstructed vessels. During the warmer months, visitors are free to watch the shipbuilders at work, and there are plenty of workshops and other hands-on activities for kids to enjoy. The rest of the museum offers a brief, but comprehensive overview of Viking history and culture including a projected exhibit of what it might have been like to try and survive the vicious waves of the North Sea. The museum gift shop is excellent, too, and don't miss out on the ice cream stand just a short walk down the dock.

Like Århus, Roskilde is an ancient city that dates to the Viking Age. It's lack of size is made up for by the impressive Gothic cathedral that houses the tombs of 39 Danish monarchs. Roskilde functioned as the capital of Denmark for about 400 years until 1443. While small, the city remained a critical hub among the region's commercial and religious networks until the Reformation. The city's importance faded until 19th-century railroads bound the city within Copenhagen's sprawling network, rendering the city back into an import hub for industrial traffic. The foundations laid by these tracks still matter today as we opted to use Roskilde as a base to get in and out of Copenhagen. Taking the train into Copenhagen is much less daunting than attempting to drive through a city of cyclists, and you don't have

to lament the drive back after a long day in the metropolis. It's an impossible place to visit in just a day, but that was all we had, and there was a lot to pack in.

A place I had not paid much attention to, but one Sarah really wanted to visit, was Malmö, Sweden. It's a growing city just across the water from Copenhagen. Denmark and Sweden had been kicking around the idea of a bridge between the two cities for nearly a century, and a number of plans were made and broken before the Øresund Bridge was officially completed in 1999. The combined motorway/railway bridge awakened the sleepy city of Malmö which has since experienced a vibrant social revival. The city is well worth a visit for the architecture and parks as a canal stitched by beautifully ornate bridges. A couple of specific places to consider visiting include Apoteket Lejonet, a pharmacy once owned by John Tesh (not that John Tesh) that features stunning architecture inside and out. Another is Malmö Castle, the oldest preserved Renaissance castle in the Nordic region and once home to the Danish kings, Frederick II and Frederick III. In 1822, the castle was converted into a prison, and dungeon prison cells are part of the castle tour. Since then, the castle is only part of the larger Malmö Museum which features wildlife exhibits and other attractions. It's a bit of a walk from the downtown train station, but the urban scenery along the way is worth it. Driving to

Malmö does have its perks, as one can also visit the Viking Town of Fotoviken, the largest reconstructed Viking settlement in the world and about 25km south of Malmö. We thoroughly enjoyed our brief time in the city, but if you go, we have some tips. At the central station in Copenhagen, look for the train going to Gothenburg. And don't forget your passports! Sweden may be in the Schengen Zone, but random border checks do happen, and you don't want to be caught without it.

We arrived back in Copenhagen without a specific itinerary in mind. There is far too much to do or see that even trying to plan a day can be overwhelming. Some of the places we visited include Rosenborg Castle, Nyhavn, Christiansborg Palace, and the popular stroget sections. Det Gamle Apotek's flagship store is there, as are several locations of a chain called Gasoline Burger which is often regarded as the best fast-food burger in Europe. One hidden gem we highly recommend is Østerlandsk TheHus, a teahouse established in 1889 that sells delicious teas and coffee. We've recently begun selling their tea in the store, and we hope to broaden our selection from them next year. No companies currently import Østerlandsk to the US, so definitely visit the store if given the chance. Otherwise, the city is packed with things to do and see from Tivoli Gardens to museums to floating jacuzzi tours. Be prepared for a lot of walking and have a place picked to relax for the evening whether it's the plaza in Roskilde or your own hygge-inspired place of choice.

After our second night in Roskilde, we began making our way back west. We had a full day ahead of us to take in Fyn before spending the next night in Sønderborg. Due to time constraints, we opted to skip Odense this time, but that is another city with a wealth of experiences to take in for those interested. Instead, we bypassed the city to explore Den Fynske Landsby, a more rural version of Den Gamle By. This was my second time there, but I wanted to revisit the place with fresh eyes after having this job for a couple years. The site gave some new ideas to consider for the windmill and we

stumbled upon a fun little piece of the Midwest (pictured) inside one of the buildings there.

After that, we made another planned stop at Egeskov Castle. Another castle from the 1500s, this one takes its unique name from the legend that it took an entire oak forest (ege skov) to build it. Touring the inside only further seems to prove this as one is able to navigate floor by floor all the way into the attic where the bare timber vaults are perfectly visible. As the castle is still partially lived in, certain areas remain closed off, but the attic was the most interesting for us. In addition to the exposed architecture, the attic space is defined by two key collections. One is of the ceramics, cookware, and other items used by servants over the history of the estate. The other is an immense toy collection from the early 20th century including a number of wooden toys made by LEGO in the 1930s before the company specialized in the bricks we know today. Outside, the castle sits surrounded by water and gardens worth exploring.

We only had a little more time before heading to Fåborg to catch the ferry to Jylland. After a quick drive along the city's waterfront and through the countryside by Grubbe Mølle, we made our way to the port for Sønderborg. We arrived ahead of time for the 3pm ferry, or so we thought. Unfortunately, this is why it is important to know Fynshav is not on Fyn because the 3pm ferry was going in the opposite direction. The next ferry leaving our port of Bøjden was not due to leave until 4pm. Incidentally, we would have made the 2pm ferry... if not for all of the Germans!

Eventually, we made it to Fynshav and drove to Sønderborg for the night. We spent the evening at the waterfront, walking around outside the castle and enjoying more of Denmark's rich ice cream nearby. By the time we arrived, most of the attractions were closed, so we would have to wait until the morning to explore the castle.

Many of the museums in Denmark are trilingual between Danish, German, and English. However, Sønderborg's castle isn't and most of the exhibits are in Danish and German. It's still a worthwhile tour for those interested in castles and the 1864 war between Denmark

and Prussia, but English speakers will miss a lot of the context. For many Danish-Americans, the Second Schleswig War (1864-65) marks a critical turning point in their family history. Prussia's successful invasion of Southern Jylland resulted in significant territorial losses, spurring a mass migration of Danes from Southern Jylland to the US. The dialects of this region remained prominent among families in Elk Horn and Kimballton well into the twentieth century. Still, the collection of items is impressive, and there is even more to see across the water at Dybbøl. The Dybbøl windmill, rebuilt since its destruction during the war, towers over the surrounding area and can be seen for miles as we drove towards Ribe.

Ribe is the oldest continuously lived in city in Denmark. It rapidly rose to prominence as a commercial hub during the Middle Ages and its streets are steeped in that history. Those searching for the city's Viking past should start with a tour of Ribe VikingCenter, a reconstructed Viking village that features a wide range of hands-on activities, cultural exhibits, and reenactments. The museum has also carefully replicated some of Ribe's archaeology, and one can tour some of the reconstructed buildings arranged just as they originally stood in Ribe long ago. Inside the city itself, there are a number of museums and attractions including the Ribe Cathedral. Everything except for parking is only a short walk from the square. The city's uneven streets and colorful leaning buildings give the impression of a lost time. Completing the experience, we spent our final night at Hotel Dagmar, the country's oldest hotel. The main building has been there since 1581, and as we can attest to, just walking across your room can be an uphill battle.

We had a little time before meeting Erik Batenburg and Morten Petersen of Møllebygger Petersen for dinner that evening. We spent some time exploring the ancient streets before meeting for dinner at Weis Stue, another urban relic. The food was excellent and the company even better as we discussed our trip, windmills, and whatever else. Plans for Erik and Morten had already been made, so

we made sure to bring them some travel literature to peruse for planning their side trip across Iowa. It was a delightful evening to cap off another surreal adventure through the country. Outside in the cold rain, we could see a group forming for the night watchman's tour of Ribe. Hopefully some day we will be able to tag along, but we were more than grateful to be out of the elements.

And just like that, our trip had come to a close. From Ribe we drove back to Billund and began the long journey back to Iowa. Even after being in Denmark a week, we knew we had only scratched the surface of everything to see and experience there. The castles, windmills, cathedrals, and turbines all blur together in a collective skyline cresting on the imagination's horizon. Passing through every town and village in such a short time produced a vivid patchwork that we may return to again and again. Some say it can take up to 6 months to feel at home in a new place. But the day we flew out of Billund, it almost felt as if we were leaving home. Perhaps some day it will be, but for now we can only look forward to returning again and again.

Shaun Sayres



A pamphlet for land for sale in Iowa and Nebraska, found inside the home of a pastor at Den Fynske Landsby

Granular History

History Told One Grain at a Time

Kimballton's Forgotten Mill

Did you know Kimballton had a windmill before Elk Horn ever did? Although it is long gone and not much of is known of its history, its story paints a telling picture of the early Danish-American experience in the United States in the 1800s.

Danish immigrants began to settle what would become the area of Elk Horn and Kimballton in 1800s. Christian Jensen broke ground on the prairie near present-day Elk Horn in 1868, and the initial settling of Kimballton followed soon after. One of Kimballton's earliest settlers was Jorgen Møller.

The surname Møller is the Danish iteration of the English "Miller," and true to his name, Møller built what would be the first windmill in the area. Not a lot is known about either Møller or the windmill.

It is presumed that the mill was up and running by 1879, joining a landscape of mills across western Iowa which including the Chatburn watermill in Harlan, among others. It stood on the hill west of Main St. (following Alfred St.) until at about 1910.

It's initial appearance suggests a strange style of construction. The mill of itself bore resemblance to a classical Dutch windmill that was typical in Denmark for the time including an external gallery that rimmed the outside. Its external components resemble those of the American-style Halladay Standard mill including the turning mechanism and the slatted blades which caught the wind.

The mill operated primarily as a grist mill, grinding flour for local residents. Lacking the equipment to make the gears himself, Møller carved the components he needed out of wood and had them replicated from a foundry.

From genealogical records, we know Møller had a family in Kimballton that included two children. His son, Peter Miller, moved to California. His daughter, Eleanor, remained in Kimballton where she managed a sewing school for girls. Møller died in 1911 in Sharon Township just east of Kimballton. His obituary recognized him as one of Kimballton's earliest settlers.

The model shown on the right was built by Pete Jensen and Harvey Sornson.



Winter landscape shot of the Kimballton windmill, year unknown



Møller's windmill as it once stood, year and person unknown



Model built by Harvey Sornson and Pete Jensen

News & Updates

This Summer and travel season proved to be a bitter sweet one for the windmill. Although Summer traffic was down about 10 percent, not just at the windmill, but state-wide, the windmill did quite well. Going by the sales figures, we had our best Summer in nearly 20 years, owing to the hard work our staff put in to keep everything running smoothly. It also helped to have an advertising campaign going on through the Summer as part of our grant funds provided by Iowa Tourism.

This was also the first Summer in a long time that we had student volunteers giving tours of the windmill, and we would like to thank Annabelle Baggett and Lily Bricker for their dutiful service.

During RAGBRAI in July, Shaun and Julie ran a booth in Atlantic for the day. We enjoyed talking with the riders as they passed through. The most popular item we brought down proved to be our rubber duck cyclist. We sold out within a few hours.

July also featured the debut of our virtual tour and we're still working to expand on the module for future visitors. The tour is currently free for all to enjoy and it's a great way to learn about the windmill from the comfort of your couch! Check it out for yourself over at danishwindmill.org.



Be A Viking day camp with Museum of Danish America



Our table for RAGBRAI

August and September have also passed by like a blur. Aside from Shaun's return trip to Denmark, we also added new products from a number of Danish companies including Maileg, Gry & Sif, and Lakrids by Bülow.

September also marked the debut of our newest publication, the *Daily Grind*. Following the closure of *Rolling Hills Community News*, we have stepped in to continue spreading the word in our local community. We publish once a month and it's a service we're happy to provide, but we remain hopeful a new party is inspired to take up the mantle soon. All issues of the *Daily Grind* can be viewed on our website.

Finally, by the end of September our new holiday catalog was ready, and it is available for viewing now at danishwindmill.org/catalog/

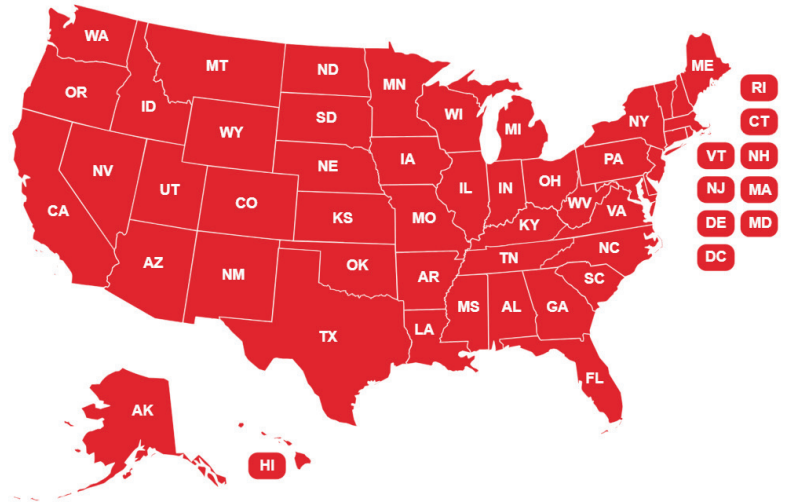


Windmill puzzles available now!

Visitor Information

We have already been visited by all 50 states plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico! In just the month of September, we had visitors from all states except Alabama and West Virginia:

- 16,917 visitors signed our guestbook
- Visitors from 28 foreign countries including 189 visitors from Denmark
- Top states: IA, NE, CO, IL, CA, MN



HELP US SAVE PAPER

To save paper (and postage), you can elect to receive *The Breeze* electronically. If you would like to switch to paperless, give us a call at (712) 764-7472 or email us at info@danishwindmill.com.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

We depend on donations and planned giving to keep the lights on. Whether it's repairs for the windmill, credit card fees, or restock orders, your support goes directly towards the operations that keeps us open and continuing our mission to preserve our Danish heritage. Any amount helps to keep the windmill turning.

Learn more about our fundraising opportunities at danishwindmill.org/donate.

These campaigns include:

- *Keep the Mill Turning* (Operations)
- *Back on the Grind* (Capital Improvements)
- *Danish Windmill Endowment Fund*



We also accept donated plates and figurines!