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# **My Observations of Danish Innovation in Doing Science, Learning New Things, and Living an Interesting Life**

by Eugene S. Takle

I have had the very good fortune to interact with a number of Danish scientists and scholars over my career, and much of the scientific success I have enjoyed is directly related to these interactions. My career has taken me to Denmark several times for a variety of personal as well as professional reasons. Although my contacts have been, in some cases, somewhat episodic and mostly professionally driven, it has been my experience that once strong connections with Danish people are made they persist and do not diminish in spite of the lack of continuous tending.

In the following, I will examine three areas of Danish innovation that have had an influence on my life. First, the Danish way of "doing science." This includes three separate areas of physical science that I have toured over my career: solid state physics, boundary-layer meteorology and climate science. Second, the Danish way of "learning new things," which refers to an area of research I was led to by a Danish scholar that is far removed from the physical sciences. It touches on the fundamentals of pedagogy, which I prefer to call the science of learning new things. Third, the Danish way of "living an interesting life." Throughout many of my scientific collaborations my family and I had numerous opportunities to spend a lot of time with Danish people in their homes and work environments. All in all, I conclude that these interactions have helped me and my family to see first-hand the Danish way of living an interesting life.

## **The Danish Way of Doing Science**

My earliest connection with Danish science came about during the break between my junior and senior years at Luther College, when I spent a summer at the Ames Laboratory, a U.S. Department of Energy laboratory, on the Iowa State University (ISU) campus. In the summer of 1965 I participated in a research program for undergraduates. I was a physics major at Luther, and my advisor helped me secure a summer work experience with a research group studying the properties of very

high purity metals at extremely low temperatures. My faculty mentor during that summer at Ames Laboratory was Dr. Allan R. Mackintosh. According to Wikipedia,

Allan Roy Mackintosh (born January 22, 1936 and died December 20, 1995) was a prominent English-born Danish physicist and a leading authority on magnetism and neutron scattering, especially in the rare-earth metals. Mackintosh was known for his key role in stimulating solid-state physics research in Denmark and for his advocacy of international collaboration. Many of his former students now occupy leading academic and industrial posts in a variety of countries. As director of the Danish Atomic Energy Research Establishment from 1971 to 1976 he was a major force in Danish science policy and a prolific contributor to the public debate about nuclear power.\*

What Wikipedia did not say is that Allen Mackintosh even debated Jane Fonda on the issue of nuclear power on Danish television.

My summer job in Dr. Mackintosh's research lab was to create small samples—about the size of a dime—of very high purity metals for use in neutron scattering experiments. I used x-ray diffraction to line up the atoms in these metals so that when Dr. Mackintosh's postdoctoral students bombarded them with neutrons, complicated symmetrical patterns would be created on photographic plates. Analyses of these photographs provided deep insight into the structures of the orderly array of atoms in these very high purity metals.

This was my first connection with international science. As an undergraduate I had, of course, become familiar with the Bohr theory of the atom and the phenomenal advances in theoretical physics that had been put forward by the renowned Danish physicist, Niels Bohr, and his collaborators in the early twentieth century in Copenhagen. But this knowledge all came from books and had no human face for a farm boy from southwest Minnesota with three years of college in a quiet town in northeast Iowa. Although Dr. Mackintosh was traveling extensively during my summer at Iowa State, I interacted with him enough to become impressed with the quiet and gentle demeanor of a man who was connected with the Danish physics establishment

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\* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan\\_Mackintosh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Mackintosh)

that had profoundly changed the world of physics and eventually the world as a whole.

It was later in my graduate school days in physics at Iowa State that I filled in some of the pieces of how Niels Bohr and Copenhagen University became the hotbed of innovation in physics in the early twentieth century. Physicists from all over Europe converged on Copenhagen to exchange ideas. Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger showed that Englishman Sir Isaac Newton's Second Law of Motion, which had been the cornerstone of classical physics for 235 years, did not fully describe the motions of sub-atomic particles. To replace it, Schrödinger offered a partial differential equation that describes how the quantum state of a physical system changes with time. Schrödinger's work was based on the 1924 PhD thesis of the French physicist Louis de Broglie who postulated the wave nature of electrons and suggested that all matter has wave-like properties, for which he won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1929.

The uncertainty principle put forward by German physicist Werner Heisenberg jolted the physics community into the realization that you could never know with certainty the simultaneous position and velocity of a particle. Heisenberg was a mentee and longtime friend of Niels Bohr. Their famous discussions during private walks in the woods in 1941 were later memorialized in the play *Copenhagen*, written by Michael Frayn in 1998. At that time, Heisenberg was researching atomic technology as head of the German nuclear reactor program, which was of course under the watchful eye of the Nazis. The particular reason for Heisenberg's visit to his long time mentor raised much speculation about what either of them knew about and what they may have discussed about nuclear bombs.

A participant in those fevered discussions over fundamental physics in Copenhagen in the 1920s was a Hungarian physicist by the name of Eugene Wigner, who received the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1963. Being born in 1902 he was a very young participant in the heated debates of the early 1920s in Copenhagen. Dr. Wigner visited Iowa State University in the late 1960s and gave a seminar, which I attended. Wigner gave us a first hand account of how every visitor who passed through the Copenhagen school, as it was called, came with different ideas that led to heated debates and strong differences of opinion. In the midst of all of these conflicting opinions and controversial discussions, when the dust had all settled, there was one

unifying outcome, according to Dr. Wigner: almost every physicist left Copenhagen with a Danish wife!

Now I was trained as a physicist, and if you have ever observed a group of physicists in either a social or scientific setting you will know what I mean when I say that you have experienced some kind of alternative universe (in a good way, that is, if you have a relaxed perspective of social graces). They think differently and react in sometimes highly unconventional ways. Like the science they study, physicists have a fundamental level of unpredictability. The fact that they all left Copenhagen with Danish wives, to me, can only be explained by "innovation the Danish way!" I will let your imagination fill in the details.

My personal connection with Danish science after my graduate school days was not through quantum mechanics and the foundations of physics but on the more practical side. As a graduate student I studied the electronic properties of the solids, rather than high-energy or nuclear physics. Upon graduation from the ISU physics department in 1971, I made an abrupt change of research focus to the physics of the atmosphere. This was driven primarily by curiosity about the atmosphere, an interest in teaching, and the fact that two other physics graduate students and I had done some tornado research while working on our physics projects. I took a position teaching meteorology at ISU, despite the fact I had no training in this area. This would never happen today, given the rigid hiring requirements and nation-wide searches that are an obligation for filling faculty positions. But this was 1971, I was interested in the open position, and the university was very desperate to fill the position with someone who was willing to become an expert in what was called boundary layer meteorology (the lowest mile of the atmosphere).

It was a painful start, having to teach new two to four courses per quarter (we were on the quarter system at that time). One of the courses that needed to be taught was a course in boundary layer meteorology, the area I was supposed to be an expert in. It was to be an advanced graduate course, and, having no experience, my first reaction was to panic. Fortunately, I knew Jim Iversen, who was a professor in the aerospace engineering department at ISU. Jim had served as co-advisor with my meteorology colleague, Doug Yarger, for Iowa State's first PhD student in meteorology. Jim had done research on Martian dust storms, trying to understand the processes leading

to the new observations that had been made of these unusual events on the surface of Mars. So my second encounter with a Danish, or should we say Danish-American, scientist was Jim Iversen who not only taught me the fundamentals of environmental boundary layers but also helped me teach this class that I had been assigned. I am forever indebted to Jim for mentoring me in those early days and for rescuing me from potential disaster in teaching a course where I had no background but was supposed to be an expert.

Unbeknownst to me at that time, a strong Danish community of scientists already had made significant advances in boundary layer meteorology, particularly on the measurement side. This was not personalized to me until 1984 during a sabbatical year at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. I had been awarded a faculty fellowship from the National Research Council to help with an environmental study at Vandenberg Air Force Base, where plans were being laid for a second U.S. space shuttle launch site. While in Monterey, I met Søren Larsen, the third Danish scientist in my life, who had been brought from Denmark's Risø National Laboratory to the Naval Postgraduate School to work on the space shuttle problem. Our task was to evaluate what would happen to the approximately 500,000 pounds of nitric acid that forms the beautiful white cloud at the ground when a space shuttle is launched. Where would this cloud go? At Kennedy Space Center this cloud drifts out over the Atlantic and eventually dilutes in the ocean. Over southern California the cloud would drift over a state detention facility and possibly even over President Reagan's sprawling ranch. Before our study was complete, however, the Air Force mothballed the whole project and a second Space Shuttle launch site was never built.

While in Monterey, our family became very close friends with Søren and his wife Bodil and their children Axel and Lena who were very close in age to our elementary school daughter Tami and son Bryn. Søren was on leave from his position in the Wind Energy and Meteorology Division of Risø National Laboratory, now a laboratory having a close affiliation with the Danish Technical University. Søren and I worked together at the Postgraduate School, where I gained significant insight from him on wind and turbulence near the ground, areas where Risø had a long and prestigious history of applications to practical problems. Our families spent many weekends together visiting Yosemite National Park, Disneyland, the Pinnacles and the

tide pools of the Monterey Peninsula. I will revisit some of our family stories later under the topic of "living an interesting life." We parted company with the Larsens in January of 1985, when we came back to Iowa and they returned to Denmark. Before leaving, Bodil mentioned that they had close friends in Copenhagen who were looking for an opportunity for their daughter to spend a year in the United States. This eventually led to their family friend, Dorthe Dahlgaard, coming to live with us and help with child care of our youngest daughter, Erika.

Having Dorthe in our family for an academic year was for us a fantastic experience and got us thinking about such international opportunities for our own children. One thing led to another and eventually Tami, our oldest daughter, made plans to spend her junior year of high school with her friend Lena Larson in suburban Copenhagen. Miriam and I decided to accompany her to Denmark and get her started in her school program. In connection with this, Søren graciously offered me a month-long visiting position at Risø to allow me to learn more about their wind and turbulence research. This was a very productive time that enabled me to interact with a number of scientists at Risø, and also allowed me to help Tami make the transition to her new home away from home. Not knowing any Danish when she arrived to start classes in Denmark, Tami depended on Lena to translate "everything she needed to know" for her first several weeks. She eventually did learn Danish, of course, and years later in her Norwegian class at Luther College, Tami's instructor noted with amusement that Tami was the only student she had ever had that spoke Norwegian with a Danish accent.

My brief stay in Denmark with Tami was in September of 1988, which marked the beginning of another important research milestone for me. I distinctly remember being in the library at Risø reading the latest edition of the international journal *Science*. A few months earlier, James Hansen, an Iowan from Denison and director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies at Columbia University, had testified before the U.S. Congress warning that climate change caused by increases of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases was emerging as a major global environmental problem. It was immediately clear to me that this would become a major global issue for decades to come and that I needed to learn more about it.

Returning to Iowa I was able to use the newfound insight in boundary layer meteorology acquired at Risø to study agricultural shelterbelts. At the same time I began a series of discussions with my ISU meteorology colleagues on global environmental change, inspired by the realization of impending global problems that became apparent to me while in the Risø library. Over the next few years we developed a climate change research program based on the use of regional climate models. One of our first major initiatives was to host a workshop in 1994 at ISU to bring together the leading international researchers that were using regional climate models.

Scanning the global literature, we again found that Danish scientists were among international leaders in this area. One of the key scientists at this inaugural meeting was Jens Hesselbjerg Christensen of the Danish Meteorological Institute in Copenhagen, and for me Danish scientist number four. The collaboration with Jens and his Danish colleague Ole Bøssing Christensen (Danish scientist number five) has led to numerous exchange visits and several joint research papers on climate change over the last 20 years. We compared results of our regional climate model with their model on topics ranging from rainfall conditions during the drought of 1988 and the floods of 1993, to the effect of climate change on tile drainage in Iowa, to procedures for taking climate change into account for building better roads in Iowa and Mississippi.

### **The Danish Way of Learning New Things**

I should point out that researchers are paid to learn new things. That is what we do for a living—learn new things. So essentially we are professional learners. We are inherently interested in how to better do our jobs—that is, to become better learners. Therefore, anyone who comes up with a better way to learn new things will capture the attention of a professional learner, that is, a researcher.

In the early 1990s, as an outgrowth of the my interest in global climate change, I launched a new course at Iowa State called “Global Change,” which included not only climate change, but also ozone depletion, global population growth, global water issues, air pollution, deforestation, etc.—problems that were rooted in global growth in human population and increased consumption of goods



that, together, were leading to excessive use of energy and emissions of carbon to the atmosphere.

In about 1992 I began working with a visionary former high school teacher, Mike Taber, who had come back to ISU for a PhD, and a young computer expert, Daryl Herzmann, who had just gotten his BS in meteorology, to transform the global change course into a form to be delivered on what we now know as the Internet. This became ISU's first online course. Our first task in delivering it online was teaching students how to use email.

The online version of the course had just been launched when I received a visitor in my office from Denmark, by the name of Elsebeth Sorensen. She was the wife of a renowned Danish geneticist who was being recruited to come to ISU for a special faculty position in the Department of Animal Science. Administrators in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences were hoping they could convince his wife that Ames, Iowa was a good professional fit for her as well. She was a specialist in humanistic informatics and was in the late stages of completing her PhD at Aalborg University. Although I did not know this at the time, Aalborg University was established on the basis that learning is grounded in human interaction. Students there work in teams, rather than as individuals, and emphasize problem solving rather than lectures and exams.

Elsebeth's work centered on the learning process and the fundamental role of human interaction in learning. Her work was reaching maturity at the time this fundamentally new mode of human interaction—online communication—was beginning to revolutionize the process by which humans learn new things. I had very little experience with theories of learning, or pedagogy, because I was so immersed in the emergence of the whole issue of global climate change. We politely discussed pedagogical issues during her visit and she left.

Purely by chance we crossed paths again in San Francisco about a year later at a conference on educational methods. I was giving a talk describing our new course as one of the last talks of the day on the last day of the conference. We spoke briefly before she headed off to a conference excursion and I to fly home, but we agreed to pick up the thread of our conversation over email. Over the next several months we exchanged emails and documents on the fundamentals of learning

as a social activity. Of course, she was all the time watching what we were doing online with the global change course.

What attracted her to this course was our development on an online discussion, which was wholly inspired by Mike, the former teacher who was now my graduate student and was implemented by Daryl, my guru computer expert. At that time, websites simply posted information; there were no blogs or chat rooms or any way the reader could interact with the information. Daryl created a way that the reader could post a comment on the course material. In itself this was not new, but to our knowledge we were the first to use it as part of the learning environment. Elsebeth saw this as a novel way of inserting human interactions—a social element—to a static and one-way learning environment of the internet.

Elsebeth had the foresight to see that this new communication medium offered an enormous potential for learning. But there are major differences between face-to-face dialogue and online dialog. Face-to-face dialogue demands an immediate response, but online dialog allows an hour or a day for an expected response. The asynchronous nature of this new type of interaction allows time for reflection, which is generally considered to be an essential ingredient of deep learning. The fundamental question then is how to use this opportunity—and expectation—for reflection to enhance the learning process for online dialog in a university course.

We (or at least I) thought that “if you build it they will come,” a phrase made popular by the contemporary Iowa-based movie *Field of Dreams*, would apply to our new learning platform. We thought that students would see this pedagogical innovation and flock to the dialog to explore this new form of learning. Originally nothing was password-protected so everything posted by students was available to the casual browser of the Internet. We viewed this as offering a new dimension to learning, because global change experts from anywhere on the globe could participate in our global change course. In fact, with some prompting we did have a citizen from Africa and an atmospheric chemist from the University of Illinois provide authoritative online responses to student questions that I was unable to answer.

But students did not flock to this new online platform for learning. They did what was required to get the grade they wanted, and no more. The dialog was not required, so very few students participated. Determined to press forward, we instituted a number of requirements

that forced students to use the Internet dialog. Elsebeth did not regard this development as being allowable as true collaborative learning. Essentially, according to her, learning must emerge from curiosity and reflection, rather than from a course requirement, if the ultimate goal is deep learning. Elsebeth relented, however, and the dialog was fully implemented, with required discussion about global change topics and was operated in this manner for about four years. The question then came down to (as it always does with new pedagogies) how do you quantify and confirm that the method does in fact increase learning. This is of course an age-old problem, which has created many imperfect solutions and none that are perfect.

Elsebeth, having lectured widely throughout Europe on the theory of learning, suggested we employ the theory of language games to test the hypothesis that learning had taken place in this form of online dialog. According to this analysis, threads in the dialog are analyzed and diagrammed to evaluate whether or not the dialog on a given topic actually converged.

The idea is this: If you were to keep track of an hour-long conversation among three casual acquaintances over coffee you likely would find that factual information had been exchanged but that very little in the way of new concepts—that is, new to all three—had emerged from the conversation. Elsebeth, using the theory of language games, argued that learning can only take place if questions are asked, alternative interpretations are offered, more facts are brought to light, and the conversation converges and produces a new idea, thought or result that previously was unknown to any of the participants. She suggested that by mapping the threads of student discussion from the recorded online dialog we could actually map out the frequency of occurrence of “dialog convergence” and the emergence of a new concept as a result of the structured online dialog.

I put an undergraduate to work analyzing over a thousand online comments from students that took the course in different years where different requirements were imposed. When we applied standard statistical analysis to the results we found that, indeed, the frequency of convergence was enhanced under this new structure. The conclusion then, based on the theory of language games, was that the method had, in fact, enhanced learning.

Elsebeth wrote a paper on this achievement, which she submitted to the *EDMEDIA-2001: World Conference on Educational Multimedia*,

*Hypermedia & Telecommunications* that was held in Tampere, Finland. This paper was selected through peer review by the International Program Committee and final blind review by the Conference Program Chairs from over 1,100 papers submitted from 60 countries to receive the ED-MEDIA 2001 Best Paper Award.

In my view, Elsebeth was a true visionary to see the link between theories of collaborative online learning and implementation in an actual course and evaluation by use of the theory of language games. To me as a researcher, it revealed Innovation – the Danish Way in learning new things. Although she is not a scientist, I consider her as my Danish Scholar number six.

### **The Danish Way of Living an Interesting Life**

Many of my interesting life experiences can be traced to interactions with Danish people from an early age. I grew up on a farm in southwest Minnesota, about 10 miles from the banks of Plum Creek where the Ingalls (Laura Ingalls Wilder being the author of the *Little House on the Prairie* books) dug a hole in the creek bank for their sod house. The farm I grew up on was only the square root of two miles from the land my great grandfather took off the hands of President Grover Cleveland on May 14, 1888, according to the homestead land patent. The landscape was a treeless prairie that definitely was not suited to the physically weak or emotionally fragile. In my day it was populated by descendants of immigrant Swedes, Danes, and a few Germans, but mostly Norwegians—my great-grandparents came from Voss, near Bergen. There were no Jewish people within 90 miles, the nearest being in Mankato, nor African Americans, the closest probably 150 miles away in Minneapolis. An inter-racial marriage was defined as a Norwegian Lutheran marrying a German Lutheran. Marrying Danes and Swedes was marginally okay for a Norwegian. Although not geographically close, it was culturally right next door to Lake Wobegon, whose most notable fugitive, Garrison Keillor, as you may know, on a trip to Denmark, succumbed to the same fate as the European physicists of 60 or so years earlier of acquiring a Danish wife.

The nearest neighbor to our farm was Lowrie Anderson, a Dane who was the funniest, most entertaining man I knew in my early years. Of course you must understand that the standard for comparison

were the predominantly Norwegian Lutheran farmers and their families living within a six-mile radius around St. Olaf Lutheran church. Lowrie seemed to never have a stressful moment in his life and stayed on the farm well into his 80s. My brother Jay farmed his land for about 20 years after he quit working the farm. Jay became his go-to person for help since he had no other family in the area. Upon leaving the farm, Lowrie built a home on the east side of Westbrook, Minnesota, some six miles away, where he lived comfortably and happily into his mid-90s. However, one winter while shoveling snow off his neighbor's roof he fell off and broke his arm. He got it set at the local hospital but refused the recommended physical therapy. He did agree to their suggestion that he continue playing his accordion, in lieu of the usual treatment. At that point he decided that winter was becoming a bit of a burden, so he asked Jay to help move his favorite chair and a few other belonging to the Good Samaritan Senior Citizens Home on the south side of town. This was a very nice facility for a town of 900 that could support two funeral homes but only one grocery store. In very good health and still having a quick wit, Lowrie quickly adopted the role of social chairman for the center and spread a lot of good cheer among the residents. He volunteered time at the little Westbrook historical museum, a small room in the refurbished depot less than three blocks away from the senior citizens home. Life was good, the snow was shoveled by someone else, and he sailed past his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. But the bills for his stay at the Home were a concern for him, and called Jay to come get him and his chair. He wanted to move back home, which he did. After a year or so, he was back on the south side of town, where he lived until a few weeks short of his 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

The Danish language, which I regret to say I have not mastered, offers an interesting set of challenges, to my way of thinking, more on the spoken side than for reading. It is a pleasure to hear Danish spoken, even when the meaning might not be clear. But to speak certain words is, for me, a ticket to certain failure.

During my stay at Risø, I frequently communicated the name of the town I was living near. I listened carefully as others pronounced it and settled on pronouncing it RosKILDE. So, some time later, proudly responding to a fellow train traveler on the way to Aalborg I said I was staying at RosKILDE. He looked puzzled and then brightened, "Oh, you mean ROS-kilde." I pondered, ruminated, reassessed and

vowed to never make that mistake again. On the way back a couple of days later I was asked where I was going, to which I responded ROSKILDE. The conductor was puzzled and then smiled "Yes, of course, Ros-KILDE." To this day it remains a mystery to me where I spent my time while working at Risø.

But pronouncing Roskilde, by whichever flavor, pales by comparison with the name of the Copenhagen suburb where the Larsens live and where our daughter Tami spent her junior year of high school. You will note that I have carefully stated that the Larsens lived in a suburb of Copenhagen. But I did not say which one. This city, spelled R-Ø-D-O-V-R-E. Say it for me please. Again, and louder. I think if I could ever get my tongue wrapped around my Adam's apple I might be able to come close. Given my lack of language skill, I could never get directions to this destination from a Danish citizen.

Danes are known and envied for their frugality in consumption of energy and resources, and it seems this frugality extends even to a recycling of some words in the Danish language. To my admittedly untrained ear, if a Danish friend said that "VEN was enjoyable" I am not sure if he had just had a glass of wine (*vin*), or had visited an island in the Øresund (*Hven*), or just returned from Vienna in Austria (*Wien*). But VEN is such a nice crisp word that doesn't waste syllables or letters. And if I get it wrong in spelling, well, I can just fall back on Mark Twain who claimed to have little respect for anyone who only knew one way to spell a word.

We did visit Hven (the island) in one of our trips to Denmark when we stayed with the Larsens. Bodil's father was a marine biologist and had purchased land on Hven for a summerhouse where he could pursue his passion for nature even when relaxing with his family. We, of course, visited the site where Tycho Brahe in the sixteenth century built one of Europe's first major scientific institutions. Søren always kept a good supply of akvavit in the summerhouse as well as in the Larsen home in the Copenhagen suburb of – say it for me -Rødovre. Of course, Norwegians also drink akvavit, but growing up as I did in suburban Lake Wobegon, such drink of the devil would never be allowed in social gatherings. Our Danish friends have no such inhibitions, so I came to enjoy akvavit through these associations. My Danish science colleagues like their Tuborg too, of course. Søren in fact showed me in his office that, whether by an innovation of Danish office furniture design or discovery by a thirsty Danish scientist, it is

true that a case of beer fits exactly in the bottom drawer of a Danish filing cabinet. We celebrated this little-known fact of science at 4 p.m. every Thursday afternoon in Søren's office.

The element I have most come to admire about Danish people is their knowledge of, appreciation for, and contentment with their place in history. While sitting on the grassy slope alongside Kronborg castle in Helsingør during a performance of Hamlet by a British acting troupe, I felt far removed from the twenty-first century. With nearly six centuries of shelter for all manner of the Danish people this structure is symbolic of the unity of the past and the present in Denmark.

It also was fascinating to me to stroll through the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen and the Roskilde Cathedral with Bodil Larsen and listen to her talk in vivid detail about Danish history and culture, including the elegance, as well as the scoundrels, of the Danish royalty over many centuries. They seemed so much alive and contemporary. It was as if these kings, queens, and members of the royal court emerged nightly from their crypts in the cathedral to mingle with passersby, to exchange greetings, catch up on the news of the day, to extol the virtues of their eras, or defend their nefarious acts against historical interpretation. It seems to me that the mantle of the past has been carefully handed over to the current generation with unspoken obligations for future generations. It is as if this compression of time somehow brings orderliness and contentment to one's place in Danish history. Perhaps I am wrong, but let me admire this image nonetheless, because for me it is the ultimate in innovation – the Danish Way.