

This is YOUR LIFE

THE DANISH SOCIETY (INC).

FOREWORD.

This Scrap-book outlines the most important events, in the history of The Danish Society since its beginning.

The pictures and original records are of special historical value from a time long gone.

Many people have been of great help to me in giving useful advise and material for the book and I am grateful to these persons:

Mrs. Poula Christie, Mrs Lydia Madsen, Mrs.& Mr. Kirsten and Poul Pedersen. Mr. Bent Hansen for making the printed cover. My wife, Margrethe for proof-reading and to The Danish Society(inc) for the loan of minute-books and records (1-10).

Should the Reader want a more detailed Information, the following Records would be useful:

Book 1 & 1A, Membership-book from 1942-1949.

- 2, Rapports of meetings, 1944-1946.

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- 4, Rapports of meetings, 1957-1962.

- 5, - - - , 1962-1965.

- 6, - - - , 1965-1971.

- 7, - - - , 1972-1976,

- 7, also contains a registre of all the presidents & committees.

- 8, Building Fund treasurers cash-book,

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- 10, Rapports from Annual General Meetings, from 1946 to 1983.

February 1991. Svend Marquart.

THE DANISH SOCIETYs HISTORY. (Speech. 19/2-1991)

INDLEDNING.

Dear friends, I feel flattered, having been asked by the committee, to give a speech about the Danish Society's history.

When I was a school-boy, I hated anything that had to do with history and now, I find myself 'deep in it' -just shows, how we people change with age!.

START:

As our old countryman, Hans Christian Andersen used to say."Once upon a time", a danish patriot, Mr. Eli Dahl of Wellington, listening one evening to B.B.C heard a danish voice informing listeners to the formation of the Danish Council in London and calling all Danes the world over, to unite in an effort to support the Allied Nations in their fight for fridom. Then, on the 6th of Feb.1942, Mr. Dahl called a meeting of Danes in Wellington and they formed the first Danish Association in New Zealand, in full accord with the Danish Council's objectives to unite and support the free Danes Movement.

CHANGE HEADQUATER.

However, a few months later the head office in Wellington was faced with lack of support from committee members and Mr. Dahl, because of ill health, asked Mr.Christoffer Langkilde in Auckland to take over as Dominion president and transfer Headquarters to Auckland. A committee was formed, June 1942, with Mr. C.Langkilde as president, Mrs. Poula Christie as secretary/treasurer and a committee of Messrs: F.O.Petersen, Niels Nielsen, Poul Pedersen, Bill Madsen and Sorene Moller. Mr.Dahl remaining as representative of the Wellington branch.

MOBILE AMBULANCE.

The Danish Association in NZ was able to collect money enough to buy a mobil Ambulance, which was presented to the R.N.Z.A.F. in Wellington by Mr. Langkilde and a delegation of committee members, on behalf of the Danes. On the side of the Ambulance was painted a red cross surrounded by the New Zealand and Danish Flags and the inscription: "Presented to the Royal N.Z.Air Force, from the Danish Association in NZ".

SEWING CIRCLE.

On the initiative of Mrs. Ingeborg Langkilde a Sewing Circle of danish ladies had been busy sewing and collecting Clothes to help the needy population in Danmark. By the time it was possible to send it to Denmark, the considerable amount of clothes weighed 2 tons. The danish Queen Ingrid, who was chairwoman for the distributing organisation later expressed her thanks for the gifts from abroad over the danish broadcasting station.

WINDING UP FREE DANISH MOVEMENT.

When the war was over the purpose of the Free Danish Movement had been fulfilled and the Association had to be wound up.

It was then decided (1946) to carry on the social club under the name: N.Z. Danish Society, with a committee of 5, and Mr. Knud Jorgensen as president, a position he held until 1949.

The club had meetings in members homes, and had intertainments of various kind, like singing danish songs, reading danish poems e.t.c. But during the following years the social club had its 'ups and downs'. Members interest in attending meetings was not always enthusiastic, and at one stage, the Society was on the brink of being wound up. But a few of the members persisted in keeping the society alive. Here Mr. Bill Madsen showed his tireless effort, by opening up part of his factory where Danes could meet and socialize, have a cup of tea or read the danish books in the 'library'.

INFLUX

After 1950 there were a boost in emigration of danish people into New Zealand and the Danish Society experienced an increase in membership. Many Danes found new friends in our club and soon the committee consisted of new-arrivals who had different ideas about entertainment. A variety show was staged i Harmony Hall, Queens Archade. Fancy-dress party in 'Edendale School-hall', just to mention some. Picnics to Wenderholm and Red Beach with BBQ's e.t.c., were also arranged.

BLDG. FUND

Before long the Danish Society was a firm, established club with a steady growing membership and as time went on it became a wish to have our own club-house. This led to the formation of the Building Fund. At a special-called meeting the 13 April 1957 it was decided to start a Building Fund with the sole purpose of collecting money to purchase a building section or a suitable house. The Building Fund was a self-ruling, three man sub-committee under the main committee and was elected as follows, Messrs: George Madsen, President; Christian Nissen, Secretary; Niels Kyed, Treasurer.

OTHER PROJECTS.

But although the 'Danish House' project had priority, other projects were also of importance. A News Letter under the heading "D D F" (Den Danske Forening) was sent to all Danes, known to the club, and was a very usefull information source between the Society-committees and the danish community.

The Folkdancing group was another activity which attracted members of the younger generation. Performing in their colourfull costumes around the country, they were (and still are) a beautiful and true representative for the danish community of New Zealand.

Also were arranged a great number of evenings with a variety of entertainments, mostly dances and gatherings which included supper consisting of Smorrebrod. This was prepared and served by our ladies, who worked wery hard to make every event susscessful, an effort of great help to the Danish Society, financially and otherwise.

DEBENTURES.

In the following years the Fund-committee worked tirelessly in the interest af our members to collect money for a house, and at every meeting of members, a wooden house-model was passed around, and money generously fed down the chimney!. But it was the introduction of Debentures which gave the Building Fund the boost it needed.

At a special-called.meetig the 16th Nov.1960 the president Borge Kirk, on behalf of the Building Fund, suggested the issue of Debentures to further collection for the danish house project. The Debentures value was five pounds with a 3% pa.interest over five years. It was accepted with majority.

The society now had about 300 members and the Debentures were selling very well. All members were in favour of a danish house, and at annual general meetings it was decided to transfer money from the society to the building fund.

SECTIONS

The building committee had begun to look for suitable sections when two building sites were offered to them. In June 1961, they called a special general meeting with the agenda: 'purchase of sections'. The president for the building fund, Borge Kirk had invited a solicitor at this occasion, and the offer was for two building-sites at Dundonald St., and the price was 4000.-pd. The matter was debated at length and finally it was decided to buy 'on conditions'...The sections were bought and rented by B.Kirk Ltd, who paid for the city rate. At a later date, the two sections had to be sold and the money invested in another building project.

PARNELL.

Meanwhile The Danish Society had been registered an incorporated Society and the constitutions had been amended to pass legal requirements. The Building funds committee was working eneygetic on plans for the danish house when one day, a building in Parnell Rd., was on the market. It was the old "Liberty" picture theatre. On a committee meeting it was decided to investigate the possibility of buying the building and soon after, at a general meeting the 25/3-1964, it was disclosed that the building price was 12.500- pd.- and that it was zoned commercial "C", which meant, that special permission had to be obtained before it could be used for the purpose of 'club house'.

ALTERATION.

The building also had to be re-build. The sloping floor had to be levelled up and the projector-room, build of solid concrete, had to be opened up into the main-room, and the building made two storey, a very substantial re-construction, for which building plans had to be made and permit obtained.

The following months the building-committe. was extremely busy trying to obtain all necessary information, the re-construction required. and also arrange for finances to purchase the building.

PURCHASE.

Finally, at a general meeting the 5/6-1964 it was decided to buy the Parnell picture-theatre on conditions, that the necessary permits could be obtained and finances arranged. At the same time it was agreed to sell the sections in Dundonald St.

BUILDING

All these problems were soon solved and the actual building work could begin. Fortunately for the Society, many of its members were building-trades people. These people were a valuable help, when it came to planning and carrying out the jobs. The following year great progress, on the interior of the building, took place. This year was also, financially, the hardest year the Society have experienced. But a clever administration and great generosity from the people involved, made it possible to reach the finishing stage, where the house could be officially opened.

OPENING.

The big day, 19th Feb. 1966 had been carefully prepared for, and to the opening-festivities were invited following VIPs: His Worship, the mayor of Auckland, Dr. Roy G. McElroy. The Hon. Minister of Internal Affairs, David C. Seath. His Excellency The Danish Ambassador, Dr. Axel Serup. The Danish consul in Auckland, Mr. L. J. Stevens, the Danish Vice-Consul, Palmerston North, Mr. George Petersen and others. There was an official opening at 3' o'cl., and a dinner and dance at night, where more than 200 members enjoyed the festive occasion for "The Danish House".

In future, a caretaker had to be engaged to look after the house and the bookings for hall-hiring, and soon he could inform the committee, that the next year was fully booked, financially, a lucky thing for the treasurer!

The Society now had 427 members and the general interest for the club seems to grow year by year.

In 1973 a building-site was donated to the Danish Society by an old Dane, Mr. Christian Savsa, who was a farmer in Swanson, and who was very fond of the Society. The land was divided from the farm, when Mr. Savsa retired and wanted to sell the farm, after many years of farming. Later, a committee decided to sell the section and put the money to good use.

LEIGH.

In 1977, the Danish Society bought a small farm and house in Leigh as a 'Beach Resort' for members and their family. The old farmhouse was renovated and now have accommodation and cooking facilities for 26 persons.

At the opening ceremony about 100 members watched a small birch-tree being planted - by the youngest, danish child, helped by his father - as a symbol. The House in Leigh is now called "Valhalla".

VISITORS.

Our Danish House in Parnell have been used extensively over the years and we have enjoyed many functions of different kinds there.

One only have to mention the Christmas-party, where 200 children of all ages were 'dancing' around the Christmas tree, singing danish carols, holding parents hands. And the 'Ball of the year', where 1800 ps., of Smorrebrod were consumed.

The danish Society has also been host to many Visitors from Denmark. Some, just comes to mind: Flensted Jensen's Gymnasts, the danish Farmers, danish Police, danish Yachts-crew from the Whitbread-race.

But one occasion must stand out here, the visit (February 10th.1987) of the Danish Queen, Margrethe and her husband, Prince Henrik.

It was a great honour for the members of the Danish Society, who were present that morning, to welcome the Queen and Prince to New Zealand and especially, to the Danish House. The Queen was presented with a Tiki in greenstone and the Prince, with a Tiki-Poutanga (Maori Axe). Indeed, a memorable day!

FINE.

Today, on the 25th years celebration for the Danish House, I congratulate the Members of our Society to the achievement over the years. Next year, on the 50th., birthday for the Danish Society, another historic celebration will be due, see you then.

Sincerely, Svend Marquart.



Some of the early committee members of the DANISH ASSOCIATION IN N.Z.

From Left: Mr. Fred Andersen, Mr. Peter Petersen, Mr. Moller,
Mrs. Sorene Moller, Mrs. Poula Christie, Mr. Christoffer
Langkilde, Mr. Bill Madsen, Mr. Otto Hadrup.



ald Dahl the Starter of D.A.

By the Ambulance, at the presentation in Wellington 10th.Nov.1943 from left:

Mr. Eli A.Dahl, Founder of the Danish Association in N.Z.

Mr. Chrsitoffer Langkilde, Dominion President, Danish Ass.in N.Z.

Faldt udstyret ambulance fra Danisk Association to N-2 Luftforce. - October 43



Stoffer - Inge - Palle - Driver Fokk Lassen,

By the Ambulance, at the presentation in Wellington 10th.Nov.1943 from left:

Mr. C. Langkilde, Mrs.I. Langkilde and Mrs.P. Christie.



From the presentation of the ambulance in Wellington, 10th.Nov.1943.

At the microphone: Air Vice Marshall Isitt, R.N.Z.A.F. Right of him are:Mr./Mrs.Langkilde, Mrs P.Christie. Behind are seen, Mrs N.Hadrup, Miss.Audrey Hadrup and Mr.Knud Graae, (both in Army uniform).



Whenever occasion offered, Danish Officers and Men of Ships, calling at Auckland, have been entertained at the Association's socials and in private homes, and hospitality thus extended has been feelingly expressed. ("Selandia" was the first danish ship to visit Auckland after the war.)



Special social night, 26th. September 1945, in honour of King Christian X's Birthday. Below, cutting the Birthday Cake. From left, Miss. Alisa Moller, President, Mr Otto Hadrup and Miss. Olga Koed.





1949 Christmas Party.

Danish Children and Parents at a Christmas Party (Juletrae).
Father Christmas (Julenisse) was Mr. Dejbjerg.



Folk Dancing. Poula Christie showing her Daughter, Inge steps of Danish folk Dancing. Anna Raynes clapping Rhythm.
Below, Three Groups of Folk Dancing Performance.





From a Preview of the danish Film, "Hans Christian Andersen" at Berkley Theatre, Mission Bay (1952). Mrs. Kirsten Pedersen entertain the Mayor of Auckland, Sir Allum and Lady Allum during the Luncheon for the Guests.