

## Christmas and New Year letter December 2013

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

It is December 25, the day after Christmas eve, and Helle is in the kitchen with two unfinished pies for tomorrow's Christmas lunch with family on both sides. Nothing shall be missing.

Søren had the choice of walking the dog or starting this letter to family and friends. So, Seja will have to wait, and she willingly does so. She has turned into a really good and (most of the time) calm family dog - it has come to the point where we sometimes call her Olga after our first and perfect dog. This is a big thing and we wish Seja knew the implication. Here you have pictures of the two super dogs, Olga to the left:



With this letter we first of all want to thank all of you who have taken part in our lives over the year. It turns out by digging into calendars, photo collections, Facebook and the small grey cells that you have been both numerous and fantastic, and we will not even attempt to cover everybody here, but just make a few dives into calendars and themes.

The most important themes we want to share with you are grandchildren and summer house, because they have been centers of so many experiences and challenges.

Helle takes Sixten and Tristan for swimming lessons every Wednesday afternoon, after which we have them for play and dinner until we take them home for bed. We have been to our favourite restaurant La Sirena a few times, and the kids love it. They play chess in the club after school, and Søren enjoys training them in speed chess (to make it more dramatic), the end game, and the vocabulary. Many pieces are being moved and experiences made. Helle cuts and draws and reads and calculates with the boys. We also have our wars with the two temperamental gentlemen, but we learn from that, so thank you very much ☺.

We have had the kids with us to Sejerø. That has given Britt and Gorm some appreciated periods to nurse their partnership and fix the house without disturbances. And we have had additional experiences and turned Sejerø into something they will always have inside: the climb of the light house hill, maybe the world's steepest and most scary hill; the

## Christmas and New Year letter December 2013

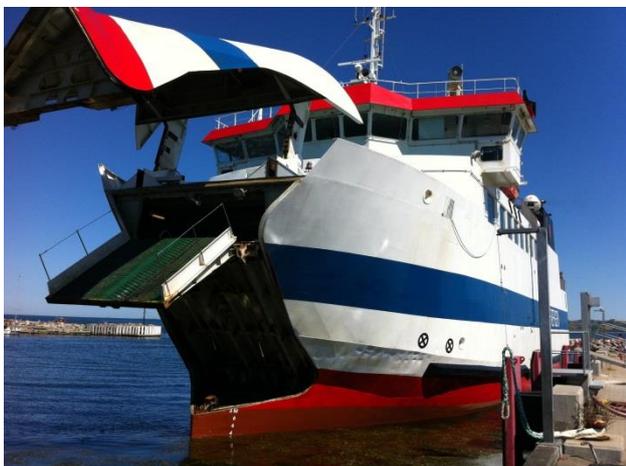
dangerous stone walk at low tide, where the big rocks appear and can be treaded on, not without risking death by drowning, or at least wet feet;



the 5 and 10 km routes, where Søren jogs and the kids cycle, with a stopover by the pensioner cow Lambi, who comes for apples when we call;



performances with the neighbour's grandchildren Clara and Christian (see the picture with Seja above); the not quite average playground by the school; the summer festival with shit bingo (in which of the 64 chess fields will the calf shit?); the Sejerø musicians; and last but not least the Sejerø ferryboat, with Inger in the kiosk.



## Christmas and New Year letter December 2013

Our summer house since 2010, in other words not a very long acquaintance (although it feels like many years - in a good way, that is), has been the center of numerous visits, and since the island Sejerø is not easily accessible, always with at least one overnight stay, so we have come closer to our guests (again, in a good way ☺).

Our families, both on Helle's and Søren's side, were there. On Søren's side it was Anne Christa, who had some good days, where in particular nature showed itself from its most lovely side, with lots of exciting birds, hares and deer.

On top of Gorm and Britt and the kids on Helle's side we were happy that Grethe and Ejvind chose to come over, so that we could show them the place we value so much.



When Helle moved down to Søren in Vienna in 1989 we got a guestbook that we used for some years, including when we lived in Basel between 1992 and 1995. Then it disappeared for several years, but now it is out again, witnessing visits from: Sven and Janet; Sophia and Casper and kids; Ellen and Lasse; Alette; Karen; and Lisbeth.

Speaking of Sejerø, we also have resident acquaintances/friends over there: North of us we have two couples who give our lives on Sejerø a certain continuity. Conny and Michael have a dog, Bella, who is one of Seja's best play mates. The other couple is Jette (collector of amber on the beach) and Steen (editor of the island newsletter). We frequently visit our friends Lis and Kurt (Kurt, chairman of the local hunting club, member of Kalundborg Kommune's Island Committee, and a member (like Søren) of the local amateur net fishing club) for a cup of coffee, a glass something, or even a regular meal. And we have Tinna, Helle's ex-colleague, almost a permanent islander it seems.

Søren has a thing with clubs, societies, unions, and boards. He is right now vice chairman and webmaster of the Gniben Strand summer house owners' society (see [www.gnibenstrand.dk](http://www.gnibenstrand.dk)). That gives him some tasks he enjoys, and also points to the time after work life (most recent prognosis says spring 2015). After 35 years in Novo Søren worries that he will have to pull **himself** together with no colleagues or bosses to pat his shoulder. Here, therefore, plunges into new obligations: right now he is fighting to keep some kind of public transportation on Sejerø. He has contacts both with the mayor in Kalundborg and Ella, who is both a permanent

## Christmas and New Year letter December 2013

resident of Sejerø and a newly elected member of the Kalundborg Kommune's byråd (city council).

There is more in our lives than Sejerø and the grand children, like a vacation in Vienna, to reunite with old friends, go to local restaurants (Heuriger) and to the Volksoper (Die lustige Witwe by Franz Lehár).



There is even more: We were invited to Tommy's 40-year birthday in February. We were happy to meet Tommy's many good friends and to hear their speeches to their host. We were in the Skuespilhus with Ejvind to hear and see Ibsen's Vildanden ("The Wild Duck"). Good show. We visited the Dyrehaven (near us) to see - and hear - crown deer (kronhjorte in Danish). And we joined Novo's art society for a full day's excursion to art galleries in Northern Zealand, to end in Helsingør where the original plaster cast of Holger the Dane resides.



Søren has been busy and had a lot of fun digging into family matters, in particular on his father's side, see [www.mamasogpapas.dk](http://www.mamasogpapas.dk). That led to an invitation for his cousin Inger's 90-year big family birthday, a festive experience. Anne Christa and Søren have been busy finally clearing out

## Christmas and New Year letter December 2013

after Ida's death in 2010. They managed to empty the rented storage room by selling the best thing on web auctions, most of the rest on flea markets, and the last they donated to a local church, or burned. This was a good period for the two, and it was a relief to be able to close a chapter in their lives in a good way.



As we have already said Helle has been busy with grandchildren. On top she has enjoyed her decoupage that ended in November with a sales exhibition with the other decoupeurs.

As a pensioner you have enough time - or that is what we once thought. Now we know that time is also a scarce resource after work life. The change is that time is used differently. Conversations with friends grow longer and more frequent, newspapers are getting read more thoroughly, there is more swimming and longer walks with the dog, there are more Facebook messages and text messages to read and write, and more visits to the neighbours. Also, the balance between the two of us is somewhat shifted in the direction where Helle is more responsible for house and food, and Søren for garden. When Søren stops the balance will probably shift somewhat, in a good way.

Let us finish this letter with a few words about our Christmas. It was celebrated in Fredensborg, at Grethe's place, and it was a good occasion. Grethe was in great shape, and the arrangement worked our really fine, with contributions from all. Grethe assisted with the gravy and made the sugar browned potatoes. After dinner we sang the psalms of Christmas and then it was present-time. A real traditional Christmas, except it was not white outside at all, rather almost 10 degrees warm (greenhouse effect we are sure). But Grethe was radiant, and therefore, we all were.



## Christmas and New Year letter December 2013

This was probably far too much from us. We again thank you for everything you have given us of experiences and closeness during the year, including for Christmas cards and letters, and we hope we can keep in touch and see you in the new year. All of 2014 Søren is still working, but from spring 2015 you should keep the guest bed ready - ho, ho, ho.

Love from

Helle and Søren



Selfie