

The Amager Museum is situated in Hovedgaden (the Main Street), in the village of Store Magleby. Despite being a mere 6 miles away from Copenhagen City Hall, the little village has maintained its historic character.



The museum relates the history of the Dutch immigrants who came to the island of Amager in the 16th century, and who cultivated fresh vegetables for the inhabitants of Copenhagen. It is a tale of strong traditions that subsequent generations have cherished and upheld, yet it is also a tale of change and development. Today, the Dutch farmers' fields lie beneath Copenhagen Airport, Denmark's foremost gateway to the world.

With its fascinating local cultural history, Amager has an identity of its very own. Past and present fuse together in the Amager Museum, giving food for thought and an enjoyable experience!

*Søren Mentz,
Director, Museum Amager.*



Welcome to The Amager Museum

The museum consists of two, four-aisled farms. Den gamle museumsgård was acquired in 1921, while Nordgården, where the museum's main entrance lies, became part of the museum complex in 1973. The buildings are located in Store Magleby, also known as 'the Dutch Town' due to the immigrants from the Netherlands who came to Amager in the 16th century.



The Amager Museum Society was established in 1901 with the aim of gathering and preserving objects that shed light on the cultural history of the island of Amager. Despite its geographic proximity to Copenhagen, for generations the island has succeeded in maintaining its distinctive local identity that springs from the Dutch immigration.



The Dutch Immigrants

Christian II (1481–1559, reigned 1513–1523) admired the enterprising Dutch and their talent for business. The king wished to improve conditions for Danish merchants and increase the State's revenue through trade. During a visit to Bergen in Norway (then part of a joint kingdom with Denmark) he fell in love with Dyveke, a young Dutch-woman who resided there. They returned to Copenhagen together, where Dyveke and her mother Sigbrit Villoms were found accommodation in Amagertorv (Amager Square). Sigbrit was born in Amsterdam and was highly conversant with Dutch commerce and trading culture. Even though Dyveke died in 1517, 'Mother Sigbrit' continued to be the king's confidante and economic adviser until 1523. The king's decision to appoint a commoner and a woman as his personal adviser was not popular, and she was loathed by the Danish nobility who saw the kingdom's administration as no one else's business but its own.

Ties between Denmark and the Netherlands were further strengthened in 1515 when Christian II married Isabella of Austria (1501–1526) from the House of Habsburg (referred to in Danish as Elisabeth). She was the sister of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and had grown up in the Netherlands. It was at this time that the king's representatives were negotiating with Dutch peasants to establish a Dutch colony on the island of Amager. We do not know precisely from where these farmers originated, one estimate is Waterland in West Friesland, but Flanders, too, has been named as a possible place of origin. Today, when we call the immigrants 'Dutch', it is because this term was used in contemporary source material, and because their descendants have carried on using this term.

A girl in Amager costume. Tulips, if anything, are associated with Holland. The Dutch immigrants did not cultivate tulips, and it was first in the 1950s that fields of tulips became a common sight in Amager. However, after 1972, the small producers were forced out of business by the import of flowers from Holland.

*Christian II and Queen
Isabella's privileges for
the Dutch on the island
of Amager (The Danish
National Archives).*

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as many of the provisions mentioned came into force subsequently, it is quite evidently a draft of the final agreement between the king and the Dutch immigrants. The text indicates that 184 Dutch farmers were given property rights to the islands of Amager and Saltholm in their entirety, with the exception of the town of Dragør. The land was inheritable, as long as inheritors existed, if not, escheated, i.e. heirless property, reverted to the crown. The Dutch farmers were exempted from villeinage and manorial dues and were permitted to establish a town council according to Dutch principles. Their privileges also included the rights to fish and hunt or trap birds in the neighbourhood, the right to use the island of Saltholm for grazing cattle and for quarrying limestone. As for the legal conditions, the draft text indicates, among others:

“First and foremost, they shall have, use and keep the entire area, and live and be judged according to present Dutch law, and not according to Danish law; and may till the land, and in the best possible way share according to their own Dutch manner, so that they each can gain an equal amount of land.”

When the Dutch immigrants were accorded these rights to use Amager's fertile soil, the original Danish farmers were forcibly evicted. The original letter of privilege contains nothing about what the Dutch farmers should cultivate, but in his lampoon, 'Christian II's rhyming chronicle' from 1523, the Carmelite monk Poul Helgesen wrote:

“The Dutch and wheelers and dealers I encouraged, causing harm to the kingdom to my shame, I banished both the men and women who had built and lived in Amagerland. Not daring to go against Sigbrit's wishes, I allowed the Dutch to settle down straightaway, they only sowed peas and beans, where previously beautiful grain had grown.”

In 1523 Christian II was deposed. He fled Denmark along with his family and Mother Sigbrit and went into exile in the Netherlands. Prior to this, she had ordered a gravestone to be made, as it was then customary to prepare one's last resting place in good time and have everything in order.



A fragment of Mother Sigbrit's gravestone.

Sigbrit's gravestone was made in Holland. She was depicted in full figure on the 2 m high 1 m wide sandstone gravestone. As they had fled in haste, the gravestone was left behind in Denmark, where the nobleman Knud Gyldenstjerne found it and subsequently placed it at the entrance to his manor Timgård. He is said to have ordered everyone to spit on it 'and do even worse things!' Knud Gyldenstjerne held a grudge against Mother Sigbrit. He had been accused of complicity in the death of Dyveke by poisoning, and had fallen out of favour with Christian II.

The deposed king raised an army in the Netherlands and endeavoured to win back his kingdom. In 1531, he made landfall in Norway, but was lured to Copenhagen for negotiations. Despite being promised safe conduct, Christian II was taken prisoner and incarcerated in Sønderborg Castle. Mother Sigbrit never returned to Denmark. She most likely died in Vilvoorde near Brussels in 1532. A fragment of her gravestone is exhibited in the museum.

After the king was overthrown, the Dutch immigrants whom Christian II had invited over to Amager were asked to return home, but in 1547 they received an open letter from Christian III, who accorded them the right to live in Store Magleby in return for an annual tax of 300 marks and 'supplying Copenhagen Castle with as many onions and root vegetables as necessary'. The remaining areas of Amager would continue to be 'Danish' copyhold farms.

The Dutch immigrants and their descendants cultivated vegetables and herbs: cabbage, red cabbage, peas, turnips, onions, carrots, salad, spinach, celeriac, parsley, parsnips, thyme and later potatoes. To this can be added cereals such as rye and wheat. In the course of time, the Dutch also began to produce butter, cheese and eggs. The products were sold in the capital city, and Amager eventually acquired the status of being 'Copenhagen's breadbasket'.



An early map of Amager and the towns of Store Magleby, Dragør and Tårnby (Map: Johannes Mejer, 1656).

On Wednesdays and Saturdays, the farmers drove to market, where they were immediately recognizable in their distinctive Amager costume. In time, the costume became a mark of quality, a brand that was associated with fresh primary products. The folk costume became the island's symbol as well as the logo of Amager Bank. This was established in 1903 and managed to become Denmark's 11th largest bank before it went bankrupt in 2011.

The Amager costume is a visible demonstration of how the cultural inspiration from the Dutch Town spread out to Tårnby and the rest of the island of Amager and left its mark on the identity of the island as a whole.

The Dutch merchant Abraham van der Meersch visited Denmark in 1674 og gave the



In 1747 Erik Pontoppidan's 'A brief account of the arrival of some colonists or foreigners', which describes the inhabitants of the Dutch Town was published. One of its illustrations depicts two couples in Amager costume. To the left, a married couple, and to the right, two unmarried Amager farmers.





Pieter Goos's map of Europe, 1665.

A Dutch sailor and a burgher are depicted on the detail in the lower left-hand corner. The Amager costume resembles the costume worn by Frisian sailors and commoners, comprising wide knee-length breeches (condescendingly called *susebukser* 'bell-bottoms') a short close-fitting top, a kind of pile or thrum hat (*floshat*), long stockings and lace-up shoes.



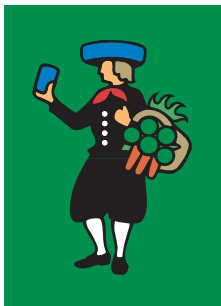


Jan Victors' genre painting, 'The Butcher's Shop' from 1651, depicts a street in Amsterdam. In front of a butcher's shop two men dressed in wide knee-length breeches and blue pile or thrum hats. The hat was made of wool from the Angora goat. The goat's Arabic name being 'seil el kemel', the hat was incorrectly called a camel wool hat (Painting: York Museums Trust).

following account of Amager farmers on market day in Copenhagen:

"I enjoyed seeing the entire marketplace full of these farmers and their wives in their beautiful, unchanged, Frisian farming costume with the white, unstiffened linen hats, belts etc. And the men with their little ruff outside the jackets, wearing Frisian camel wool hats, and with all sorts of vegetables, butter, milk, hens, pigeons etc. I spoke to one of these people, [...] but no one could understand me; they only spoke Danish."

The quotation attests that the Dutch immigrant farmers had lost their ties to their old homeland. They, however, maintained their distinctive character in relation to the Danish population through the Amager costume and their nomenclature. Many of their descendants continue to bear names such as Dirch, Neel or Marchen.



The Amagerbank's logo was naturally a Dutch farmer in folk costume with a basket of vegetables.





The red-painted chest with the golden fittings has the year 1786 inscribed on it. It belonged to Store Magleby's last schout (sheriff) Dirch Corneliussen, who died in 1816. Not many objects remain from the autonomous Dutch local government in Store Magleby. The municipal authority's money chest and seal are among the few things that have survived the many destructive fires in Store Magleby.

The Dutch Town was autonomous and therefore did not constitute part of the kingdom's system of justice. Both the judicial and administrative authority were vested in the town's leader, the schout (sheriff), who administered the town along with seven aldermen (scheppen). Thus, Store Magleby constituted an independent judicial district (et birk). From 1615, the Dutch Town's judicial district followed Danish law as its legal basis. In 1822 Store Magleby became a part of the judicial district of Amager, and in 1857 was subject to the Local Government Act. From 1870, communal matters in the town were managed by the Byforstanderskabet (Town Administration), later on from 1910 termed the Store Magleby Bylaug (Store Magleby town guild or council). The last of the Dutch Town's privileges lapsed in the 20th century. The right to eel fishing ceased in 1961, and 1983 was the last ever year that the town council received 13 cubic m of timber from state forests.

In terms of ecclesiastical affairs, too, the Dutch immigrants made their own arrangements. Thus it was that, the farmers of Store Magleby came to own their own church and graveyard. For nearly 300 years, its priests delivered sermons in Low German; from the 18th century, the church also acquired a Danish priest, but it was only in January 1811 that German sermons were completely abandoned. Today, Store Magleby Church is an ordinary church belonging to the Danish Evangelical Lutheran faith.

Store Magleby's administration also played a role in Dragør. The two villages had a common court and judicial district as well as a common parish. It was the schout (sheriff) in Store Magleby who appointed a deputy sheriff for Dragør and he thus had immense influence in the sea-captains' town. Over time, the farmers of Store Magleby and the sea-captains of neighbouring Dragør became rivals and were involved in bitter disputes. Dragør was, for example prevented from expanding the town's borders, as the surrounding land was owned by Store Magleby, and the farmers did not wish to sell. Both in the nearby town of Tårnby as well as in Dragør, the privileged Store Magleby farmers were looked upon with some envy, and the inhabitants of the Dutch Town understood how to exploit their social capital to show themselves off both culturally and in terms of influence.



In 1974, the municipalities of Store Magleby and Dragør were merged together. The evident dichotomy between the two different communities, one based on farming and the other on shipping, influenced their historical development and local identity to a large degree. At the same time, the highly active local community in Dragør municipality is due to the establishment of Copenhagen Airport which has isolated the community from Tårnby and Copenhagen. Thus, its unique character and local traditions continue to survive in a time of modernity.

A wall plate commemorating the merger of the municipalities of Store Magleby and Dragør in 1974. The motif depicts the 'marriage' between two different communities. The young woman and the crops symbolizes Store Magleby, while the sailor is a symbol of Dragør's maritime connections.



The North Farm

The North Farm (Nordgård)'s current timber-framed buildings originate from the early years of the 19th century. The farm's exterior was, more or less, established in its present form in 1878. The fields belonging to the farm were expropriated by the Danish government in 1957 in connection with extending Copenhagen Airport.

The Café area lies in the old barn where grain was threshed. On the



*The Royal Family leaves
Store Magleby Church
after the festive church
service on the 16th
October 1921 (Painting:
Paul Fischer, 1924).*

end wall hangs Paul Fischer's painting 'The Royal Family leaves Store Magleby Church on the occasion of the town's 400-year-jubilee on the 16th October 1921'. At the centre of the painting stand King Christian X, Queen Alexandrine, Crown Prince Frederik (IX) and Heir Presumptive Knud. The Royal Family is surrounded by the citizens of Store Magleby and Tårnby. The older women and children are in Amager costume.

Paul Fischer (1860–1934) and his wife are seen furthest to the left in the rearmost group.

Paul Fischer's painting was completed in 1924. The artist had the following to say about the composition of this painting:

"(As the men and the younger generation refused to wear the old historical costumes) it was thus the older women, to whom I essentially devoted my interest. Don't forget, these costumes and jewellery had been inherited down through the generations. Even the hairstyle is special to Amager. Only a single elderly woman out there knows how to set up the hair for the younger ones, as tradition demands...and that takes two hours."

Apart from the Royal Family, 41 people whose names we know modelled for the painting. The sketches were made in the artist's atelier in Hellerup, and many of them are exhibited in the Café, for example the portrait of Neel Christensen, an Amager woman from Tømmerup. The sketches were subsequently put up for sale, providing Fischer with a decent income. In return, he donated the large painting to the Amager Museum.

The portrait of Neel Christensen. She was evidently uninterested in burying her portrait, as the painting was sold as part of the auction of Paul Fischer's estate after his death in 1934.





The rooms next to the Museum Shop are used for exhibitions. A permanent theme is the island of Saltholm and the artist Theodor Philipsen (1840–1920). The parishes of Store Magleby and Tårnby held annual grazing rights for 400 cattle on the island of Saltholm. From the mid-19th century, all animals were sailed to Saltholm from Kastrup Værk (Work)’s harbour. The grass in Saltholm was considered especially good feedstuff, as it was fertilized by seaweed, that was washed up at high tide. Theodor Philipsen combined traditional animal painting with impressionist techniques and colours. As well as being a painter, Philipsen was also a ceramicist. His animal pottery is lifelike and naturalistic.

*To the left: The cattle
are watered on Saltholm
(Painting: Theodor
Philipsen).*

The art historian Karl Madsen designated Theodor Philipsen as the most esteemed artist in terms of animal painting:

“There is something almost as distinctive with Philipsen’s depiction of calves as with Hans Christian Andersen’s style. Nowhere in the world of art do we find their equals. No one has ever expressed the animal simplicity in their shiny eyes, the awkward and droll in their slightest movements, their intrusive curiosity, their fierce greed.”



A ceramic figure of two lambs by Theodor Philipsen.



A ceiling painting in the large parlour in the North Farm. Detail of two disciples and God's all-seeing eye.

The large parlour has a beautifully decorated ceiling with the all-seeing eye of God at its centre and Jesus's disciples depicted with their names and attributes. The painter is unknown, but travelling country painters were a well-known phenomenon, and quite a few of the farms in Store Magleby are decorated with similar paintings.





At the entrance to the summer kitchen is a smithy, that originally lay in Tårnby. The smith in Store Magleby was an important figure, whose services were essential for the functioning of daily life. The smith forged horseshoes and shod horses. Additionally, he made tools and repaired them.

The old Dutch farmer Jan Dirchsen remembered the smith:



The old smithy now situated next to the summer kitchen in Nordgård.

"In the early hours of the morning, the smith himself stood there with a pair of tongs holding the iron that was being shaped into a horseshoe. The smith and his apprentice each beat the iron with a hammer. This required some practice. If it went wrong, it wasn't gentle words that issued from the master's lips. The master belonged to the old school of solid village craftsmen, who respected the idea of delivering a good solid piece of handiwork."

The local village smith disappeared in the course of the 20th century.

The summer kitchen was originally the washhouse. In summer, it was used as the kitchen and dining room to lighten the burden of cleaning the main farmhouse, and of course the laundry was done here.



In the early part of the 20th century, the area belonging to the Dutch farms comprised nearly 60 acres (ca. 24.2 hectares). Often, three generations of family members would live together on the farm. Moreover, two farmhands and a boy of 15–17 and two maids also belonged to the household.

In the summer kitchen, a great deal of food was cooked for the various meals of the day. In the course of the workday, as a rule, the em-



*The summer kitchen
in Nordgård.*

ployees received early morning coffee, breakfast, dinner, coffee, supper or fesperkost (vesper meal) and milk at night:

Around 5.30 a.m. a light breakfast of coffee and a sandwich of rye bread and butter with a slice of white bread in the middle, called an *amagermad* was served, followed by a more substantial breakfast at 9 a.m. Then came a hot dinner, the main meal of the day, followed by the so-called vesper meal at 5 p.m., and finally, around 7 p.m. hot milk and buttered bread with salt.



A cradle washing machine ca. 1900. Nordgård.

The cradle washing machine was operated by two women, who rocked the clothes too and fro in the machine with the help of the handles. Even though it was heavy to handle, it was considered a modern convenience. Housework on the farm belonged to the female domain.

In the stable aisle, the story of the Dutch farmers' products and market day is narrated. Amager was characterized by its specialized agriculture and market products. Production in Amager may be divided into three main types: classical farms which produced both animal and vegetable products; market gardens which shot up especially in the 20th century and focused on the finer vegetables; and finally, smallholdings, with small sales of vegetables from private gardens that could supplement the income of a smallholder's family.

It was, first and foremost, fresh vegetables that were sold at the market in Copenhagen. Before the railway and cars, fresh food could only be transported over short distances, thus, Amager was ideally situated in relation to the capital city. Expressions such as ‘Copenhagen’s larder’ and ‘Copenhagen’s kitchen garden’ reflect Amager’s role as a food supplier specializing in vegetables and dairy produce. Sometimes, the enterprising Dutch farmers also drove as far away as Helsingør (Elsinore) or to Køge and Roskilde to sell their wares. In the early part of the 20th century, especially cabbages were exported abroad.

Amager’s status as a supplier of fresh vegetables was also expressed in the old Danish children’s rhyme about the ‘Amagermoer’ (Amager Mom):

*“Amager Mom
give me carrots!
Certainly not,
do go away!”*



A wagonload of cabbage ready for export around 1920 (Dragør Lokalkiv).

Selling fresh produce in the marketplace was a common sight in Copenhagen in earlier times. It was partly the Amager farmers' own wives who sold the produce from their farms, and partly other women, 'andenhåndskoner', who resold the produce from Amager farms. Finally, there were also the women from Sundby 'Sundbykoner', who sold smaller vegetables and herbs, parsley, radishes and spinach.

The Amager women wore a costume comprising a black skirt with a blue apron to market. Beneath the apron, the skirt had a front pocket, roomy enough for notes and coins. As

Amager women at the Copenhagen vegetable market ca. 1930.





A Market Scene: a couple from Amager at the marketplace in Copenhagen (painting: Albert Petersen, ca.1913). The painting was exhibited at the Grand Salon in Paris (1913–1929).

a headcovering, the women wore sun bonnets. The produce was driven into town in horse-drawn wagons, and the goods were often sold from the back of the wagon.

The Amager farmers placed great emphasis on the vegetables looking good and presentable. When the products were tied together and packaged in willow baskets, the wagon was packed for market. The baskets and sacks were stacked together with the most robust vegetables at the bottom. The traditional market days were Wednesday and Saturday.

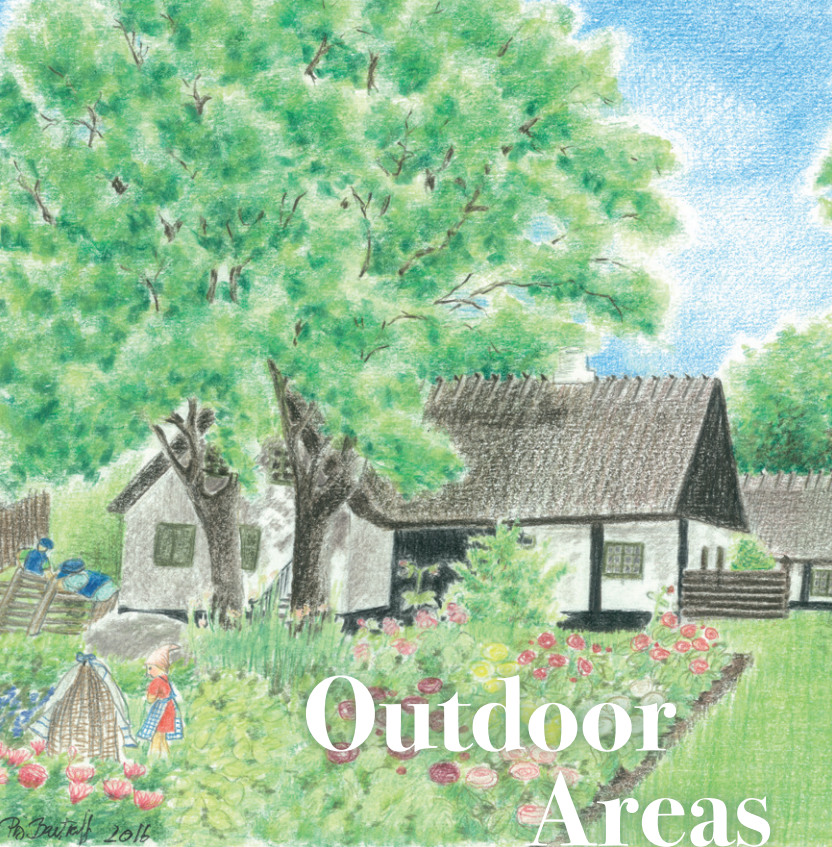
Until 1857, the Amager farmers had to wait



until the Amagerport, one of the city of Copenhagen's gates, opened between 6 to 7 a.m. The farmers set up their wares for sale on Amagertorv (Amager Square) and from 1795 at the marketplace in Højbroplads (Højbro Place). People from Amager were also permitted to set up their wares on the outer edges of the town's other markets, e.g. at Gråbrødretorv (Grey Friars' Square) as well as Gammeltorv and Nytorv (Old Square and New Square). In 1889, a new marketplace 'Grønttorvet ved Vendersgade' was opened in what is today's Israels Plads (Israel's Place). The owners of big farms had regular spots. Others had to plan their trip carefully to avoid the poorer spots in the marketplace. Sometimes, the trip from Store Magleby began at 2 a.m. It was almost a science to stack the many heads of cabbage onto the horse-drawn wagons (see photo on page 31).

Cabbages were not only sold in the Copenhagen market. In the early years of the 20th century, Amager's cabbages were exported to countries like Austria, Russia, Norway, Sweden and Germany. Cabbages that were transported by train were sent in bulk. If transported by ship, they were packed in sacks.

The blue pile or thrum hat in the collections of the Amager Museum is one of two preserved examples. It may be seen in the costume exhibition along with other treasures from the unique folk costumes that became Amager's visual expression.



Outdoor Areas

The animals on the farm at the beginning of the 20th century consisted primarily of cows, pigs, sheep, geese and hens. Horses were used as draught animals for fieldwork. Farms in Amager would typically have two types of horses, a pair to drive produce to market and two to six work horses.

It was first in the course of the 1950s that horses slowly gave way to tractors. Cows provided milk and the necessary fertilizer for the fields.



The gardens of Amager Museum. The museum's beautiful kitchen garden contains vegetables and flowers. Dahlias adorn the garden in late summer. Many old plant varieties that were bred on Amager are planted here (Drawing: Pia Bjerre Bartoff 2016).

Most of the fertilizer for the fields in Amager, however, derived from waste collection and emptying of latrines from Copenhagen. It is, thus, not without grounds that Amager was once known as 'night soil island' or its equivalent.



*Geese belong in both Dragør and Store Magleby.
They ran around freely until the 1960s.*

In summer, the museum has a poultryyard, rabbits in the old pigpens, as well as sheep, geese and goats in pens.

Beehives are kept in the rose garden, and honey may be purchased in the Museum Shop. In the kitchen garden, volunteers from the Museum Society cultivate historical flowers and vegetables following old Dutch customs. The raw materials are incorporated in the traditional local products that are sold in the Museum Shop, such as jams and preserves, pickles and home-made mustard.

*One of the museum's
volunteers amongst
the dahlias in the
museum garden.*





The Old Museum Farm

The Old Museum Farm (den gamle museums gård) is one of the original Dutch farms. It was rebuilt in 1782 and belonged to the Buur family until the Museum Society took it over. The buildings are half-timbered. Between the timbering, the walls are built of clay. The entrance to the farm building is at the centre of one of the aisles.



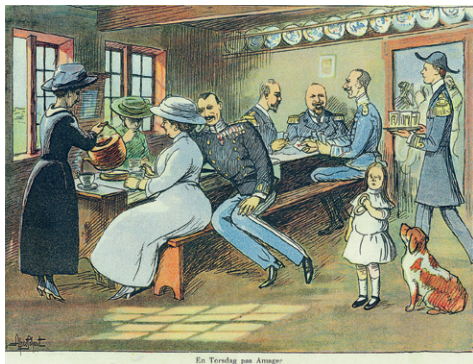
*Den gamle museumsgård with its characteristic well
with a counterpoised sweep.*

Most of the objects and interiors were collected in Amager towards the end of the 19th century by Dirch Jansen, a local farmer. He belonged to one of the old families that could trace its ancestry back to the Dutch immigrants. He wished to preserve the memory of Amager's past at a time characterized by change.



Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands and her consort Prince Henry visited the Amager Museum together with King Christian X, Queen Alexandrine and Crown Prince Frederik on the 8th of September 1922. The museum itself had opened three months earlier.

The visit was depicted by the painter Karl Larsen (1897–1977), who was a notable artist belonging to the school of Early Danish Modernism. The Cubist and Expressionist statements are a characteristic feature of his work. In the painting, the royal visitors are gathered together in the parlour of the Old Museum Farm. The tableau of mannequins in Amager



'A Thursday in Amager' the royal couple's visit to the museum on the 8th September 1922. A caricature by Alfred Schmidt, 1922, after Exner's painting, which is published on pages 56–57.

The visit to Amager Museum in 1922 by the Queen of the Netherlands (Painting: Karl Larsen, 1930–31).

costume seated at the refectory table was a reconstruction of the artist Julius Exner's famous painting 'A scene from a party in Amager' and was part of the room's decor in 1922. The cupboard seen in the painting still stands in the parlour.

The painting is dated to 1930–31 and is based on a photograph. It was donated to the museum by the the wholesale dealer Kai Lippmann in 1934.

After the royal visit to Amager Museum, the cartoonist Alfred Schmidt drew a sketch that was also inspired by Exner's aforementioned painting, which attests to the popularity of the motif amongst the population.



The Kitchen: The meals were prepared on the hearth. In the tall chimney, there was room to smoke hams and sausages. The large jamb stove, that stands in the adjacent room, was also provided with firewood through a hole in the kitchen. Plates, dishes and other serving implements were stored in the pantry. Among the more exotic objects are an iron ball for grinding mustard and a large punch bowl.

Visitors brought along a platter of food when invited to a party. It was a type of potluck, but too many guests contributing to a single potluck platter was not considered seemly. Until the mid-19th century, a 'platter of food' could comprise the following: a hind quarter of beef, a fresh ham, a smoked ham, a string of smoked pork sausages measuring ca. 5 feet and a string of saveloy of ca. 2 feet.

*To the left: A platter
for salted meat from
around the turn of the
19th century.*



A punch bowl from around the turn of the 19th century. A punch bowl could contain around 20 litres. A good punch comprised rum, hot water and sugar. It was not unusual that several bowlfuls of punch would be drunk in the course of the evening at a lively and enjoyable party.



To the left of the entrance: A room from the Dutch Village, called Dirch Jansen's Room. In front of the high, canopy guest bed, draped with curtains in Dragør weave from the end of the 18th century, lies a cradle with embroidered sheets.

The interior decor was collected by the farmer Dirch Jansen at the end of the 19th century and provides us with an idea of the interiors of farms in Store Magleby. The purpose of the room was thus to preserve



Dirch Jansen's Room. The grandfather clock to the left is Dutch. The cradle in front of the guest bed has dark sheets. They were used before the christening in church, because the unbaptised baby was considered a heathen. After the christening, white bed linen was used.

the memory of the culture peculiar to Amager, or in the words of Jan Dirchsen in 1982:

"Life as it was lived, not least in the farms that were inherited down through the same family for several generations, is a heritage that we have received from the generation before us, which we base our lives on, and wish to pass on to the generation after us."



The jamb stove in front of the tiled wall. To the left of the panelled wall is a triangular-shaped shelf, called an Amagerhylde (an Amager Shelf). Dirch Jansen's Room.

Behind the wrought-iron jamb stove (1698), the wall is clad with Dutch tiles depicting biblical motifs.

These Dutch tiles were rather popular in Store Magleby. They were fetched from Holland and proved highly useful merchandise to bring home as ballast. The tiles could be placed at the bottom of the cargo hold and were not damaged by water. The motifs comprised various everyday scenarios with children at play and scenes known from Bible history.

On the stove is a teamaker. It resembles a samovar, known from Russia, where the word means a 'self boiler'. It was a popular apparatus for making tea and for keeping the tea hot.



Dutch tiles with biblical motifs.

The mezzanine cellar served as both the maid's room and pantry. From here, there was access to the main parlour that was built over a low cellar. Kitchen goods and utensils and copper pots used on festive occasions were also stored in the pantry.

The main parlour, also referred to as 'up above the cellar' was used to store cupboards and chests. A guest bed, too, was often placed there, as the main parlour could be used as a guest room. For a while, the main parlour also functioned as the town's taproom, where alcohol was served. Finally, it was in the main parlour that the deceased was laid before the funeral, where people would come to pay their last respects. The coffin was carried out through 'the door of the dead' at the back of the parlour. If the corpse were were to be carried out through the rooms and out of the main entrance, one then risked that the deceased would walk again.



The maid's room and the entrance to the cellar.



To the right of the entrance: The Dragør Room is from the turn of the 19th century. The panels and objects originate from a sea captain's home in Dragør. While the family's oldest son usually took over the farm in Store Magleby, others would move from the farms to Dragør. Thus, ties of kinship existed between the two towns.

In the parlour stands a loom from 1803. The widows of sailors often



*Souvenirs from abroad.
Fine china and bouquets
of artificial flowers
encased in glass domes.*

supplemented the family's income by weaving textiles. The bed curtains were woven in Dragør. The bouquets of artificial flowers encased in glass domes are souvenirs brought home from France. The tiled stove is from the end of the 18th century and stands in front of a splendid Dutch tile-clad wall. These blue tiles from around 1675 depicting soldiers are some of the oldest tiles in the museum.



*A Loom from Dragør,
19th century.
Dragør Room.*

Women in Dragør were permitted to weave cloth in their homes. It was a type of pension scheme for, among others, widows whose husbands had perished at sea. Weaving provided a good, stable income that gave financial security to many families. From the Dragør Room, we can enter the Tømmerup Room.



The Tømmerup Room. Motifs with biblical pastoral scenes were painted in the manner of the Venetian artists Jacopo Amigoni and Giuseppe Zocchi. The motifs were known all over Europe thanks to Joseph Wagner's engravings. The motif on the back wall depicts the Pharaoh's daughter finding the baby Moses in a rush basket.

The Tømmerup Room: The decor originates from the latter half of the 18th century and initially belonged to Cornelius Crilles Jansen's farm, where it was the guest room. Painted Cherubs adorn the ceiling. The walls are decorated with scences from Genesis and Deuteronomy painted on stretched out canvas. Depicted on the large wall are Rachel and Jacob at the well, and Joseph being lifted up from the well.

The other motifs are: the Pharaoh's daughter finding Moses in the rush basket, Moses killing an Egyptian, as well as Abraham amidst the oaks of Mamre. Beneath the biblical motifs are hunting scenes. Panels of chinoiserie adorn the wall with the windows as well as the door. These motifs were fashionable at the close of the 18th century as a result of Denmark's trade with China.

The Rococo tilt-top table is painted with a scene of the angels visiting Abraham amidst the oaks of Mamre.



The Picture Gallery

The artist Julius Exner (1825–1910) with his many genre paintings from Store Magleby has more than any other contributed towards evoking and visualizing Amager's cultural history.

In the second half of the 19th century, the farmer and his world became a theme in Danish art. Genre paintings, in their artistic expression, laid great emphasis on a sympathetic depiction of daily life and festivities. An accent on the national was articulated by Niels Laurits Høyen, one of the most influential art critics of the time. In his view, art and culture should define Danish national identity and create national unity. Artists ought to cultivate what was essentially Danish and paint images of the daily lives of ordinary folk and depict Danish landscapes and history. The daily lives of local Amager people were already well-known and it was Exner, who picked up this theme and made the farmers of Amager famous through his genre paintings.

Exner's first genre painting was executed in 1852. It depicts a woman from Amager, counting her money from selling fish. This portrait confirmed Exner's reputation as a genre painter. The woman's costume contains several layers of detail, and her facial expression is captured masterfully. The manner in which she sits with a hint of a smile on her lips, gesturing towards the coins in her palm, gives us the impression of a certain satisfaction with the day's earnings. The coffee is poured into the cup and a piece of rock sugar lies ready on the table.

The painting led Høyen 'to seriously draw the attention of the artist to also observe the people of Amager in their small homes, when on festive days they go in joyous turmoil dressed in their flattering old Dutch costumes'. A year later, the artist travelled from his home in Copenhagen out to Store Magleby. It was a Sunday, and when he arrived people were in church. He was permitted to sit and wait in a room: 'I sat here and beheld an entirely new and special material, not lit up by the atelier's dull lighting but by the clear daylight of reality', he later related. Exner received permission to live a couple of months with one of the farmers (Zibrandt Jansen) in Store Magleby for the price of one Danish Crown a day.

Julius Exner, A woman from Amager, 1852 (National Gallery of Denmark).



*Julius Exner, A scene from a party in Amager, 1854
(National Gallery of Denmark).*





In 1853, Exner exhibited the painting 'A visit to grandfather's', which was accorded the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' prize for the best painting exhibited that year. It was also a popular motif among the members of the public who were enthusiastic about the light tone of sentimentality expressed by the composition. Along with paintings such as 'A scene from a party in Amager' (1854) and 'A bridal couple return home from church' (1863), Exner became a highly popular artist, whose motifs were printed as lithographs and hung in many Danish homes.

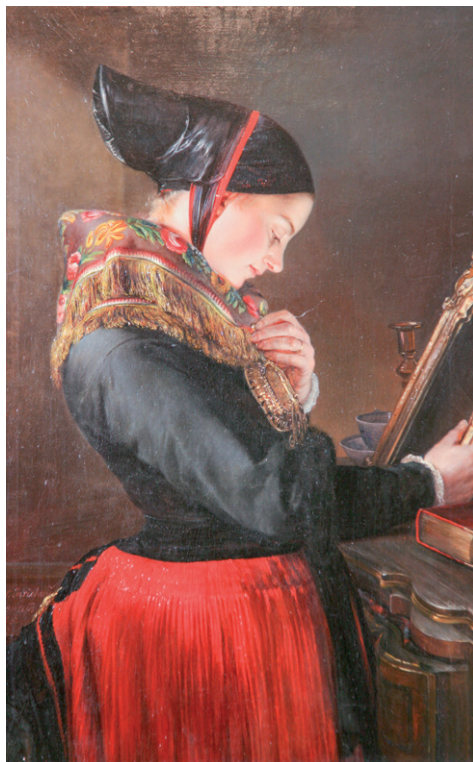
In the eyes of his contemporaries, his fame was due to the following:

"Each and every one of his many paintings attest to the childlike joy in life that he loves to depict with his brush, while he rather avoids life's more serious sides. Yet therefore, the figures Exner paints are also imbued with a wonderful sense of loveableness and childlike joy of life which we are spontaneously drawn towards, and we never tire of looking upon their cheerful countenances and innocent demeanors."

The motifs are typical for Exner. In his painting 'A scene from a party' we see the joyful and carefree farmers in festive company. Young people dance in the background, while the older men smoke their pipes and drink punch. In the foreground, the beautiful young girls are courted by a smiling young farmlad.

To the left: A bridal couple return home from church (Painting: Julius Exner).

With the coming of the modernity in the 1870s, realism came to the fore, and Exner's scenes from the lives of ordinary people went out of fashion. Today, he is largely unknown, despite the highly attractive qualities his works display. The Painting Salon also exhibits paintings by, e.g Jens Juel (1745–1802) and Elisabeth Jerichau Baumann (1819–1881).



An Amager girl at her looking glass (Painting: Elisabeth Jerichau Baumann). The painting is dated to 1855. It appears that the artist was inspired by Julius Exner, who achieved great popularity with his motifs from Store Magleby. Elisabeth Jerichau Baumann's portrait depicts much more of her sitter's character, and the viewer senses the young girl's thoughts, as she stands in front of the mirror. Jerichau Baumann was a great artist of her time and painted portraits of, among others, the poet Hans Christian Andersen and the Danish statesman Orla Lehmann (1810–1870).

A traditional Danish folk costume hat, known as a pige-hætte, is displayed on a thin metal stand. The hat is made of dark brown fabric and features intricate floral embroidery in red, white, and green. A red ribbon is tied around the base of the hat, and a large, ornate silver nameplate is attached to it. The nameplate is inscribed with the letters "J M H D". The hat is mounted on a small, dark, rectangular pedestal.

The Costume Collection

Sølvøre til pige-hætte med navne-
bogstaverne "J M H D", der f.eks kunne stå
for "Johanne – Mikkel – Hansens – Datter".

To the left: A girl's headgear with a silver earpiece. On the jewel, the girl's initials J M H D are attached. This could, for example stand for Johanne Mikkel Hansens Datter.

The Amager Museum holds a large and highly varied collection of old Amager costumes, that were worn in Store Magleby until the early 20th century. Their origins can be traced back to the Dutch immigration to the island of Amager.

Over time, Dutch influence waned, and a unique local folk costume developed. The women's attire followed complex rules that symbolized the changing of life's phases or various feasts through the year.



Costume exhibition.



To the left: Details from the costume collection. A family in Amager costume. The married couple at the rear, and the costumes of a young girl and a child in front. Boys were attired in skirts until they were toilet-trained. The final initial on the silver earpiece denotes the child's gender, here S for son. The silver earpiece was originally a hatpin.

The man's costume, however, did not change much over the years. In the second half of the 19th century, it was no longer seemly to wear knee breeches, and men changed to the more fashionable suit. The blue, pile or type of thrum hat in the exhibition is one of two existing examples (see page 34).

Jewellery is part of the Amager costume. The most outstanding are the studs for fastening jackets with the owner's initials in gilded silver. The characteristic egg-shaped vinaigrette from Amager belonged to the church outfit. It was covered with a silk scarf and carried by the woman in one hand. In the compartment of the vinaigrette lay a perfumed sponge and a coin for the church collection.



An egg-shaped vinaigrette from Amager.



The Shrovetide Exhibition

*"In Amager a cat is chased
out of the milk pail
In the same place
a goose's neck*

*though covered in soap
is pulled
in a test of strength
rendering her gravely ill."*

Thus wrote the priest Henrik Gerner in 1670 on the festive Shrovetide custom that the farmers from Amager had long upheld. 'Pulling the neck of a goose' was discontinued in the early years of the 18th century, whereas tilting at the barrel on horseback continues to this day as an important event in Amager, and especially in Store Magleby.



*Tilting the barrel. 1929
(Dragør Lokalarkiv).*

The baton with which the barrel is beaten or tilted is made of ash wood, while the barrel itself is especially made and painted in the colours of the Dutch Royal House of Orange-Nassau.

Earlier, at each Shrovetide, two different barrel tilting competitions were held, where first the unmarried sons of farmers tilted at a barrel, followed by the farmers themselves. Today, tilting at the barrel takes place once on Shrove Monday.

The rider who beats down the last stave of the barrel is crowned the 'barrel king'. Christian X often visited Store Magleby and witnessed the tilting at the barrel on nine separate occasions in the course of his reign. He presented the barrel king with a silver cup that he had brought with him in his coat pocket, and afterwards drank coffee and punch with the farmers.

The celebration of Shrovetide continues to be one of the most notable traditions in Store Magleby and a custom that contributes to maintaining local identity and establishing ties between the past and the present.



Batons used for tilting the barrel.



*A painted Shrovetide
barrel.*



'Tilting at the barrel in Store Magleby in Amager', a preparatory sketch for a painting by Emil Krause, 1897. This is an original sketch made for a larger painting by the artist. The place depicted is Møllegade (Mill Street), where tilting at the barrel took place for many years, until the event was moved to Hovedgaden (the Main Street). Store Magleby Church can be seen in the background.



Christian X greets the barrel king 1937 (Dragør Lokalkiv).



The Fire Station

Stove Magleby has experienced destructive fires on several occasions. In 1733, 33 farms burnt down, while fire destroyed 30 houses and killed 12 people in 1809, and in 1821 a fire burnt down seven farms with the loss of five lives.

The farms and houses in the village lay very close to each other at the time, and thus, a fire could spread very fast to neighbouring buildings. The Fire Station, which also functioned as the local jail was built in 1877 and extended in 1889. Today, Amager Museum's collection of old fire pumps and other fire-fighting appliances are exhibited here.

The Fire Station lies in Hovedgaden (the Main Street) close to the village pond.

The Fire hose comprised a copper tub with a built-in pump case provided with two pistons and a pump handle. It could be used by 6–8 men, and with 50 pump strokes on each side a minute, it meant a capacity of 2–3 barrels a minute. The carriage itself is painted red and has 'Hollænderbyens sprøjte' (the Dutch Town's spray hose) painted in white, as well as the year 1843.



Barrels full of water were always ready at hand in the farms of Store Magleby.

The Museum Year



Winter

Spring



Just as life and nature, Amager Museum, too, has its own cycle. The Winter celebrations include Christmas with a traditional Christmas fair as well as the Shrovetide celebrations with preparations for the magnificent tilting at the barrel on horseback with its rich traditions. Spring heralds the arrival of animals, and the tulip field blossoms in May. Summer brings the past to life throughout July, with the farms buzzing with activity and visitors gaining a glimpse of life in the old days. The Dahlia days of September glide over to the autumn school holidays with its butchering of hens and geese, with the butcher making heaps of sausages, and volunteers helping to mash apples and make hot soup. The volunteers also help make Halloween a ghastly experience! See the exciting and fun-filled activities rich in learning possibilities at www.museumamager.dk



> Summer > Autumn



*Julius Exner's painting
of a girl in Amager
costume from 1853.
It is a sketch for his later
painting 'A scene from
a party in Amager'
(pages 56–57).*

