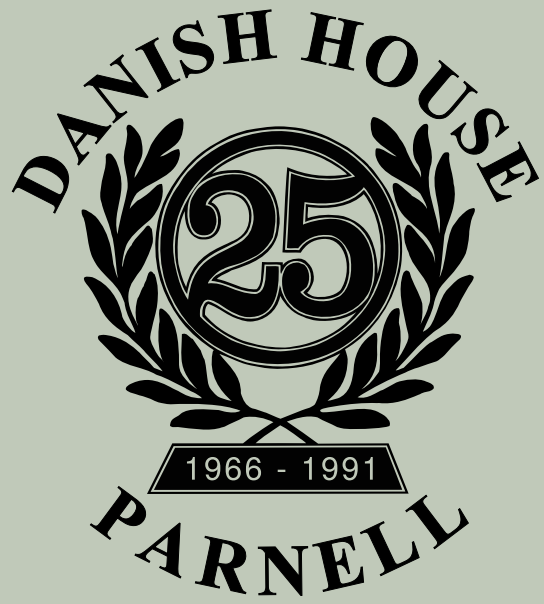


THE DANISH SOCIETY (INC.) AUCKLAND

19th FEBRUARY, 1991

The Committee of the Danish Society
welcomes you
to the
celebrations to mark the

25th Anniversary

of the

Official Opening of the

Danish House in Parnell

HASSETT PICTURE PALACE
GIBRALTAR CR

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the committee of the Danish Society, it is our pleasure to welcome you to this celebration of 25 years of theDANISH HOUSE in Pamell.

The purpose of this souvenir booklet is to serve as a reminder of some of the great things that have come about in the Club, mainly because of the House. It is not meant to be a day by day historical record, I will leave that to the historians, but a summary of some of the things that have happened within the four walls of the House.

This is a time to appreciate the great work that went into the transformation from the Parnell Picture Palace to the DANISH HOUSE, a landmark for tourists and locals who travel up and down Parnell Road.

There have been many changes, both upstairs and downstairs, new roof, new paint on walls, but always the DANISH HOUSE.

My grateful thanks to the Sub-Committee, Rila Jægersborg, Christina Jensen, Finn Nielsen, Edmund Rendtslev and Grete Rendtslev. They have all put a lot of effort into the arrangements for today, and a special thanks to all our families for their patience and support, the occasional pat on the back and reassurances that it will be alright on the day.

I would also like to thank the members who came forward and kindly let me have access to their slides, photo albums, and their mcmories, especially Svend Marquart and Age Larscn. It was much appreciated.

We have a great club with a lovely place to meet, of which we are justifiably proud, something which can be passed on to future generations as a meeting place, to remember the culture and language of Denmark.

Congratulations to the comminees and members - past and present - of the Danish Society, for the last 25 years.

Lene Scott
Chairperson of the
Organising Sub-Committee

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is my pleasure to congratulate the Danish Society, the committee of the day of the opening 19.2.1966, all the various committees including the present one, and all members past and current with the 25 years Jubilee of the DANISH HOUSE.

On behalf of the Society I want to thank many of the members who made specific contributions to the start, finish and absolute success of this fine building of which we now celebrate 25 years of service to us all, to name a few: Georg Madsen, Christian Nissen, Niels Kyed, Peter Jørgensen, Ole Jansen, Arne Olsen, Knud Kristensen, the President Børge Kirk, the Building Fund Sub-Committee and the main committee of 1965/66, also many other members contributed in various ways, some by physical work, others by way of financial contributions such as donations, loans, buying shares, it is impossible to name all, because nearly all the members helped in one way or another. Maybe the biggest contribution to accumulate funds was made by all the ladies who did the catering for our socials for free. Right from 1952 and up to now. By doing this for the club with a big smile, without complaining, when you were called upon. Thank you ladies. You are the greatest assets we have got.

I am very sorry that some of our members cannot be with us today to celebrate, it would have been a very proud day for them. Many more details of the history of the DANISH HOUSE 25 years ago can be found in the Opening Booklet and also from Svend Marquart's articles in the later Danish News Magazines.

To summarize I can surely state that the object put forward in the last sentence of the Past President, the late Børge Kirk, in his message on the opening day 19.2.1966 has been fulfilled: "It is my fervent wish that this House will develop into a centre for the fostering of Danish culture, that it will become a home away from home where old and new settlers in this country can congregate, and that it will remain a meeting place where both Kiwis and Danes can gather together in good fellowship". HOW RIGHT HE WAS.

Let me conclude with this: Thanks all Danes and Kiwi friends including the ones who are not with us anymore, for providing this meeting place NAMED THE DANISH HOUSE, which has given us joy and happiness over the last 25 years.

LONG LIVE THE DANISH HOUSE

Edmund Rendtslev
President

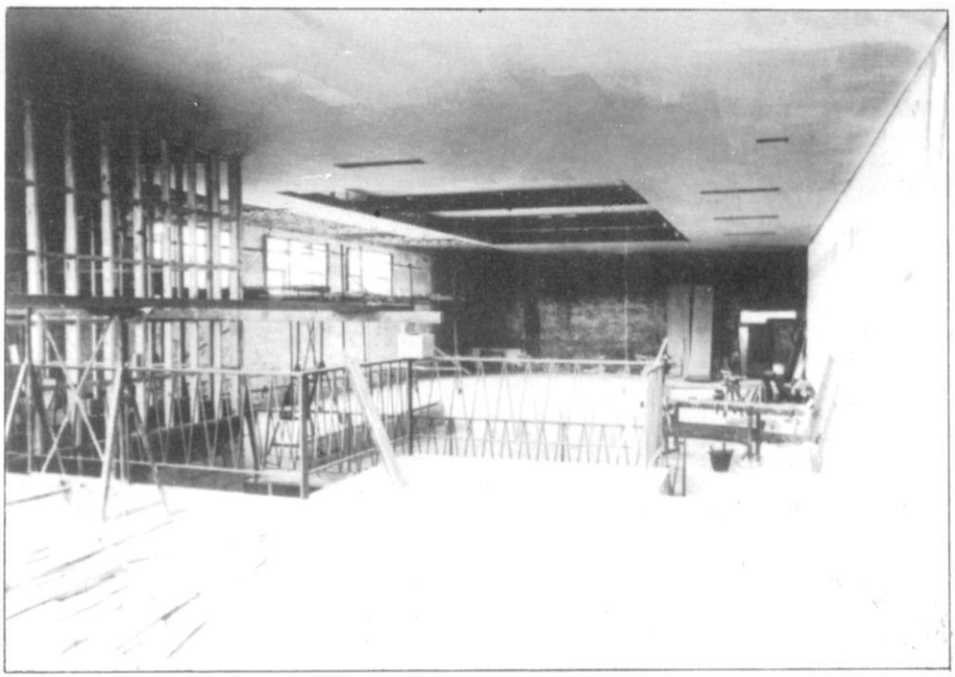
AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At this 25 years jubilee for: the Danish House it seems fitting to look at the history of the Danish Society (Inc), of today. According to membership-books and minute records from early days it is possible to build a picture of, how Danish settlers in Wellington formed, what they called: The Danish Association in New Zealand. The founder Mr Eli A. Dahl wrote inside this book : "Date Association was founded: - February 6th, 1942 - to unite in an effort to support the Free Danes Movement, in full accord with the Danish Council in London. A few months later the Head Office in Wellington was faced with lack of support from committee members and Mr. Dahl, whose health was weak, asked the Auckland Branch, under the leadership of Mr. Christoffer Langkilde, to take over as Dominion President and transfer the Headquarters to Auckland. A committee was formed by Messrs: C. Langkilde, President, F.O. Pedersen, Niels Nielsen, Poul Pedersen, W. Madsen and Mrs Poula Christie and Mrs Sorine Møller. A cable was sent to Mr. Christmas Møller; Chairman of the Danish Council in London, giving the wholehearted support in his policy.

The Danish Association in New Zealand bought a mobile ambulance, which was presented to the RNZAF in October 1943 by a deputation. This was well received in Wellington by the NZ Defence Minister and RNZAF Officers. The Sewing Circle of Danish ladies who had been active in sending clothes to Denmark, received Her Royal Highness (then) Crown Princess Ingrid's thanks in a speech on the Danish Broadcasting Service on November 5th, 1945.

After the war, the purpose of the Danish Association had been fullfilled. It was then decided to carry on as a social organisation under the name: "N .Z. Danish Society" (from 12/3/1946) with Mr K.C. Jørgensen as President and Mrs. N. Hadrup as Secretary/Treasurer and a committee. The Society's meetings were held at different clubrooms around Auckland, such as The Overseas League Rooms - Upper Queen St. and others. During the following years the NZ Danish Society had difficulty existing, due to lack of members' interest, but Mr. Bill Madsen came to the Society's rescue by opening up part of his factory, where the Danes could meet and socialize.

A new influx of Danish emmigrants to New Zealand took place around 1950 onwards, and before long, the Danish Society grew to become the meeting place for many Danes. New arrivals were elected onto the committee and soon the Danish Society was so well established, that the wish to have a meeting place of our own, became actual. The building fund now introduced Debentures for sale to members of the Society and within a short time there was enough capital to finance the purchase of two sections in Dundonald St.



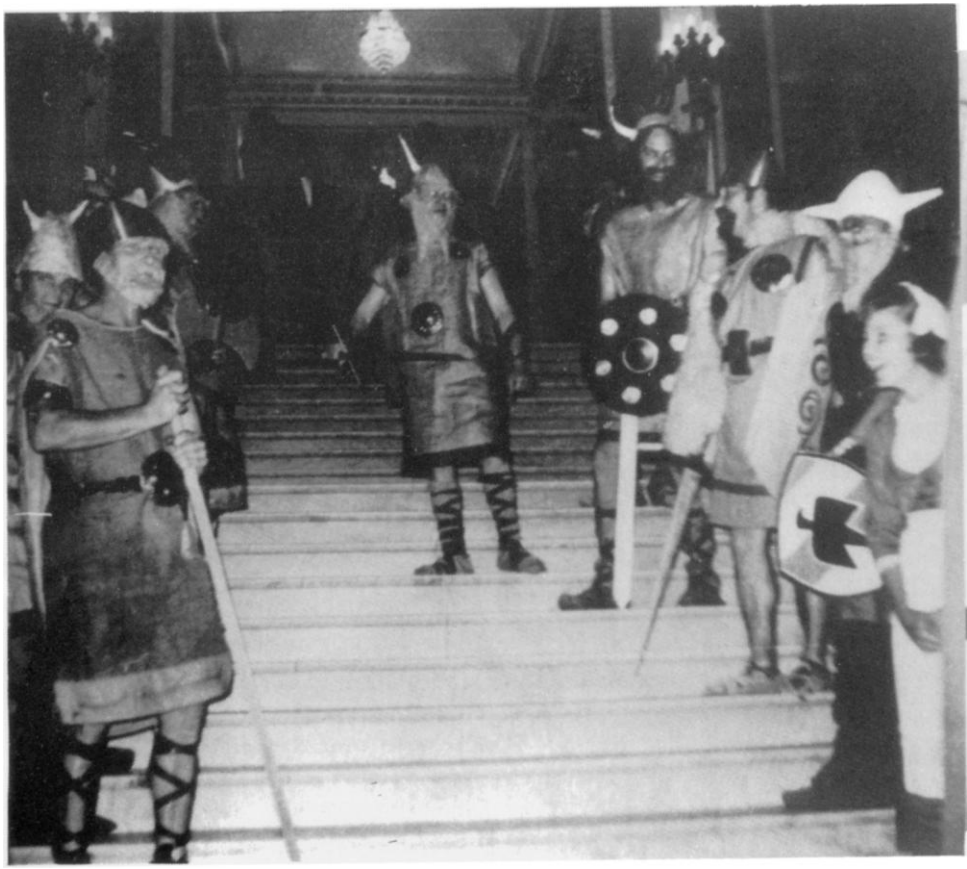
Building plans were being prepared, and the following committees worked at the goal of building a Danish House on the sections. However, at a meeting on the 17/2/ 64, the committee heard, that an estimated cost of a new building on the sections would be approx. 65,000 pounds. At the same time it became known, that the "Liberty" picture theatre was on the market, and it was suggested to try to buy the old building. From that moment, no effort was spared. The theatre was zoned 'commercial C', which meant, that special permission had to be obtained to modify the building. The interior of the theatre had to be totally redesigned, and the sloping floor had to be levelled up. The projector room, which was made of solid concrete, had to be opened up to the theatre-room, a considerable reconstruction job, before the building could be used for the purpose it was intended.

During the following year or so, members of the Danish Society keenly volunteered to work on the reconstruction job, for the common goal - THE DANISH HODSE- .

It seems only a short time ago since that job took place, but in the 25 years, the Danish House has been in existence, it has given great pleasure to Danish people in New Zealand, and it is our hope, that future Danish generations will enjoy this house for many more years to come.

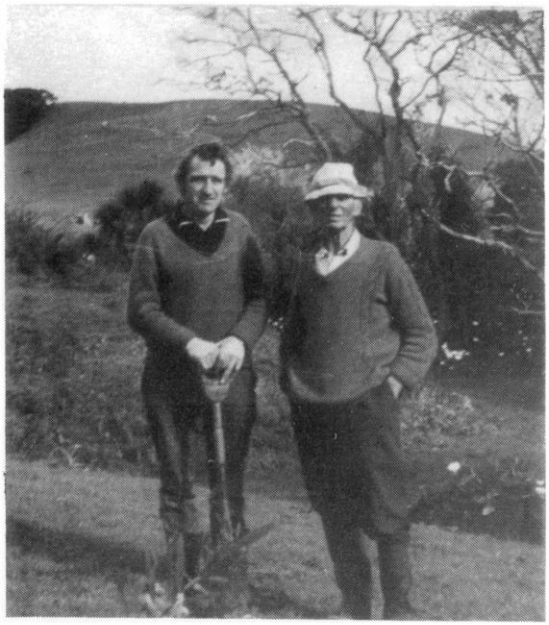
Svend Marquart

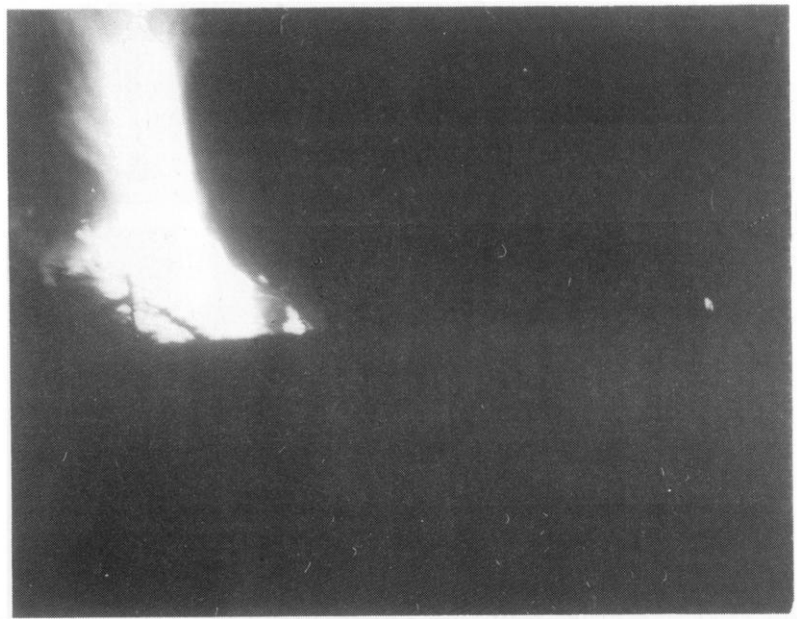
The first part of the research for the 25th Anniversary was to go through the cupboards to try and piece together as much information as possible, especially from the earlier days of the House. Well we found all sorts of things, some of which should have been thrown out years ago, but the real goldmine was the old copies of the NEWS MAGAZINE. They proved to be the starting point for putting this booklet together. They were fascinating to read, and were a factual record of dates, opinions, and background information on events, both here and in Denmark. Our sincere thanks to the editors, past and present, who have worked hard putting the magazines together. They have become a very valuable part of our library. A magazine is the first line of communication within a club, and without it, the club wouldn't function.

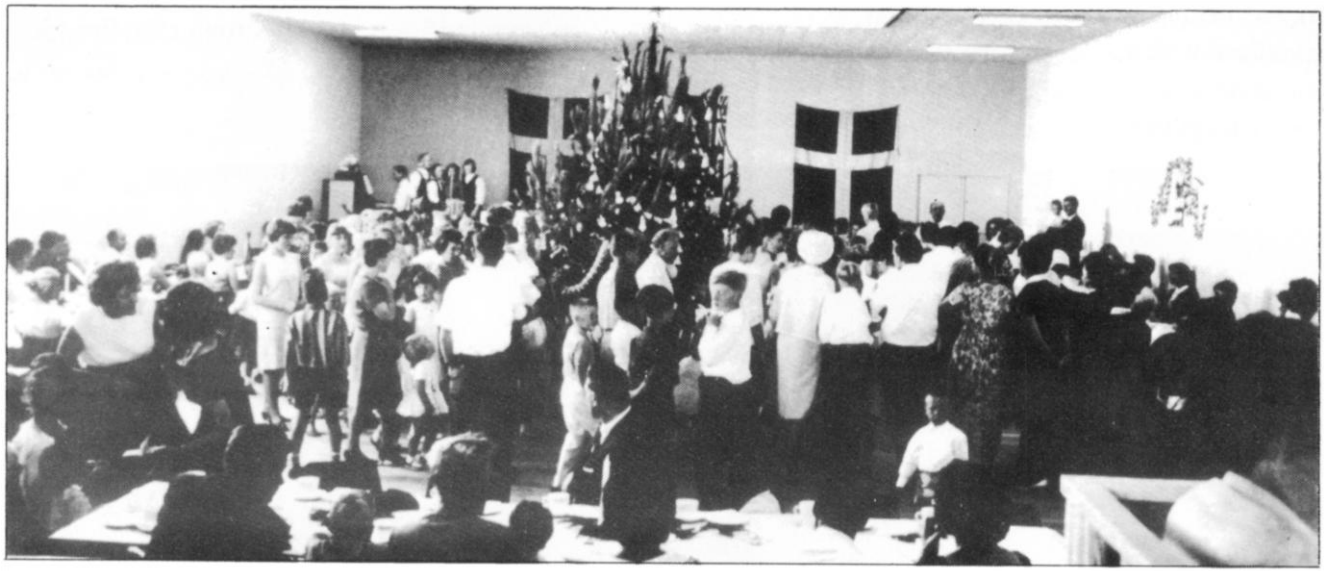


Not all the activities in the Society have been at the House, but have still become enjoyable annual events. The PICNICS have become a great way to catch up with friends after Xmas. The venues have ranged from Redwood Park, Swanson, Wenderholm, Matheson Bay, Valhalla and lately we have been meeting at Long Bay. This has become a double celebration with the children dressing up for Fastelavn, and the poor cats being hit out of the drums by some very determined young and old members.

Another favourite for the family is SANKT HANS. We had some magic nights under the stars up at Chr. Savsø's farm in Swanson. The sight of the torches coming over the hill, the smell of the sausages and definitely the snaps and hot coffee was well worth braving the cold evenings for. Young and old would gather round the fire and sing the old and new songs. Last year we met again at Whangaparoa, and hopefully this will become an annual event.

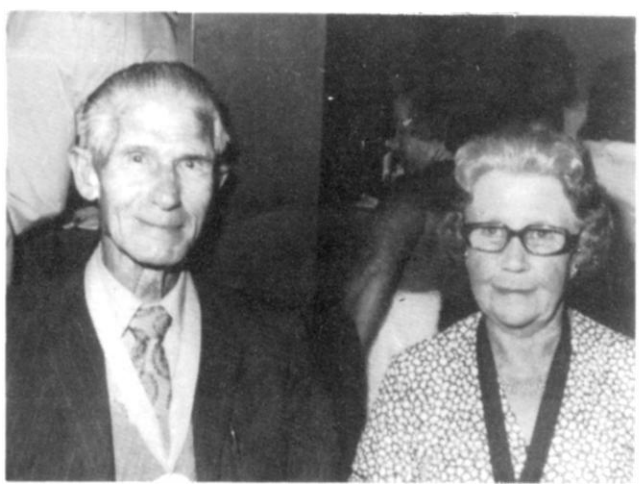


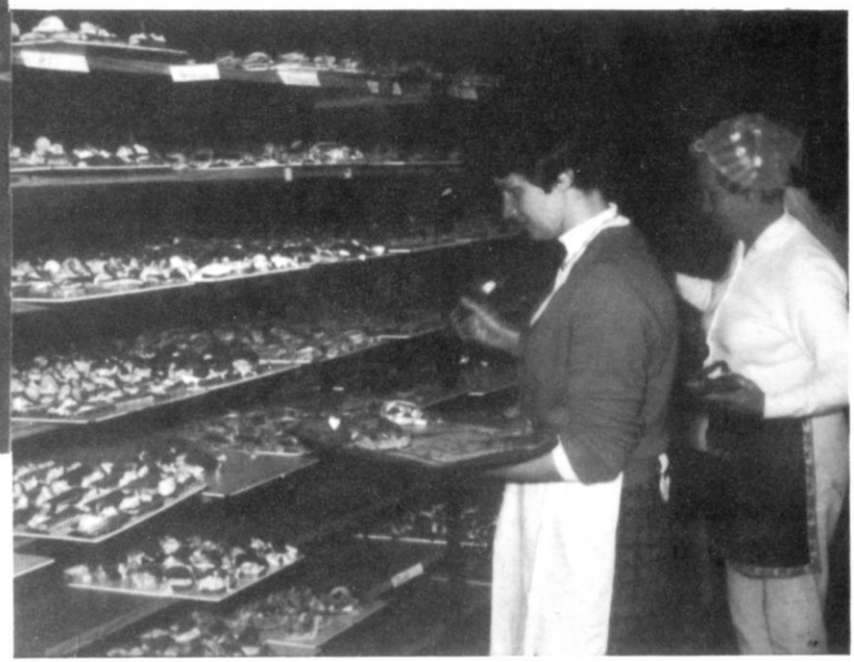




The greatest family favourite on the Club's Social Calendar has to be the CHILDREN'S XMAS PARTY. For over 25 years the special guest has been the Man in the Red Suit, with great presents, a bag of goodies to eat, and special entertainment while Mum and Dad got their coffee.

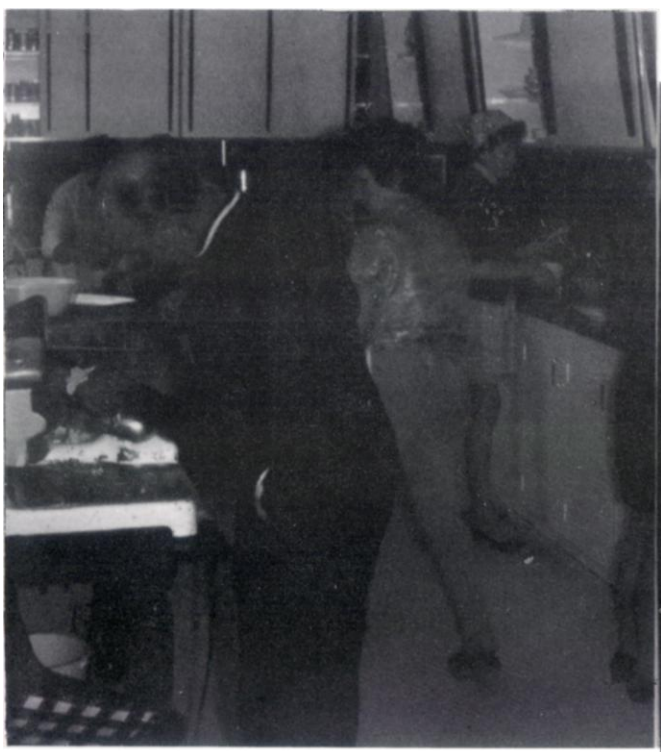
There has been a special event for the YOUNG OVER 60's since the late sixties. The smørrebrød is always well received and with a snaps or two, the chatter really gets going. Some of the best research into the history of the club can be done at these functions. The stories are definitely great to listen to, and should be retold and retold so they are never forgotten.





The SOCIALS or FESTER, is the one event that the Danish Members have excelled at. There have been many memorable nights with themes and decorations beyond imagination. Some of the popular themes have been: The Beachcomber, Black and White, Red and White, Autumn, Spring, Bad Taste, Carnival, Barn Dance, Tyroler Aften, Gule Ærter i Messen, Midwinter Xmas, Pølsegilde, Krobal, Casino Night, Pariserfest, Mad Hatter's, Oktoberfest, Viking Fest, and many, many more. In fact 25 years worth. This list does not include things like the Film Evenings, Winetasting, and Car Rallies, the Andespil or the lovely Friday Night Family Dinners.

The highlight of the Danish Society's social calendar has to be the BALL OF THE YEAR. The food and the music is guaranteed to be the best, and it is one of the occasions when the whole House is seen at its glittery best. As with all functions, but especially the socials, the success of the event is mainly owed to the people behind the scenes, and here the Society's members come out on top. From the ladies in the kitchen, to the people in the hall doing the seating and the decorations, the standard is the highest, and we all look forward to many more good social events in the House in the years to come.



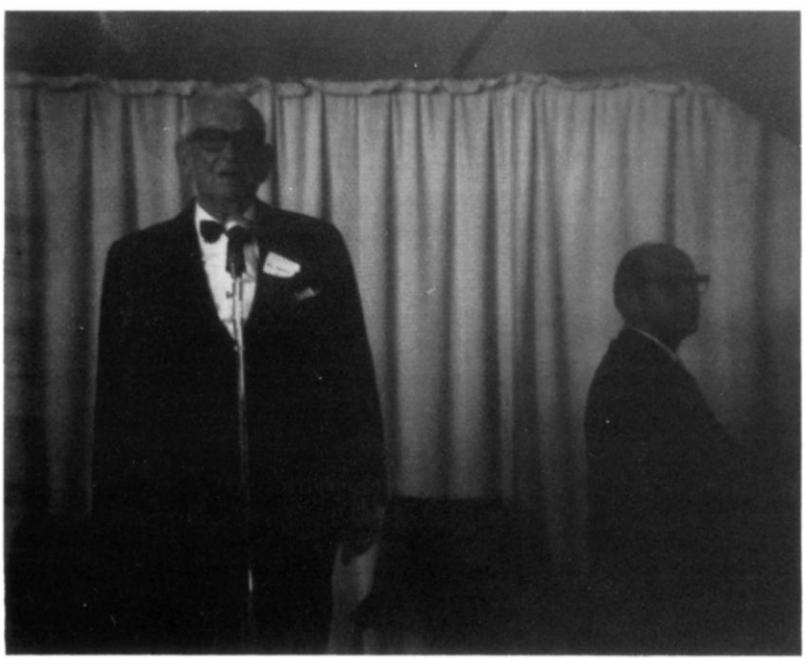
One truly great advantage of having our own House is being able to entertain special visitors to our Shores. One of the proudest and most memorable days would have to be when we welcomed our own QUEEN MAGRETHE II in 1987. A Magnificent day that was shared by so many of the members. We have celebrated Royal weddings, Special Birthdays, and distinguished visitors such as the Flensted Gymnasts, The Danish Police, The Danish Farmers, the Crew from SAS Baia Viking, Wienersangeren Jørgen Malstrøm, Ivor Holmquist, The Ollerup Gymnasts, The Viking Jumpers, and definitely the funniest of them all was the lunch with Victor Borge.

Not all events in the House have been purely social. We have had a Memorial Service for our King, as well as for some of our members. There have been the A.G.M's. Definitely an annual event, where some historical decisions have been made. Through good and bad, the Society's members have held together and built up something worthwhile, which we today and future generations can be very proud of.

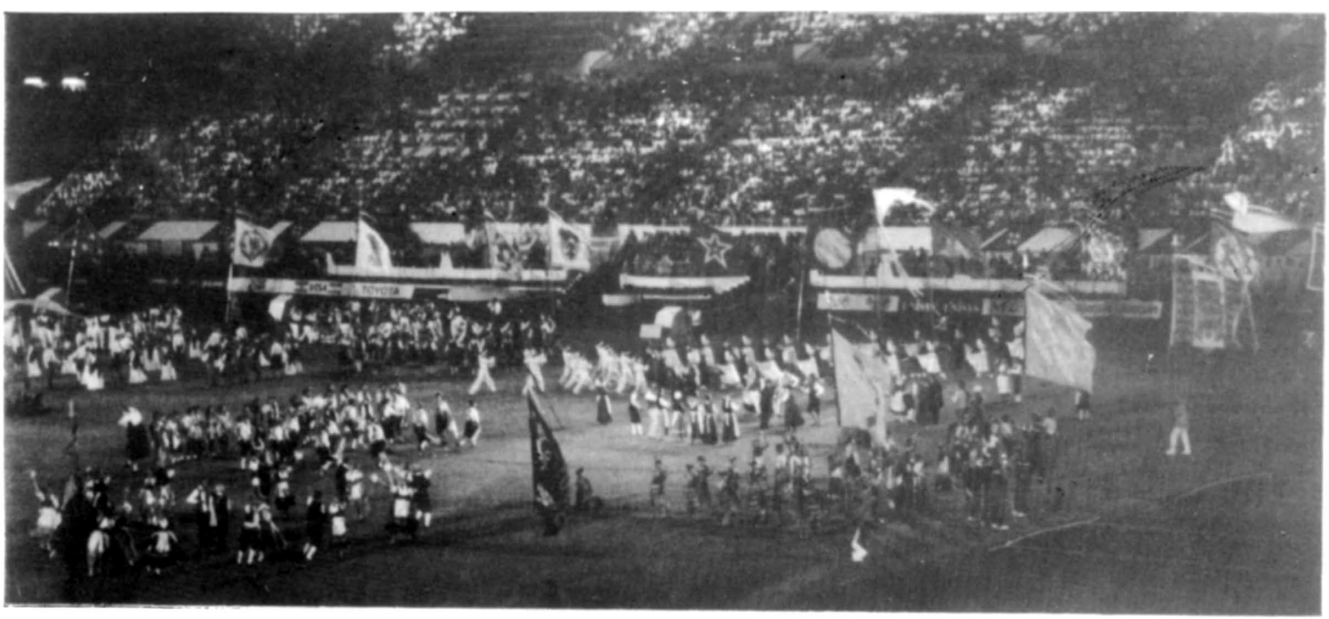
In 1970, we officially opened the Library in the Viking Hall. This now comprises a very valuable collection of books, mainly in Danish, which have been donated or purchased by the club. It is also a display area for the many lovely gifts that have been given to the club over the years.

The common bond that all the members of the Society has, is the link with Denmark, it's culture and the language. The DANISH LESSONS are therefore very important to us all, especially the non-Danish partners, and the generations that have grown up away from Denmark. Having seen the lessons restarted a few years ago, let's hope they keep going for a long time, with future support from tutors and lots and lots of students.

With an asset such as the DANISH HOUSE, the members, over the years have tried many different activities other than the ones already mentioned. These include: Ladies' and Mens' Gymnastics, Modem and Ballroom Dancing, Stamp Collectors' Club, Choir, Group Travel to Denmark, Playgroup and the ever popular Kortspil. The Ladies had a very successful 'TIRSDAGS KLUB', with gues speakers and trips out to visit many different places of interest.



The YOUTHCLUB has brought many young Danes into the Club, with friendships starting that have lasted through into adulthood. True to tradition in the Danish Society, the activities have been many and varied. Some of the Highlights have been the camping or Valhalla Trips in the summer, and the Ski Trips in the winter. There have been visits to the Hot Pools, Ice and Roller Skating, Bush Tramps, or just games or dancing evenings in the Viking Hall. The YOUTHCLUB members have always taken an active part in fundraising for their outings, and the Andespil has been a favourite. They have also organised Tombolas at the Xmas parties, sold æbleskiver and coffee, collected pinecones etc. etc. Needless to say, all this would not have happened without senior members willing to take on the responsibility for these energetic youngsters, and we're sure both past and present members of the Youthc1ub are grateful for this.



From the earliest members in New Zealand there has been a strong and consistent interest in FOLKDANCING. This was really strengthened when the House was opened, as this was a definite place to meet, to practice and improve a very important and colourful part of our culture. The Folkdancing evenings have always been very friendly, often with a kaffebord andthe singing of traditional songs. Not everyone who carne along was necessarily dancing, but they all enjoyed the friendly atmosphere.

The Folkdancers have often represented the Society at Cultural and International events, among them the Lego Launch at Farmers, United Nations Day, The Whitbread Yachts, Dance-a- Thons, and when the Ollerup Gymnasts were here. The Danish Culture was represented at two milestone events in the history of New Zealand. In 1974, 10 Folkdancers travelled to Waitangi to perform at the Pageant to mark New Zealand Day, and in 1990, 33 Dancers and Musicians took part in the Opening Ceremony of the XIV Commonwealth Garnes.

The list of achievements is endless, but throughout the first 25 years of the History of the House, there have been plenty of music and laughter, a testament to evenings with a truly Danish flavour. An acknowledgement has to go to the leaders who researched and taught the dances, and to the ladies who through the years have made, and improved, lent out, passed on and altered the costumes for the Dancers. The dancing would still have been excellent, but not nearly as colourful.

VALHALLA

The Danish Society has always been at its best when it lives up to its name in Danish: "Den Danske Forening"; "forening" meaning union, unification. We saw it when The Danish House was purchased and rebuilt..And when the AGM in 1977 supported a suggestion by Viggo Andersen, to buy a beach section, it happened again. I was Foreman of the Society at the time. Some members prefer the title President, which means: He who sits down first (at the table). I prefer Foreman, meaning: He who goes in front when things are done; so it fell on me to find a suitable section to submit to the members for approval.

After many week-ends, travelling many miles, I found what was well above all other beach sections viewed, approximately 56 metres to the highest point, as a matter of fact.. The next step was to convince the rest of the committee and later the members, that this was it. The members, too? On the night of the extraordinary general meeting 46 members turned up, that is, 10% of the total number. About 40 of them said: Yes, buy it! They spent $60,000 that night for 18 acres, that to-day, surrounded by properties in the million dollar class, lay there as a tranquil retreat, always ready to recharge your emotional batteries and renew your companionship with Mother Earth. That was the beginning of VALHALLA.

Of course it wasn't VALHALLA then. It was a utilitarian pre-fab from the last war, sitting on the top of a hill, straddling the peninsular, with one leg in the open sea and the other in a calm cove; a few age old pohutukawa, but otherwise bare, fenced paddocks around. But it was soon to change. A small sub-committee was formed, each member handpicked for his multiple skills: Foreman Arne Olsen, the best organizer in the west, John Barrett, who never answered back, Kjeld Faaborg, who always did, Knud Kristensen, who held firmly onto the purse strings, Bjarne Elowsson, with his extensive local knowledge, Edmund Rendtslev, who registered every little occurance with his camera, and Kaj Winter for his good connections with suppliers of much needed this and that.

The forty far-sighted people grew literally into a hundred after we had taken the property over, on November 18, 1977. At the dedication one month later, the Danish tradesmen had shown they meant business. Let me quote from the very first report from the VALHALLA committee: "Men with hammer and saws, and ladies with their sewing machines went into gear. A start was made on the new toilet and shower, curtains and drapes were sewn and fitted, all in record time." This happened in the busy weeks, just before Christmas. For years this spirit of co-operation and togetherness continued as the house was gradually transformed; about one thousand trees were planted and the staircase down to the beach on the seaward side was constructed.

Eli Larsen

JOHN W. CROSBY
528 Karangahape Road,
Auckland. P.O. Box 8082

LICENSED REAL ESTATE AGENTS

No 3096 **A**

28th August 1964

Received from Mr B. F. STANNUS £500 : — : —

the sum of FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS

Cash/Cheque

for credit of UNITY TRADING Co. LTD

being DEPOSIT on PROPERTY LOT 46 D.P. 2357
Co. for Agreement Sellers D.I.T. Co. Ltd
and DANISH SOCIETY (INC.)

Official Receipt Form For Trust Moneys

JOHN W. CROSBY
per J. Crosby

DEPOSITS ON PURCHASES ACCEPTED SUBJECT TO VENDOR'S CONFIRMATION

THE COMMITTEE OF THE DANISH SOCIETY (INC) AUCKLAND.
FEBRUARY, 1991

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President

RITA JŒGERSBORG
Vice-President/Editor

LENE SCOTT
Secretary

BJARNE ELOWSSON
Treasurer

CARSTEN DANSTED

CHRISTINA JENSEN

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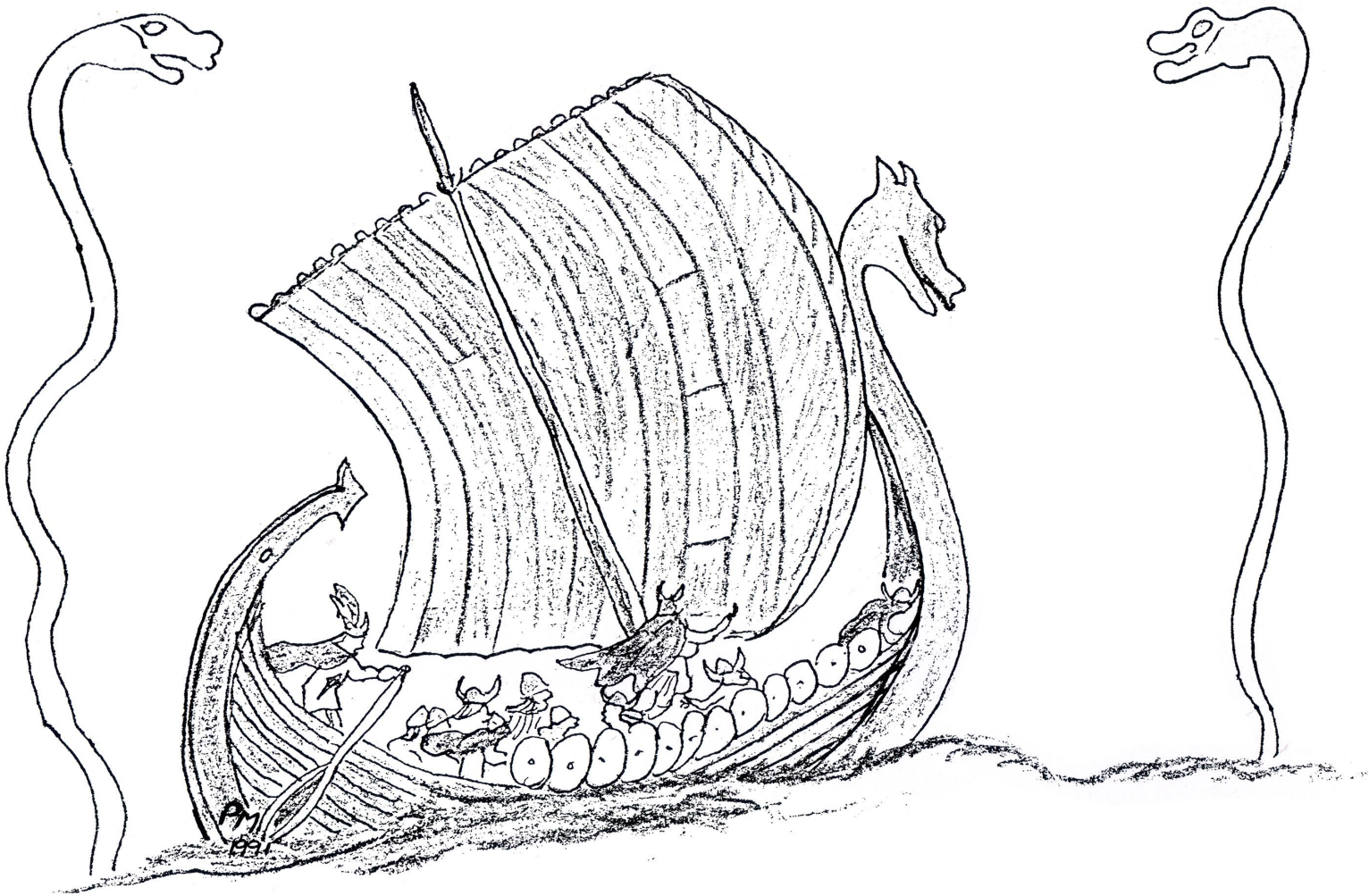
JOHN RASMUSSEN

VAGN THOMASSEN