

## 020302 Malmö C

Two weekends ago, Micah and I decided to visit Malmö, Sweden for an afternoon. Malmö is located 16 km across the narrow sea from Copenhagen. The two cities are linked by the Oresund bridge which was completed in the summer of 1999, thus connecting Sweden with the rest of Continental Europe. From Sweden, the bridge runs to a four km long artificial island off the Danish coast from where a tunnel carries traffic and trains across to the mainland. The bridge itself has two levels, the upper for a four lane highway and the lower for two sets of train tracks. The actual building of the bridge was debated for 40 years until something was actually done about it. According to local lore, the Swedish protestors to the projects held rallies in Malmö, proclaiming "make love not bridges". The Swedes are a odd lot. Anyway, the bridge is proclaimed as Sweden's most significant construction achievement of the 20th century and Volvos and trucks loaded with Ikea furniture have been cruising across it ever since.

Malmö used to belong to Denmark until 1658 when the Danes were forced to give it along with several other towns to Sweden. The city itself is attractive with colorful, 3 story buildings made of wood and brick lining the city streets. There are also numerous parks and squares making it a really nice little city. Friends who have explored more of the Swedish coast have told us that the towns to the south of Malmö are even nicer and worth checking out during the summer.

Micah and I took the train from Lyngby and we decided to bring our bikes along so that we could also check out the area around Malmö. Being the silly Americans, we thought that we could just clip our Klipkort (clip tickets for the train) for the journey. (The same train does take klipkorts for travel in Denmark, but not to leave the country.) Fortunately we asked a conductor who told us that not only did we have to buy much more expensive tickets, but also much more expensive tickets for our bikes. This is the same train that we were busted on back in September, so at least we asked before we got on the train this time.

We spent the afternoon wandering around the attractive city and checking out the local museums. We have come to the conclusion that to be called a museum in Sweden, all that you need is a coffee shop and a shop selling museum-like things. Actual exhibits are not a necessity. Did I mention that the Swedes are an odd lot? Irregardless, it was a beautiful day and it was an easy trip to make to visit another country.

Speaking of Sweden, there is a chocolate bar produced there under the name Marabou. Chocolate connoisseurs in both Germany and Portland, ME have determined in independent studies that the quality of the chocolate is outstanding. The bars are in .2kg size (BIG) and are great for stocking up for long afternoons spent in the library.

## Snow

Before I arrived in Denmark, I was under the mistaken impression that all of Scandinavia was blanketed with white for the winter. Denmark receives little snow and it mostly rains during the early months of the year. That being said, the past two weeks have brought several days of snowstorms to Denmark. These were the same gales that plagued most of Northern Europe and Britain and covered the entire country of mainland Denmark with snow (which is easy to do since Denmark is just a little smaller than Pennsylvania). The storms were not bad by Boston standards, but would have shut down St. Louis for the day due to the wind and ice.

I have not seen evidence of the big dump trucks that cities in the US use to plow the streets. Nor are there the numerous plows on pickup trucks, since pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles are rare in Denmark (the only ones that I have seen are Land Rovers) and you aren't going to get far if you strap a plow onto a Mini. Instead, the complex that I live in has a little vehicles with a rotating sweeper on the front. The driver just drives along, sweeping up the snow and pushing it to the side. These same sweepers clear the bike paths just as diligently as they clean the roads and so I never really had much trouble on my bike. I think that people are responsible for sweeping the length of sidewalk outside of their house.

The snow was not very deep and only lasted for a few days. But the white covering was most welcome to brighten up the days which are already much longer.

## Ventilation

The Danes are all about making sure that they get fresh air into their homes or offices. Every morning, I wake up to see my neighbor's windows open and I have been encouraged by Tove to open my own for several minutes each day. In the classroom, the windows are opened during the breaks to bring in the cool air which is actually most welcome. Some professors even prefer to teach with the windows open. You just have to dress warmly for those classes.

## You cant beat the Danes

Somehow I managed to break my HP calculator two weeks ago which was quite a loss. I priced out buying a new one here, but it would be \$100 more than if I bought it in the US. Then I got even smarter and bought one off of Ebay and had it sent here. Smart, but not really that smart. The Danish post office saw the customs declaration and opened the package. Not only did they put a tax on the new calculator, but also the postage that I paid and then charged me for opening my box! I wound up paying over \$50 in taxes showing that you cant beat the Danish tax man. The stupid thing is that I knew better than to send the package directly, but I forgot in the haste to get a new calculator here.

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 **Previous** | **Next**  | **Return to Main Page**

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