



# 130

**The little  
red book**

# Foreword by the President

Dear member,

Over the next 12 months, we are celebrating 130 years of the Danish Club in Melbourne and 10 years at our current premises in Denmark House.

Reflecting on our past, from a humble beginning in 1889, the 20th of August to be exact, when a small group of Danes decided to establish the Danish Club Dannebrog, we have survived the depression, two world wars, a couple of fights for our survival and countless schisms.

A quick search of the Trove online reveals a first entry featuring “Danish Club” on the 13th September 1890.

It is the “Social Gossip” column of the Argus, reporting on Madam Melba performing for the Prince and Princess of Wales in London, Lady Clarke opening a bazaar in aid of the poor children of Collingwood and the Governor of

Tasmania, Sir Robert Hamilton and Lady Hamilton, being guests of Government House.

In this auspicious company, the Argus reports on the Danish Club “Danebrog” hosting its inaugural ball at the [Manchester Unity] Oddfellows Hall on Swanston Street, a venue used by the Club up until it found a permanent home at 533 Collins Street, and much later, Beaconsfield Parade in Middle Park.

*“About 120 ladies and gentlemen were present. The room was tastefully decorated, and a number of very pretty dresses noticeable amongst the ladies. Mr. Jorgenson (Captain of the Storm King), Mrs. Jorgenson, and Mr. Neilson (mate of the same gallant little vessel) were present, and after having*

*been addressed by the president of the club, suitably responded to by Captain Jorgenson, received quite an ovation. The catering in the hands of Mr. Shannon, was very successfully carried out, and dancing proceeded with great spirit till early morn.”*

This ‘great spirit’ has continued through-out the Club’s 130 year history, reflected in the longevity of the annual Birdshoot event, the enthusiastic celebration of our monarchs birthday and the stubborn upholding of cultural and culinary traditions.

And I believe, it is also this same great spirit that has ensured the survival of the Danish Club, where other social clubs in Melbourne have long perished.

Piet Hein [1905-1996], a Danish scientist, philosopher, mathematician, inventor, designer, author, and poet, wrote in his famous grook on Denmark and the Danes:

*“Denmark seen from a foreign land looks but like a grain of sand. Denmark as we Danes conceive it is so big you won’t believe it.”*

We Danes are blind to our relative insignificance and safe in the knowledge that when threatened, the mythological Holger Danske, a fearsome Viking warrior, will rise to protect us.

And so it is with the Danish Club Dannebrog. Less than two decades ago, the Danish Club had largely become irrelevant to the wider Danish community.

It was caught in a time capsule of a Denmark long gone, a hotchpotch cultural soup of Australian poker machines and bygone Danish food and traditions.

But as circumstances have it, a chance meeting in the club carpark, awoke Holger Danske and this year, it is 10 years since we left Beaconsfield Parade to open up Denmark House as a cultural mirror to contemporary Denmark, open for all Melbournians to visit. In fact, Denmark House has become a happy place for Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns and Australians to mingle, socialise and enjoy a unique Nordic experience in the heart of Melbourne.

Denmark House, of course, is also home to the Danish Club and a growing community of active club members, both new members who are discovering the unique friendships a social club like ours can offer, and ‘old-hand’ members reconnecting with

old friends and helping newcomers find their way in the curiosity that are Danish traditions.

So as we celebrate our 130th Anniversary, we also celebrate a decade of Denmark House and the big leap we made a decade ago in saying goodbye to the old and hello to the new.

And so, despite being but like a grain of sand, the Danish Club is now so strong, you won’t believe it.

In finishing, thank you for being a member of the Danish Club Dannebrog. This is my final year as President as I step aside to make room for new blood.

It has been an exciting journey and I am, if possible, even more passionate about our club now, than when I first

got involved 'by accident' 17 years ago. I have endeavoured to make my membership count, and now I encourage you to do the same with your membership.

Why be a member of the Danish Club if you do not use it? Use it or lose it, right? See you.



Med Venlig Hilsen

*Jan Ravnholt*

Jan Ravnholt

# Membership

To commemorate the Club's 130 years in Melbourne, we offer one year of membership for a discounted price of \$130 for a year, including:

- \$50 to spend at Denmark House
- \$30 birthday voucher
- 10% discount on your bill
- Free Danish celebration events
- First chance to book seats for public events at Denmark House.

**Monthly Presidents Lunch is on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.**

Time: 12 noon for 12:30 start.  
*Set menu including drinks for discount special price.  
RSVP preferable, but walk-ins accepted.*

**Monthly Members Dinner is on the last Wednesday of each month.**

Time: 6 pm for 7 pm sit-down.  
*Set menu including drinks for discount special price.  
RSVP preferable, but walk-ins accepted.*

For booking please call:

(03) 96 00 44 77

# History of the club

On the 20 August 1889, a Danish employee with a Melbourne-based ship chandler invited 25 Danes to discuss his proposal to form a Danish association - a club that could be a means of mental and cultural enrichment for Danish settlers in Melbourne.

The Danish Club Dannebrog - named after the Danish flag - was born, complete with a constitution, president and vice president. Members were invited to a lecture evening where the topics were chemistry and a North Pole expedition. Not long after, the Club began

hosting social nights and became a gathering place for Danish expats to sing Danish songs, dance and socialise with other members.

## What's in a name?

When the Danish Club was born it was named after the

Danish flag, Dannebrog, meaning 'cloths of the Danes'. In 2019, Dannebrog is celebrating a special anniversary: the legend of the Danish flag is 800 years old.

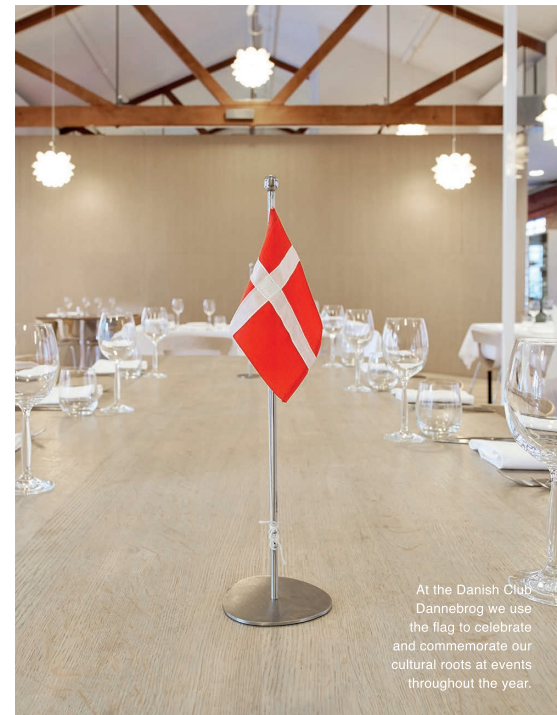
First mentioned by historians in the early 16th century, legend has it that Dannebrog fell from the sky while the Danish King Valdemar Sejr's army was on the defensive during a crusade in Estonia.

As the flag descended from the sky, luck turned and Sejr's army won the battle which took place on 15 June 1219. While the battle is well-documented, the story of the flag falling out of the sky isn't but that hasn't stopped the legend from living on in Denmark.

Today the use of the Danish flag is still very widespread in Denmark when celebrating major life events like birthdays and anniversaries, with flags flying from traditional white flagpoles in picturesque suburbs of Denmark. It's even hung on Christmas trees when decorating for Christmas!

There are no laws on the use of the Danish flag in Denmark - only guidelines. Danes use the flag for many occasions in life and - like many other countries - in death when it's flown half-mast at funerals to symbolise mourning.

Dannebrog is used and interpreted in a multitude of ways throughout Denmark (and the rest of the world), making it a strong uniting symbol for many.



At the Danish Club Dannebrog we use the flag to celebrate and commemorate our cultural roots at events throughout the year.



# Annual Danish Events

# Queen's Birthday

16 April marks the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark and every year members are invited to lunch at Denmark House to celebrate the Danish monarch and catch up with other club members.

Queen Margrethe is also celebrating a great milestone as she turns 80 in 2020. In 1953 she became heiress to the throne, when the constitution was amended to allow women to inherit the throne and so has been held in high esteem amongst the Danes for many years now.

We look forward to celebrating this special achievement in 2020 and since this lunch event is always

well-visited with Denmark House at full capacity, we encourage you to book on phone 96004477 or via our website booking site.

The Queen's Birthday Lunch is a free event for members of the Danish Club Dannebrog with plenty of snaps and other drinks available on consumption.



# Morten's night

Every year duck (or goose), potatoes and gravy are served for dinner in Danish households in celebration of the legend of Saint Martin before the Feast of Saint Martin on 11 November. To commemorate this Danish tradition Denmark House serves duck on the dinner menu all through November.

In Danish folklore Martin of Tours (Morten Bisp) was a holy man who cured the sick and helped the poor. He lived a pious life as a monk in Tours where the citizens wanted to elect him bishop. Martin wasn't interested and to avoid becoming bishop he hid among the geese. But the geese cackled, revealing Martin's hiding spot and he was forcibly appointed bishop of Tours. To get one up on the geese, Martin

of Tours made all households kill and eat at least one goose every year on the day he was found among the geese. He died in France in November 397 and was buried in Tours on 11 November.

Anyone with a taste for duck and Danish culture is invited to partake in Denmark House's take on this age-old Danish tradition to celebrate the Feast of Saint Martin.



# The Annual Birdshoot

The Birdshoot event at the Danish Club Dannebrog goes back almost as long as the Club's history - just shy of ten years.

This European tradition travelled with members of the Danish Club to Melbourne and takes place the last Saturday of February.

Members of the Danish Club dress up in shirt and collar (yes, there's a dress code), meet for breakfast at Denmark House

and travel to a nearby shooting range. Before the shooting commences, members sing the Danish national anthem. The tradition is believed to have its roots in France from where it spread throughout Europe. Popinjay, papingo or pole archery is a traditional equipment or rifles.

shooting sport where artificial birds are knocked off their perches, either archery

In Melbourne members of the Danish Club Dannebrog use rifles as was customary at bird shooting events in Denmark in the 1700 and 1800s. The event goes on all day and once the Bird King or Bird Queen are crowned, the members go back to Denmark House for some well-deserved lunch, beer, snaps and singing.

Denmark House hosts a dinner in honour of the new Bird King or Bird Queen - usually about a month or two after the event - with all members invited to join in the celebrations of this year's King or Queen.



## Skål

Our friendly staff are here to ensure you experience hygge at Denmark House. Copenhagen Flights in the Akvavit Bar are very popular and great to share with friends and members.

We hope to see you soon





