

# THE DANISH SOCIETY (INC.) AUCKLAND

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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**



## INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the committee of the Danish Society, it is our pleasure to welcome you to this celebration of 25 years of the DANISH 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 memories, especially Svend Marquart and Age Larsen. 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

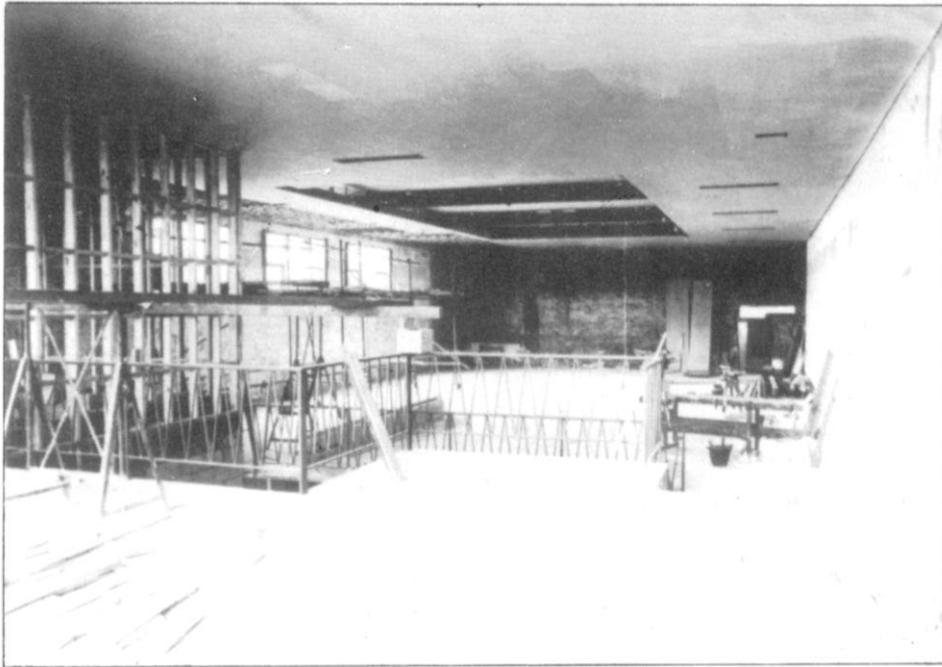
## AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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 fulfilled. 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 emigrants 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.

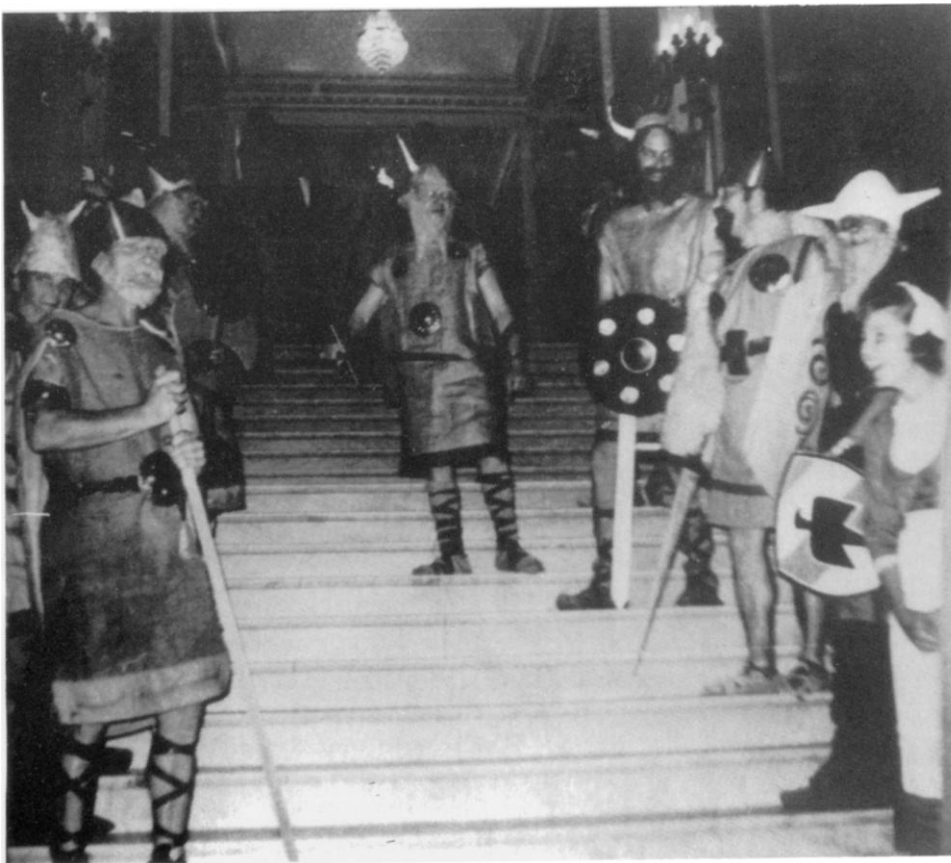
During the following year or so, members of the Danish Society keenly volunteered to work on the reconstruction job, for the common goal - THE DANISH HODSE- .

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.

