



## The thrilling history of the city

### The Sound Dues

Elsinore has a long and thrilling history - quite different from any other Danish provincial town. We can thank Erik of Pommerania for this. In the 1420's he decided that ships passing through the Sound should anchor at Elsinore. Here the captain had to go ashore to pay a tax before being allowed to proceed. At the time there were many protests against this new tax, but it was still carried through and was in force until 1857. The money from the Sound Dues went into the king's own pocket, so Elsinore's citizens did not profit directly from it. But the ships' crews seized the opportunity to take in supplies at Elsinore, and this founded the enormous Sound trade, which for several hundred years was the very backbone of Elsinore. This also means that a ship - to be precise a "cog" - one of the most common vessels of the time, is in the Elsinore municipality coat of arms.

### The Monastery and the Churches

It is still possible to find memories of the Sound Dues in the town. Most remarkable is the Castle Kronborg, which was built by King

Frederik II at the end of the 16th century. Kronborg also holds what is left of the old Middle Age fortress - Krogen, built by Erik of Pommerania to uphold the Sound dues and defend Elsinore. The stately Carmelite monastery is one of the best-preserved monastic buildings in all of Denmark. The Monastery church - now Saint Mary's Church - is also among the major sights of the town with its newly-restored frescoes. Not least the organ, which has not been altered since the 1660's when the famous organist Diderich Buxtehude sat at its keyboard. Saint Olai Church - after 1959 consecrated the cathedral of Elsinore - is the parish church for inner Elsinore.

The first small church was built here round 1200 and the rest of it can still be seen in the northern wall of the cathedral. Through the following centuries the church was rebuilt and enlarged several times. Its current edifice was created in the middle of the 16th century and today it's remarkable exterior and valuable interior are an apt expression of the bourgeois prosperity, which at the time characterised the town.

### Preserved buildings

Along Stengade one can find many beautiful and interesting buildings dating back to the late Middle Ages. A very fine example is No. 66 - The Oxe-family yard from 1470 with its crenellated gables on the old strait Gl. Færgestræde, tells much about the building style of the time. Here Chrestiern Pedersen was born in 1480. He was the first to make an authorised translation of the Bible into Danish and is therefore called 'The father of Danish language'. Gl. Færgestræde has in general kept its late Middle Age character. At the other end of the strait at Strandgade we find the old pharmacy which was founded by Frederik II and was in function up to 1970.

Despite the character of the Middle Ages, the Town Hall in Stengade was built in the 1850's, but using the stones from the 16th century town hall.



*The Carmelite monastery is the best-preserved monastic building in all of Denmark.*

This also explains why the building has been decorated with the names of Frederik II and Queen Sophie. In the yard behind Stengade No. 50, there is a beautiful old back house dating from 1630, with original carved timber frame work in the auricular style. Stengade No. 46 is characterised by the 'Three Crowns' of the Swedish coat of arms, and on the roof, the impressive coat of arms of the Swedish King Gustav III. The explanation for this is that the building was erected in 1778 as a Swedish consulate. Here the French Marechal Bernadotte - later King Karl XIV Johan of Sweden converted from the Catholic to the Evangelical church.



*No. 27, Strandgade dating back to 1577 is the oldest house in Elsinore.*

In No. 27 Strandgade we find the oldest timber frame house dating back to 1577. As in most of the other houses in this street this has also been an ale-house - Peter in the Anchor's daughter - No. 93 Strandgade is the building, which was the scene of one of Karen Blixen's fantastic tales, namely 'A kinship in Elsinore'. The other houses in this part of Strandgade present a very fine example of the affluence, which descended on Elsinore in 'the flourishing period' in the second half of the 18th century.

No. 12 Kongensgade was formerly Elsinore Grammar School, where Hans Christian Andersen ploughed through his unhappy school days from 1826-27.

### Rudolf Tegner

The sculptor Rudolf Tegner was a very controversial and

*The beautiful, old timber frame houses leave their mark on the city.*



condemned artist for the first half of our century. He was from Elsinore where his grandfather was city treasurer. Tegner himself was to leave his mark on the town. At the corner of Kronborgvej and Havnegade stands his - and in the town very popular - 'Well of the dancers'. At the parking lot on the North Pier stands Tegner's editions of 'Hamlet' and 'Ophelia' and at the end of the pier probably his internationally best known work stands - 'Heracle and the Hydra'. In the Cemetery of Elsinore can be found what is perhaps his most beautiful work of art - the sepulchral monument over his mother, Sigrid Tegner.

### The surroundings

In the areas surrounding Elsinore there are many reminders of the former greatness and power of Denmark. At Hellebæk - the oldest industrial area in Denmark - you can see Bøssemagergade (the gunsmith's street), Proberhuset (the testing house) and the still active Hammermøllen (hammer-mill) - the remnants of the gunsmithy of Kronborg. Further along the coast at the harbour of Hornbæk stands

the monument to the painter and poet Holger Drachmann, who often came to Hornbæk, where he died in 1908. Close to this monument is also one commemorating the rescue exploits of the Hornbæk fishermen, described by the poet Johannes Ewald in his ballad opera 'The Fishermen' from 1778. It is from this opera that Denmark got its royal anthem - 'Kong Christian stod ved højen mast'.

Inland, the beautiful village church is worth a visit, and only a few kilometres away at Gurre we find the ruins of the hunting castle of King Valdemar Atterdag. The location is connected to various tales about King Valdemar and his love - Tovelil - and about the wild riding of the impious king. He was well known to have uttered the following blasphemous statement: 'Let God keep his heaven, as long as I can keep my Gurre' - and for this he will forever haunt the area. Gurre has been the arena of highly dramatic events, but it was the idyllic atmosphere of the place, which made Hans Christian Andersen utter: 'I think it is the most beautiful place in Denmark'.

