

Danish Windmill Quarterly Newsletter

THE BREEZE

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 **Nørre Snede, DK 1848-1975**
Celebrating
47 years in
Elk Horn
Elk Horn, IA 1976-present 

Director's Message:

Dear Members,

It is with great excitement that I present to your our inaugural issue of the Danish Windmill's new quarterly newsletter, *The Breeze*. We are thrilled for this opportunity to further engage with our members and honored that you have chosen to support us.

The Breeze is designed to have something for everyone. You can expect to see feature stories, interviews, pictures, news updates, activites, upcoming events, and more! Since this is our first issue, we've dedicated it to a special story about our most recent Denmark visit, but you can expect more about everything happening around the windmill in future issues!

New issues will be printed every April, July, October, and January. Copies will be available in print and electronically via email as well as our website.



Thank you for supporting the Danish Windmill. We hope you may look forward to this newsletter for many years to come.

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: "Down The Road And Back: Travels Through Danish History"



Søndersborg waterfront

If you ever wondered why the Danish pioneers of Elk Horn and Kimballton chose the rolling Iowa prairies to homestead, take a trip to Denmark sometime and you'll have your answer. Flying over Jutland, the connection becomes clear as day as a patchwork of crop fields form the ground beneath the heavens. The verdant landscape is serene, dotted with towns miles (or kilometers) apart and connected only by roads as straight as arrows. Sound familiar? One can only assume the Danes felt right at home as their Conestoga wagons met Iowa's great plains.

But this flight is heading to Billund, not Des Moines, and soon I will have touched ground in Denmark for the first time in my life—certainly not the last. After nearly 24 hours of air travel, we finally made it, and it became instantly clear as to what makes the Iowa-Denmark connection so special, a transatlantic bond over a century old with no signs of letting up anytime soon. Exhausted and jetlagged, we made our way to the rental agency for our car. The sleek Volvo SUV was an unexpected, but welcome surprise over the small compact sedan we were expecting. Keys in hand, we hit the road, destined to catch a ferry in Esbjerg before the day was over.

Fanø

The ferry is the only way to get to Fanø, a tiny island floating just off the coast, so tranquil that even despite the choppy waters of the North Sea you might mistake it for a Caribbean hideaway. Fanø's solitude makes it a popular vacation spot for Danes seeking a quick getaway, but the island still has a small population living there

year-round including some special friends of the windmill and Elk Horn. Elk Horn's own Steve Rold, one of Denmark's most accomplished brewers, is now a fulltime island resident with his wife, Jessica and their two kids, Finn and Clementine. Together, they run the Fanø Bryghus, an award-winning brewery that should be a rite of passage for anyone travelling to Denmark. The brewery also happens to sit just a stone's throw away from the Nørby Kro, a quaint, historic inn so cozy you might assume the concept of hygge was invented there. We can say firsthand that Steve's refreshing brews go great with the delicious meals served at the kro. You might also be surprised to learn the owners, Rikke Christiansen and Kenneth Lindenhoff, have been to Elk Horn and are longtime supporters of the windmill and our Danish connection.

Herning

Having rested the night at the kro, we hopped back on an early ferry to head to Herning and the annual Formland exposition. This was one of the main reasons we had come to Denmark. Formland is a renowned exhibition for Scandinavian companies showcasing new and unique product lines for retailers. Lisa has attended for years, and the show is a huge part of our windmill's continued success as a business since it provides the rare opportunity to locate new products or companies, and at times even speak directly with the owners. For myself, this entirely new experience is essential to the job, and it made me form a deeper

appreciation for the great lengths Lisa went to over the years to keep the windmill turning. These days at market are grueling, but the reward is worth it when the truck arrives weeks later and all sorts of new and unique gifts and decorations line the shop walls.

Two days in Herning was enough to get everything done, but once again we had some local friends and supporters to visit before we left. Erik and Tova Nørkjær reside just north of Herning in the warm hamlet of Aulum. Erik, a board member of Museum of Danish America and noted tourism fanatic has visited the United States several times, many of which as a tour guide for Danish bus groups. The two have long been supporters of the windmill and Danish-American culture and Erik enjoys parading cavalcades of Danes across the rural Midwest to all of the Danish hotspots including Elk Horn and Kimballton. In typical Danish fashion, Erik and Tova graciously hosted us at their home for some coffee and cake, and obviously a round of aquavit.

Nørre Snede

With our business in Herning accomplished, we could now set our sights on Nørre Snede so that I may see where our windmill originally stood. And again, we weren't alone. Local supporter Tina Qvist Nielsen had arranged with Lisa to personally escort us through town to the old mill site, conveniently located on Møllegade ("Mill Street"), just a short walk from the Kelsen cookie factory. Tina recounted stories of the mill from her youth and graced us with two Norwegian beer steins as souvenirs, the final remaining

possessions of the Hansen family, the windmill's previous owners before its transatlantic journey. Some other locals passed through as the conversation carried, and after a few World War II stories later, it was time to depart. We had a surprise visit to make to a nearby windmill, and didn't want to miss it.



Uldum Mølle

Uldum

There is a poster in the breakroom at our gift shop in Elk Horn just beside the employee entrance. It is of the Uldum mill, a near twin to our own. Many have wondered how these two windmills came to look so similar, and we were finally about to learn why. The Danish millers talk, and shortly after arriving, we received a number of voicemails from Jacob Hanqvist Petersen, miller and millwright of the Uldum mill. Unbeknownst to us, Jacob had recently come across some important documents related to our windmill, and he did everything he could to reach us once he learned we were in the area. It was a welcome surprise.

The papers Jacob had just so happened to be the account books of Danish millwright, Ejnar Hansen. Not a lot is known of Hansen's early life, but he was born and raised into a family of millers who ran the Hornumkjær Mill in Hornum. Later, he took up an apprenticeship in carpentry and somewhere along the way began started a mill-building company that would run for 65 years. Hansen built the Uldum Mill in its current form, and when our windmill experienced its

last fire in 1943, the Nørre Snede miller, Kresten Vestergaard contracted out Hansen to rebuild it. It would be the last windmill of his career.

Hansen's account books shed light on how he built it. Jacob walked us through the pages, showing line items where Hansen spent time at different windmills, dismantling parts he would need for the project at Nørre Snede. We learn how much money he needed and the amount of time spent as Hansen traveled about, collecting all of the parts necessary to rebuild the windmill. As it turns out, this practice of recycling parts from broken-down or decommissioned windmills was quite common, and a number of windmills in Denmark today are made up with parts taken from other mills. The Nørre Snede mill was rebuilt with parts for several other windmills, and more information on how it came together will be available later this year. After a great tour of the Uldum mill and facilities, it was time to take a break from windmills and take a look at some of Denmark's rich sites of Viking history.

Jelling

We stopped at Jelling first, a short distance southwest of Uldum, to visit the world-famous Jelling stones. A UNESCO heritage site, the stones are Viking relics, runestones that chronicle pivotal moments in Danish history. King Gorm the Old erected the first one in memory of his wife, Thyra. The larger stone was commissioned by Gorm's son and successor, Harald Bluetooth, in memory of his parents. Bluetooth's stone notes several important events including the Danes' conquest of Norway and his role in converting Danes to Christianity. For this reason, Bluetooth is frequently credited with leading the Viking conversion to Christianity which they would later spread on their travels and conquests.

Ribe

Our next stop was in Ribe, one of Denmark's oldest cities and home to two large Viking museums including a living history site. After a longer drive across Jutland though, the museums would have to wait until the morning. We booked a night at Motel Rovli in a



Sunset on Rømø

quaint town just outside the outskirts of Ribe. A number of vintage and antique vehicles including roadsters and coupes were in the lot, and we learned that the island of Rømø was hosting its annual vintage car event that weekend out on the beach. When the motel owner told us there were close to a million people out on the island, we assumed she was exaggerating. She wasn't. If you get the chance, it's worth going. We missed the races happening on the beach all day but got there with plenty of time to see a huge crowd of vintage vehicles from Type 2 Volkswagens to 1930s Mercedes roadsters. A beautiful sunset capped off the evening and the crowds slowly trickled off the beach, putting their way to the two-lane bridge back to the mainland.

After a delicious homemade breakfast at the motel, we left for the first viking museum, Ribe VikingCenter in Lustrup. This living history museum offers a truly authentic Viking village down to the gardens, animals, and smells. Most of the workers are barefoot in period clothing, bustling about doing daily chores, conducting demonstrations, or entertaining with music and singing. Lacking electricity, the authentic wood and clay buildings were especially dark, but still the flickering lights of nearby flames offered glimpses of the ornate murals that coated their inner walls. Best of all, the museum site hosts a wide range of reenactment events and as luck would have it, a blacksmith market happened to be present the day we were there. Dozens of tents lined a field, each sheltering blacksmiths at work or other artisans with authentically-made

trinkets and wares for sale. It truly was an immersive experience and we collected a good amount of vendor information from the gift shop as well. After quickly re-acclimating to the 21st century, we drove into Ribe.

Ribe is a beautiful city with enough attractions and events to keep a tourist busy for a week. The city was originally founded around 700CE as a Viking market town, offering direct riverine access to the North Sea. It is Denmark's oldest city and boasts a rich history spanning over 1,300 years. You feel its heavy past with every step.

Ribe's other Viking museum, Museet Ribes Vikinger, offers a more modern experience than the first, but is still worth visiting. There are a number of exhibits on Viking history and archaeology of the city including a partial replica of a Viking ship that gives a true sense of how large they are. As with every Viking museum we visited thus far, there were plenty of interactive activities for children and we hope to replicate some of them at the windmill in the future. The gift shop offered something familiar to with their bottles of Dansk Mjød, even some flavors we can't get here in the US. They offer free samples, too, as the best Danish gift shops always do. But that was all the time we had for milling around. With a meeting set at the Dybbøl Mill the next day, we hit the road for Sønderborg.

Sønderborg

Of all the places we visited on this trip, none seemed quite so picturesque. Pastel-colored buildings line the water inlet on both sides with sailboats rocking back and forth with the tide. A large brick castle overlooks the bay, followed by a short beach and marina where onlookers enjoy loaded hotdogs and the richest soft-serve ice cream you'll ever taste. On the hill stands a towering windmill, recently refinished but currently out of operation. Looking south, the German border fades in and out of the mist. To the west across the fjord, the Dybbøl mill stands out against the horizon.

We met with Morten Anker Petersen and Erik Batenburg of Møllebygger Petersen at Dybbøl the next morning. Morten is the sixth-generation Petersen to run the

family construction company, and together with Erik, the two have found an important niche in preservation work for Denmark's countless old mills. Following a thorough tour of the Dybbøl mill, we followed Morten and Erik a short drive to their company workshop where they intend to run a training program for millwrights. Over plates of delicious open-faced sandwiches, the main topic of conversation was grindstones, and with the help of Morten and Erik, we are hoping to locate and obtain a new set of stones for our windmill. This was only the beginning of what will be a multi-year process, but we are more than confident that we're working with the most qualified people available, and they are invested in our mission as much as we are.



Left to right: Shaun Sayres, Erik Batenburg, Lisa Riggs, Morten Petersen

As far as millwrights go, Erik is among the best of them. Born in the Netherlands, his father and twin brother are both millwrights themselves, and there doesn't seem to be any place Erik is more comfortable than high up inside of or even on top of a windmill. His boasts an impressive knowledge of windmill construction and a fountain of generosity to match. Erik kindly took us through a number of nearby windmills, some he worked on himself, others still in disrepair. We are extremely appreciative of his insight and generosity, and we hope to have him in Elk Horn before too long. We thank Erik and Morten both for their willingness to host us and work with us on getting our own windmill up to full functionality in the near future.

Following our final tour with Erik, this time of the abandoned Elstrup Mill in Nordborg, we caught a ferry for Fyn. The crisp sea air and sloshing waves welcomed a



Grubbe Mølle

time of rest to process everything up until this point. We had seen so many windmills up until this point, each with new ideas for what we might be able to do back in Elk Horn. The rest of the trip had been mapped out. We would stay the night in Faaborg before spending our last full day in Odense.

But there was another surprise visit in store for us. Between the ferry landing in Bøjden and the city of Faaborg rests the Grubbe Mill, owned and run by Susanne Jervelund, who is also the editor of *Møllen* magazine. Lisa and Susanne have met previously through the International Monological Society (TIMS) and Susanne gave us impromptu tours of both her windmill and watermill. The property offers an incredible history and Susanne shared much of it with us including Viking-era finds and spies using the windmill as a message location during the Cold War. Afterwards it was back onto the winding country roads to Faaborg.

Faaborg

For the tired traveler, Faaborg's waterfront offers a bit of peace. Boats pass back and across the bay where rows of buildings stand in unison, housing apartments, store fronts, and a number of coffeehouses and bakeries. There is also a miniature village attraction akin to our own Ebeltoft Village exhibit that boasts 30-40 buildings. Out into the country, plenty of bed and breakfasts offer rooms to vacationers. It was one of the quieter nights we had. This reviewer isn't inclined to recommend the venue we stayed at, but the friendly outdoor cat made up for the rooms decorated with animal skulls.

Just south of Odense sits Den Fynske Landsby, a living history museum composed of historic buildings relocated from around Fyn after World War II. Some of these buildings date back to the 1600 and 1700s, and together, they form an entire village complete with a kro, church, watermill, windmill, and animal pens. Erik was kind enough to connect us with the lead carpenter of the site, Nikolaj Halck Krause. Nikolaj kindly met us at the entrance and gave us insider tours of the windmill and watermill, both of which had been relocated from other parts of the island. This was the only windmill we saw that had thatched walls, and its construction dated back to an older design than some of the newer ones we've become accustomed to. Afterwards we walked the rest of the village, and explored many of the old farmhouses most of which still with furniture and equipment that were centuries old.



Hans Christian Andersen's Childhood Home, Odense

museums we visited, this one included headsets that translated all of the exhibits into English. Room after room worked through Andersen's life from childhood to adulthood, offering a range of exhibits from his personal belongings to the characters that lived within his imagination. The unique blend of visual and auditory elements to the museum offers a number of creative avenues to explore Andersen's minds and creations, and no two people will likely experience the museum in the exact same way.

Something similar can be said for traveling in Denmark altogether. There is so much to do, see, and feel that it is impossible to experience all of it, no matter how long you stay. Navigating the countryside and web of towns felt almost like a dream as straight roads gave way to labyrinths of new experiences and emotions, a seemingly endless series of time capsules that walked you through centuries of history in the blink of an

eye. To experience so much of Denmark in such a short amount of time is truly a privilege and the memory of it will last a lifetime. All of this was on my mind as we made our way from Odense to Vejle, where we spent the final night of the trip.

Home

The two goals for this trip were to re-establish connections with the Danish market and meet with a firm on obtaining a new set of stones. To that end, we accomplished both, but neither compared to the satisfaction of having experienced Denmark for the first time. Whether you are there for an hour or a week, Denmark feels like home.

Traversing its patchwork of farms from town to town brings about this calming feeling. It's serene and quiet, yet full of bustling life.

There is a word in Dutch that has no direct English translation, and maybe it has an equivalent in Danish, but I don't know it yet: overzichtelijk. On paper, it's best translated as "clear" or "easy to understand," but it also means something more than that.

Overzichtelijk conveys a sense of predictability, of things arranged in a way that just makes sense. That is how 900 kilometers of Denmark felt to us as highways and farms quilted the greenest pastures and forests. The roads are easy to navigate, leading to city centers that converge into mazes of layered history where any given street could be centuries old. There is something simple about it that is familiar to us all.

Shaun Sayres



Windmill, Den Fynske Landsby

Odense

Odense isn't quite as old as Ribe, but still has a rich urban history. Archaeologists have recently unearthed burials there indicative of a Christian presence that would predate Bluetooth's time and the site is accessible to the public in the historic center of the city. Driving inside the city can be confusing, but walking down the cobblestone pathways feels natural. There is plenty to do and see, and be sure to take your time observing the architecture of the canals, bridges, and cathedrals.

Odense also happens to be the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) and you can tour both his childhood home and a new museum established in his honor. The childhood house doesn't have much to offer, but the new museum is very well done and offers visitors a very interactive experience. Like many of the other



Lisa and Shaun with Klarborg, Formland, Herning

On behalf of the Danish Windmill Board of Directors & Staff, we would like to thank the **Mike and Lou Howard Foundation** for funding this important trip.

News & Updates

Even in Winter we have had a very busy few months! In January, the windmill joined the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM), a membership organization dedicated on providing resources to small nonprofits. We also debuted our new logo at the annual meeting and a story on our logo and who designed it will feature in our next newsletter.

In February, the windmill participated in Elk Horn's first 'hygge' event and debuted two new t-shirts, the first bits of a new line of merchandise we are bringing to our gift shop this year. Be on the lookout for more apparel, keychains, bottle openers, and more!

In March, some misfortune struck when one of the gear boxes connecting the fantail to the windmill's cap broke down. The gearbox was taken down by Mike Riggs with the help of Steve and Raydene Mathisen and is currently being repaired by Mike Mortensen in Kimballton. We are expecting to have it repaired by mid-April and we proud to have such a proactive community of supporters on call.

On April 2, we had our first in-person gala and charity auction since 2019. Shelli and Scott Lange of Master Griller Catering in Kimballton made some delicious food and a number of items donated by local businesses and friends were sold. It was wonderful seeing everyone again and everyone had a great time. We honored Wayne Hansen for 40 years of auctioneering and raised over \$6,000 towards obtaining new grindstones.

Finally, we are extremely grateful to say we have received another monumental donation from the Mike and Lou Howard Foundation of \$43,900.00!



Grants

We've been awarded a few grants!

- William G. Pomeroy Foundation** \$6,094.00
For technological upgrades and membership software
- Shelby Co. Community Foundation** .. \$6,203.00
Bathroom upgrades and kitchenette addition
- Shelby Co. Community Chest** \$824.75
Changing stations for restrooms
- 4Imprint One-for-One** \$500.00
Free windmill hats for Tivoli giveaway



Visitor Information

JANUARY

351 Visitors

258 Travel Parties | 28 States | 1 Foreign Country

FEBRUARY

496 Visitors

222 Travel Parties | 22 States | 3 Foreign Countries

MARCH

845 Visitors

360 Travel Parties | 32 States | 8 Foreign Countries

*These visitor counts are based on guestbook entries only.

LEADERBOARD

1	IOWA	877	★
2	NEBRASKA	242	▲
3	MINNESOTA	80	▲
4	ILLINOIS	73	▲
5	COLORADO	41	▲

Iowa leads the 1st quarter with 877 visitors!

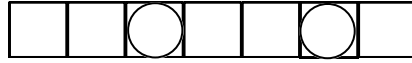
Activity Page

- Unscramble the words at the top
- Use the letters in the circles to fill in the message below.

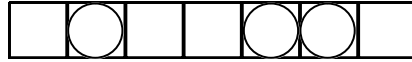
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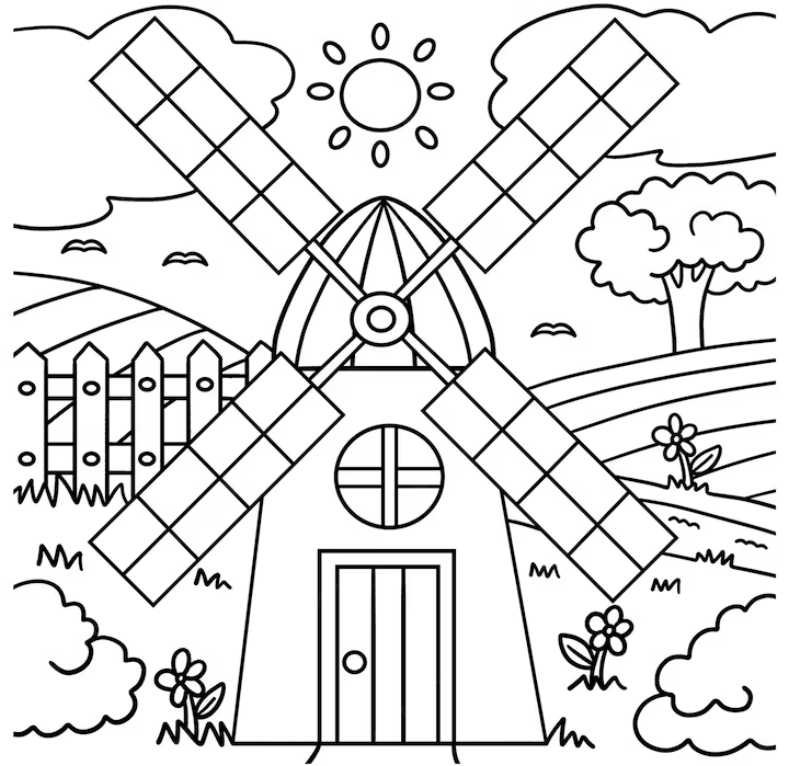
ISLSA



RLMILE



“ N _ _ _ _ _ ”
M _ _ _ _ _



Using the letters in the word below, can make at least 10 new words? **RULES:** You may only use a letter as many times as it is shown in the key word. Each word must have 4 letters or more. **GOOD LUCK!**

A U E R D L L B B S L M M Y Q
K X A N I T C E E B B Z I T U
Z B Q L G Y R N S X R E L M F
T V Y C D R O V A E P K L M O
A C R N I T W J P A C C W C V
E P I E S K C I I E Q T R Q G
H W S T H A C G N I D N I R G
W N X W R W W R J D F N G O T
L B R E E Z E H W P M P H B E
J E O P Z T M F T T E I T Q K
J Q X Z Q H D R G D R Y L V R
R I R Q N D J F I E L A R L A
U T V U Q C J A R J B K C F M
H J N Q K N K C O G L D T G F
F Z T P V C J G C B W B V Y S

MILLWRIGHT

- KEY:**
 BERRIES
 BREEZE
 CAP
 CART
 GRINDING
 MARKET
 MILLWRIGHT
 RYE
 STONES
 WHEAT
 WINDMILL
 WINDY

Honorary Millwright(s)



Lillian & Declan Niklasen
Kimballton, IA

Medium: Tangram geometric shapes

DID YOU KNOW?

The earliest known windmills in history were built in modern-day Iran over 1,300 years ago!



Niklasen Windmill

Do you have what it takes to be a millwright? Submit your windmill creations to our team for a chance to be featured on this page in future issues! It can be anything from a drawing to a windmill made out of popsicle sticks or pasta. What will you come up with? Submit your creations to info@danishwindmill.com.

Are you a member?

Become a member today and receive direct copies of *The Breeze* by mail or email.

Additional benefits include:

- Free tours of the windmill & vikinghjem
- 10% off in the gift shop and online
- Direct access to news, updates, and catalogs
- Exclusive digital access to historical materials related to our windmill (coming soon)
- Pride of supporting a local museum

**Family
membership
coming
soon!**

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