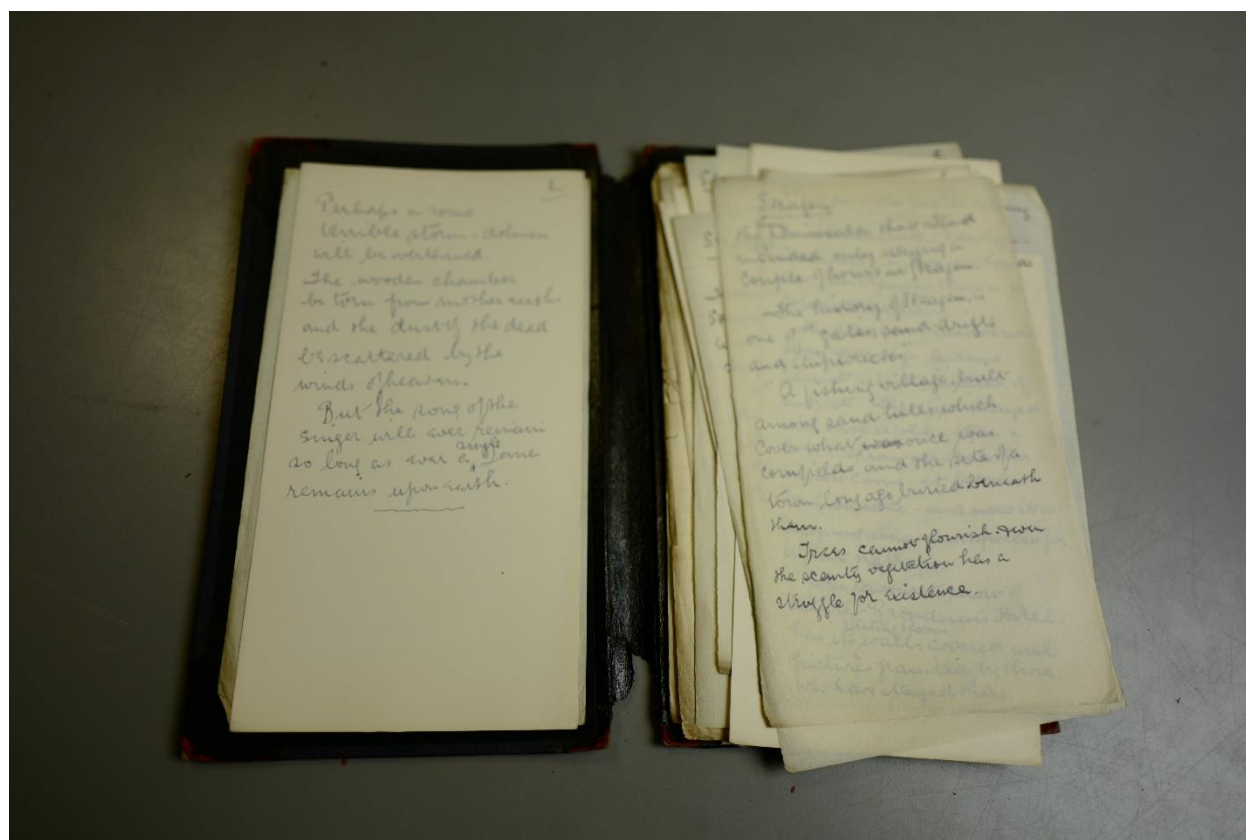


Jutland Jottings, 1911

Charles B. Howdill



Copenhagen: Weyesgade eBooks, 2020



Howdill's own hand-drawn map of Jutland

Jutland should be particularly interesting for Yorkshire folk.

It was the home of their forefathers.

One of the three tribes which invaded England in the fifth century, the Jutes

Unquestionably came from Jutland.

Pagans though they were, they had made such progress in civilization and the useful arts, that they could build, rig out, provision and navigate vessels of considerable size. They were conversant with the manipulation of iron, wood, clay. They had progressed beyond the stage of hunting, husbandry and herdsmen.

Restless, and with ideas beyond the boundaries of the peninsula they occupied, they ventured into the unknown.

Never subject to Rome - nor in direct Communication with her subjects - they remained pagans for five centuries after the Roman world had accepted Christianity.

The Jutes in their original home clung to paganism for centuries longer than their descendants in England.

A Yorkshireman is thus entitled to expect, in this country of his forefathers to come across some of the traits and characteristic energy found in his own broad shire.





The Dutch and the Danes: A Comparison

Countries: Flat

People: Tubby

Oppressed by greater nations

Fight for freedom

Sea kings

Architecture

Art

From whom descended

Dutch

Danes

Cooking

Reclamation of land. Dutch

From water

From moorland Danes

Denmark

“Dress like a Frenchman,
And you’ll freeze as a Dane”

The homely figures of the Danish peasant woman are not improved by their clothing. From the age of fifty until she is gathered to her fathers, she knits on the average one woolen skirt a year and wears it over those she has already; till in course of time she becomes as broad as long; thus defying cold, damp, rheumatism.



Warewolf

One of the earliest of uncanny animals according to Scandinavian superstition was the werewolf. It is said to be the offspring of a woman, who by some rite, escaped the painful penalties of motherhood. The sons were werewolves, and the daughters, nightmares. By day, human in form, but with meeting and beetling eyebrows, at night a three legged dog. She can be released from his thralldom and power of the evil, if suspected and accused. The spell is then broken.

A man who had unfortunately been a werewolf from childhood, was driving home late at night with his newly made wife. The time had arrived when the evil was to assert its power. Throwing the reins to his wife, he alighted and made off with his parting injunction:

“In case of an attack from anything, defend yourself with your apron.”

Soon the frightened bride was attacked by a werewolf, which snatched away the apron with which she defended herself. The husband on his return has still a piece of her apron in his teeth.

“Lord! My husband, thou are a werewolf!”

“Thanks mother, I am now released.”

Never again was he affected.

Nightmare

These supernatural beings are now aware of their duality.

A peasant was betrothed to a nightmare, entirely ignorant of her evil power. Every night she visited her swain, coming through a small hole in the window frost. Having noticed the method of entrance, one night he plugged the hole; she was compelled to stay & assumed human form.

They married, had many children, lived happily for years. One night her husband remembered the plugged casement. He asked his wife if she knew how she had entered. No! He told her, took the plug out, she looked through the hole, whilst standing, shrunk, slid through the hold and vanished for ever.



Odense and Olaf Bager

Olaf Bager was a rich merchant, and withal noble and generous. Whenever King Frederic II visited Odense, he dined with Bager. At one of these banquets it was particularly impressed with a compote of apricots. "What a bouquet they have," said the delighted king. "Wait till the dessert, your majesty, I will give you some incense, which will smell far sweeter". At the close, a censer was brought in, charged with perfumed cedar chips, crowned with legal documents. The king was politely requested by Bager to light the pile. Nothing loath, the King acceded & soon saw his own bonds for large amounts, which he never could have honoured, reduced to ashes.

As time passed Olaf Bager has serious losses and expenses with his numerous family. He was compelled to apply to his children for assistance. Sorry and sick at heart, Olaf took a large coffer and made a pilgrimage to his friends, and soon returned with a heavy coffer, padlocked & barred. He promised to give the contents to the child who treats him best. As crows to carrion, so the ungrateful children now crowd to him. So the wily old Bager ended his days in peace and plenty. All his family were expecting to hear who had treated the old man best. The old man has been so well provided for he can make no distinction. They must divide the coffer's contents equally amongst them.

The funeral naturally was gorgeous, midst a crowd of sorrowing relatives, & with pomp Olaf was laid in his last abode. The will is read - the coffer opened - everybody expectant. With what result? A heap of stones fills the coffer.



Odense St Knud's Church [Canute's]
Chapel of the Counts Ahlefeldt

In this chapel you may observe the figure of a lady, tightly corsaged, arrayed in a dress of dark brocade, with broad ruff at the neck. The story goes that she died under curious conditions. Pleasure loving, lively, young and fair, she danced with twelve knights in succession at a ball in Odense and then fell dead at the feet of her twelfth partner. Impressed with her tragic end, he caused this stone, richly gilt, to be erected to her memory, at his own expense. Christian IV's devotions appear to have been disturbed by the glittering gold, so he said "Take a brush, tar the jade." Rumour states the original of the effigy, Lady Margaret, refused to lend him money while living, hence the tarry treatment. Now after a lapse of a couple of centuries, the tar is peeling off, again revealing the garish glittering finery.

Odense Church of St Knud [Canute]

In the crypt reposes a simple velvet covered coffin bearing a Duchess's coronet, the initials C. M. ;
Christina Munk

Odense Relics of Knud the Holy

The widowed queen, Adela, naturally wished to take her husband's remains with her when she left the country. The inhabitants indignantly refused. Such an idea could not be entertained. His body possessed miraculous powers. Sight was restored to those who visited his burial place. Rheumatics were cured; whilst the healing of skin disorders was his specialty. In 1100 Knud was canonised.

Odense Knud the Holy

In the crypt of the great church.

At Odense, repose some of the bones of King Knud. Fleeing from his wild subjects the Vandal boers, he crosses the Great Belt. Weary and tired, utterly fatigued, he rests on a rock by the wayside on his way to Odense. Tradition says that touched by the sorrows of the sleeper, the granite softened, and the king rested till morning, as comfortable as though he lay on a bed of down.

Odense, King Knud

Among the suite of the flying king was a traitor, Blakke, the "red haired". He told the king he might safely rest at Odense, his enemies (the Vandal boers) had returned to Jutland. Directly the king had settled in the Church of St Albans for the night, Blakke informed the enemies. They surrounded the building; whilst the king & his brother Benedict sought sanctuary at the altar, both were laid low by spears cast through the windows. Feeling faint and his end approaching, he asked for a drink. A young man passed a pot of water, suspended on a spear, through the window. An old peasant dashed it down. The king looked at the cruel chap as he expired. The sad sorrowful sight haunted the man, till a painful death released him shortly afterward.

Island of Funen Odense

As you travel across the island of Funen, you miss the miles of moor, heath and waste of Jutland.

The land is highly cultivated, divided into small fields by lilac hedges.

Cultivation, civilisation and hedges, hand in hand. The permanent division a necessity through the former dishonesty of the inhabitants.

The Fionese claim there is a curse on the culprit who moves his neighbour's landmark. His ghost is compelled to plough the ill gotten land for ever.

This explains the eerie sounds you hear at midnight in the villages of Ryslinge and Frorup. The condemned culprits busy with their never ending task of ploughing, all to no purpose.

The peasants warn the unwary pedestrian against passing over a certain hill (Graabjerger) after nightfall. Without warning, a red hot rein may be placed in the hand, the tortured spirit then ploughs by proxy, so long as he wishes to rest.

In such a case, immediately kick off shoes or sabots, turn back, push feet into footgear and run like the wind.

Island of Fanø

1

Fanø sticks to its ancient customs and costumes.

They evidently emulate the Dutch fishwives of Sheveningen in the patter of petticoats. Their number increase according to the solemnity of each occasion.

One bride was led almost in a fainting condition to the altar, under the weight of thirteen petticoats.

She was somebody. It was a great event.

Another girl appeared in similar garments of varying hue, green, blue, red, brown, yellow and dingy blue

The oddest custom is that of wearing a black mask, when working in the fields. The girls are very pretty and have an eastern type of face, dark eyes, long, aquiline nose, fine delicate mouth, dark but brilliant complexion. It is not at all impossible that the early inhabitants had connections with Turkey.



The legend of the Basilisk

When a cock reaches the age of seven years, it lays an egg, from which emerges a basilisk. So ugly is the monster, that a look is sufficient to kill.

The only way to master this power of darkness, is to hold up a mirror to the basilisk.

The sight of its own ugliness is sufficient. It dies!

Denmark, Cimbrian Peninsula

“cards and coffee, chaff and comic songs the order of the morning”

Three acres & a cow on principal

Improvised holdings...

Himmelbjerget (500 feet) the Everest of Denmark. A precipitous rise would drown the peninsula.

Fjords of Jutland, so called on the maps, rather should be called “broads”, “geese and gulls”

The Cimbrian peninsula is the only one in Europe of considerable size fronting north. For its area is the least visited by travelers of any similar area in Europe. It is not a thoroughfare. It had no harbours of any size up to quite recent years in the Norsk Sea. It has no grand or interesting scenery – no celebrated works of art – nothing to excite the curiosity of the naturalist – nor to stir the feelings of the romantic wanderer. It is a terra incognita, it has a few small rivers, and some small towns rejoicing in names unheard of in history – but looking to the English eye awfully unpronounceable – owing to the strange combination of double vowels

This peninsula is one of the most remarkable and important physical and geographical features of Europe. Consisting of a vast bank of sand, gravel, waterworn stones, transported rounded blocks of granite of all sizes, covered with a bed of clay & vegetable brush, thrown up by the sea itself – it now forms a breakwater or barrier against the sea – and protects a large portion of the North of Europe. If this great barrier be washed away by the same power that has raised it – then to a large extent – the north of Europe would be again under a vast northern ocean.



Aarhus Cathedral

Strange epitaph

Long life.

“Here lies Christian Jacobsen

Born 1626 died in 1772 (146)

Changeable – dainty in food

At 111 he married a widow of 60

He drank beer, brandy & mead – in moderation - & at other peoples expense – he was a great smoker.

Never confined to bed except after a good fight.”

Veigle [now Vejle]

A small town at the head of the beautiful fjord of the same name. One of the few places in Jutland that may be called hilly. Its history goes back beyond Gorm the Old. Here the charms of sea and forest are combined.

The valley of Griesdal [now Grejsdal], in it the traveller may wander for hours neath the shade of the tender green of the beeches, the heavy plumage of the firs and the lighter foliage of oaks, with a natural carpet of ferns and flowers.

Jellinge [now Jelling] Church

Runic stones

One erected by Gorm in
honour of his queen.

The other set up by Harold
in memory of his parents.



Jellinge. Tumuli

Small train.

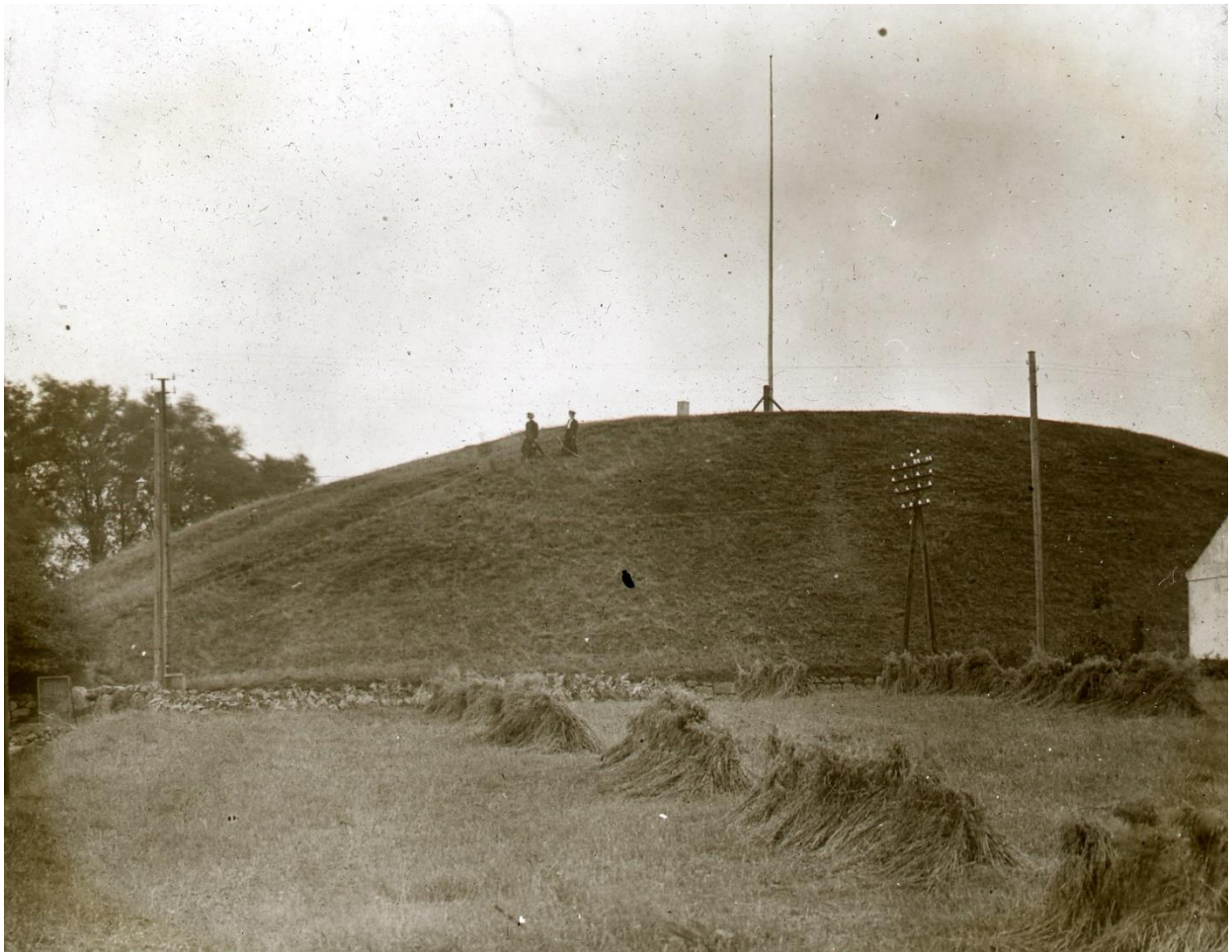
Wind tosses rye fields.

Kongehøj.

Two grass covered flat topped mounds

One to Gorm the Old, where he was buried by his son, Harold Blaatand (Blue tooth), the other to his mother Thyra, the "Dane Pride".

These tumuli are the largest in the north. When opened in 1861, the chambers were found to be lined with painted platters of wood, over which hangings had been suspended.



Silkeborg

In the twelfth century, Silkeborg boasted of a Castle. Bishop Peter Bagusen, of Aarhus (d. 1204) becoming tired of the business and bustle of Aarhus, determined to build a chateau fort on the banks of the Lang-sø. To help him select a suitable site for his new castle, he took with him a prior and a knight. Sailing down the Guden Aa, the prior points to a promontory as a proper position. "Nonsense" settle upon a strategic site", replies the knight. The discussion became so acrimonious that the bishop lost patience. A gust of wind suddenly whisked his silken skull cap off his head into the stream. "Where my cap sticks, there will I build my castle, and call it Silkeborg," said the Bishop.

Silkeborg

The Runic Stone

On a moor hard by once stood a stone inscribed with strange intertwining and tortuous runic characters. Even the witches could not decipher their meaning. The superstitious peasants revered it and passed by with awe, afraid to touch, even though tradition said a treasure of solid gold, the weight of a Jutlander was hidden beneath.

A stranger came, laid his tether on it, the stone sank, and disappeared - but not forever. At some future time when the Danish king shall be captured and imprisoned by a foreign power, the stone will rise, the treasure be revealed and used as a king's ransom

Silkeborg

Tradition of Laven Castle

On one of these wood clothed promontories jutting into the lake, once stood Laven Castle. In Pagan times, a petty king lived here, he had an only daughter who was wooed by a neighbouring small king. Forbidden by the father, the lover disguised as a blind harper gained admittance. At early dawn the daughter is missed by her tire-woman.

The alarm is raised, the pair pursued and hotly pressed. Closely clinging to her lover, an attempt is made to ford the river. The horse stumbles, and sinks, rises again only to again sink more deeply, and finally horse, king and damsel disappear in the midst of the morass and before the eyes of the agonized father. The peasants still call it the "Kongensdyp"

Silkeborg

Himmelberg [Himmelbjerget]

The name more high sounding than any Nepali peak. The mountain of heaven. 550ft high, A mere mole hill. The other mounds behind and around beech covered, but less in height than the queen of Jutland hills. On one of these even during last century, a fiery beacon crowned the crest, to summon the people to arms to repel an invader or suppress a local rising.

In days gone by, the "Budstikke" was sent round. A piece of stick with the name of the king inscribed at each end, and passed from man to man, as a call to arms. A willow twig burnt at the ends was also used. The penalty for missing this massing of men was for the absentee to be caught and hanged on a willow on his own ground, and his own house burnt to the ground.

Silkeborg

Hills cloaked with beech and pine.

Coming out on the crest of the hill, a panorama bursts upon our view, a network of deep blue lakes, as far as the eye can see. Strung together by the stream Guden Aa, in days long gone by many a victorious viking has steered and sailed his barque laden with the spoils of England and Gaul up these placid waters.

Viborg Cathedral.

Skovgaard's labour of love

These frescoes have been entirely a labour of love on the part of the artist Skovgaard. He estimated that it would cost 100,000 krone to paint them. He along with assistants laboured for five years in their production. At the finish he found the cost had only been 85,000 krone! He returned the 15,000 krone to the State! He is not a rich man, but no one can deny that such a one, in every sense of the word is one of Nature's Noblemen, and one of whom the Danish nation may well be proud.

Viborg Cathedral FRESCOES

The interior is decorated with Frescoes. Painted in a style to give somewhat the effect of mosaic work.

The incidents portrayed are from Holy Writ, and cover the whole of the walls and domical apse.

Broadly painted, quaintly shewn, although modern, the pictures have been painted in such a fashion as not to jar with the severe architecture of the building.



Aalborg. Eel castle (literal translation of place name in English)

Aalborg is a very old town, which to a great extent preserves its former appearance. It is rich in picturesque old houses, the most remarkable is “Jens Bang’s Stenhus” built in 1624. Now an apothecary, it is known as the “Svane Apothek.” It is one of the finest specimens of domestic architecture of the seventeenth century.



Aalborg Jens Bang Gaard

The pride of Aalborg is - the Svane-Apothek. The apothecary in Denmark holds a much higher position than in England - so many lives are in his care. In former days travelers have lodged at the apothek. Mentioned by Daniel Major in 1693 & by Holger Jacobens in 1671. The signs usual are the swan and the lion. This establishment, the finest specimen of Renaissance in Jutland was built in 1623.

At that date a wealthy wine-merchant - Jens Bang - lived in Aalborg - young - well-respected by all - liberal to a fault, he was loved by the daughter of the old miser Knud Jensen - the eel-salter. She was the fairest maid in North Jutland. Jensen was proud to have a wealthy son-in-law - but horrified by his liberality. When Jens Bang commenced to build this house - the old man went purple - and swore with a bitter oath - that if he did not desist from so extravagant an undertaking he would end his days in the poor house.

The young man laughed, and jokingly replied “Well, if such is to be the case, I will build it myself” - so he straightaway - spent more money by founding the Fattighus for aged men and women outside the town. These almshouses bear his name today.

“Odden the old, Asdal the bold”.

About a couple of miles from Hjørring, there is one of the most ancient manor and farm houses in Jutland. It is famous for its flitch of bacon, now half a thousand years old.

Early in the fourteenth century the rival houses of Asdal and Odden, fattened their swine on beech-mash in the same forest. A dispute arose as to the ownership of a certain sow and her litter. The Lord of Odden claimed it, the lady of Asdal retorted, “It’s mine, I know her by her curly tail”. “Fiddlesticks! The curl depends upon the dryness of the weather, yesterday her tail was as straight as your hair.”

Indignant at the implied insult to her hair, she went to law. The Jutlanders are litigious & lethargic. The magistrates were puzzled, until a bright idea came to a priest present in court. He remembered the representation of Solomon’s judgement in Hjørring Cathedral. He explained the case to the court, thereupon the sow was condemned to be killed, & a half handed to each of the contending parties, each to cure its half & hang up. The possessor of the side that remained longest free from rust and worms, to become the owner of the twelve little pigs & their future progeny, which were to remain the custody of the court. The lord of Odden was more of a soldier, than salter of swine; whilst the lady of Asdal prided herself on her power of pickling pigs’ pork.

Years rolled on. The forest was filled with porkers; both straight and curly tailed. The Asdal flitch is fine & fit; the one at Odden looks rather rusty. The suit is still pending even after another inspection. The plague of pigs proceeds. After years of weary waiting and watching, there is a commotion at Asdal. Decay has declared itself at Odden, followed by decomposition – and defeat. Loud & long are the rejoicings at Asdal, as the herd of swine is handed over to its victorious mistress, who there and then pronounced a curse on any future descendant who dared to take down the far-famed flitch. So there it hangs, rusty and shriveled: an object of superstition on which also hangs the fate of Asdal.



Fredericia "Dankse Landsddat"

The best work of Bissen, where he has departed farthest from the traditions of the classical school. There are a couple of monuments by Professor Bissen, erected to the memory of the brave Danes who fell in the battle of Fredericia. The bas relief represents a couple of soldiers bearing a dead comrade for internment. A memorial of a brilliant episode of the campaign of 1849. The Danes made a sortie after a two months siege, drove the enemy back, and captured 30 field pieces and 3000 small arms.

Frederikshaven

The State system of railway ends at Frederikshavn. To reach Skagen you change on to a "toy" railway which creeps due north on a narrow hook shaped peninsula, five miles at its broadest & two at the north at Skagen, & gradually tapering till it is lost in the sea.

This slender sea slashed peninsula is probably the wildest and most desolate spot on earth. Low sand hills covered with somber heath. Here and there patches of broken and blasted firs.

To Skagen

Lovely, long & low buildings, apparently half buried in the shifting sand now and then arise above the vast horizon. The savage landscape bounded by the blue and boundless sea, whose breakers would fain swallow the unresisting land. Now and then the monotony is broken by a stop at a station - hard featured men with caps tightly tied on get in and out. So to a journey to Skagen. I had read so much of the desolation and despair of

The Church Tower, Old Skagen [Sand-Covered Church]

"About half a mile from Skagen

Amid a scene of complete desolation, the tower of an old Gothic church rises from the sands, which have covered the rest of it.

The sole relic of a whole village.



Skagen

The tiny peninsula that I had intended only staying a couple of hours at Skagen.

The history of Skagen is one of "gales, sand-drifts and shipwrecks". "A fishing village, built among sand-hills, which cover what once was cornfields and the site of a town long ago, buried beneath them.

Trees cannot flourish & even the scanty vegetation has a struggle for existence.

The dust of the dead

The thistles of Skagen

A bluish green with a delicate silver bloom

Skagen - the artists' colony

As at Lands End - Newlyn - Cornwall - so here is a colony of artists

The place was "discovered" some years ago by some Danish artists in search of subjects. They first stayed with fisher folk. Then a hotel sprang up - & another - visitors came - it became fashionable - and now it is becoming somewhat spoiled for its first patrons.

The favourite resort of the artists - Brøndum's Hotel, has its Dining Room walls covered with pictures painted by those who have stayed here.

Skagen - Monuments

Cemetery to German Sailors

There are few monuments in Skagen - but those which do exist tell tragic stories of shipwreck and disaster. On the heath just outside town is a lonely cemetery. There you may see a granite obelisk to the memory of fifteen German sailors - whose torpedo boat was wrecked on the coast - the remains of the vessel are picturesquely piled at its base.



a. Skagen approach

Desolation read of

Intended visit for 2 hours

Passed buried church tower & thought it must be a death kind of place

Surprised by School bldg.

Found a quaint and interesting village
The people ...live on fish they fish
Fish warehouses by small harbour
Fish kept fresh in pontoon
Photographed the men who appeared diffident



b. Wrecker

In the past read of wreckers – human ghouls anxiously on the look out
for vessels which they might lure on to the sandy shore equally as deadly to vessels
as the rocks of the gullies & townwall
Now in place of the undulating light lure of the wrecker, we have
The intermittent but stead light of the lighthouse

c. New lighthouse

attended to by men who have various night duties – but those of the day – attending
to the but recently introduced high power lamps provided with modern mantles giving an
intense light – seen at sea for miles
Symbolical of the gospel of the future

d. Salvation for all

Both socially, spiritually and destruction bar none
Further along we see Lloyds Signal station with its gaunt looking signalling arms
The station was in charge of young men who attend to all of their duties
It is one of the most important stations in the world

e. Many in this audience

Have passed it on their way into the Baltic to Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Russia
If vessels are wrecked and then the descendants, the one time wreckers are prepared to go out
& risk their lives to save others
None are braver
Than these fishermen
of Skagen

f. Their deeds of daring

Their deeds of daring have been pictured by the painters – who discovered this outlandish spot –
in search of subjects
Tuxen
Michel Ancher
Tanel
The lifeboat in a storm

g. Many men lose their lives
Memorials erected to their memory.
Visit the lonely cemeteries
German torpedo boat
Daphne
Kruse's tomb

h. Skagen Monument to the crew of the Daphne
In the centre of the town a memorial has been erected to the crew of the Swedish boat "Daphne".
The whole crew perished on Dec, 27th 1862 - in addition the crew of the life-boat was lost - who went to their assistance

i. Lars Andersen Kruse
The hero of Skagen is Lars Andersen Kruse - whose name has been immortalized by Holger Drachmann in one of his finest poems. He is said to have saved no fewer than two hundred lives in this sandy but stormy coast. "In the end he perished in the same terrible sea from whose devouring grasp he had snatched so many of his fellow creatures. His boat was capsized in 1894 in comparative calm weather and he along with part of his crew was lost.



j. Holger Drachmann
Danish poet
Had a house at Skagen.
Endeared himself to the folk whilst alive.
After death he desired that his ashes be placed midst the spot he loved so well whilst on earth.
So with national honours the urn containing all that was mortal was brought from Copenhagen to the Skaw - and placed in a kind of

k. small wooden chamber or Itoi - like the Viking gold.

Near by a simple monument marks the spot for the sailor in the sea – three stones –
rounded by nature – unmarked by man – has been seated in dolmen form.
How long will they remain intact.
One cannot say.
The relentless and resistless wind had laid bare and undermined the sandy foundation.

1. Perhaps in some terrible storm – dolmen will be overturned
The wooden chamber be torn from mother earth
and the dust of the dead be scattered by the winds of heaven.
But the song of the singer will ever remain so long as ever a single Dane
remains upon earth





Charles B. Howdill c. 1900

Charles B. Howdill (1863–1941) was a Leeds architect and photographer, who travelled extensively on the European continent before the First World War. He was one of the first to exhibit colour images at the Royal Photographic Society. Howdill gave hundreds of ‘magic lantern’ shows all over England about the places he had photographed, including Jutland.

Howdill apparently summarized most of the historical background and anecdotes in his Jutland notes from Horace Marryat’s *A Residence in Jutland the Danish Isles and Copenhagen*, Volume II, London, John Murray 1860.

The observations about Skagen appear to be Howdill’s own.

Transcribed and compiled by Duncan McCargo, Copenhagen, Easter 2020, from handwritten notes in a green leather folder, Leeds Museums and Galleries (Anthropology Eu.Gen.13) kindly donated by Madge Howdill, 1993.

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All images are from the Howdill collection Jutland boxes (Anthropology Eu.Gen.16), copyright Leeds Museums and Galleries.

For more information about Charles B. Howdill, see:

<https://blazingbalkans.leeds.ac.uk/>

For the background to Howdill’s Jutland trip and this eBook, see:

<https://blazingbalkans.leeds.ac.uk/new-insights-into-howdills-1911-jutland-travels/>

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