

## CHAPTER 2

In the meantime, we left Jeremy to negotiate what he could, and checked with our vet on the procedure outlined in the Embassy's documents for having our cats innoculated against rabies. We had to get it done in the correct fashion, and with the correct documents that would be recognised by the Danish Customs, although as the UK was part of the EEC, that was not much of a problem. On the way over the North Sea, we also talked to the ships purser about their need to see the documents, and the arrangements for having the cats on board during the actual move. We were reassured that we could have the cats in the cabin with us (the brochure details referred to 'the ships jail' for pets!), although as it turned out, the reassurances were not worth the effort of getting them!

Arriving in Skt Klemens in the twilight, we went straight to Susse's house to get directions and the keys for our inspection. Then we found the explanation for the mystery of the fresh photos - the house and Susse's shared a common bamboo hedge!

As it was soon to be dark, and as the Danish custom is to *remove* all the light fittings that are not actually part of the fixtures, Susse lent us a torch and quickly took us round to the house. She and her husband, Christian, left us to our own devices, with the invitation to come back to their house and discuss everything when we were finished with looking around.

That was fun! First we had a quick look around the garden, courtyard, garage and cellar. Then we checked in every room and cupboard and were astonished at how much was built in and part of the price. The house not only had all the usual rooms, but also a guest room with toilet and shower; an extra room that had been built as a bedroom, but then approved for office use; laundry room *and* utility room; conservatory *and* a connected greenhouse with a herb garden outside. From the cats point of view, the road is a no-through-road, and the house is set back from the road anyway. Lots of trees and shrubs (*too* many as it turned out when all the leaves grew!) and even some flower beds. Susse told us that the house was built in 1960, so almost the same age as ours, and had had only two brothers owning it in turn. The price was low as it had been rented out for a couple of years when the second brother was divorced by his wife - additionally, the housing market was at its lowest point for some years and the house had a flat roof. That didn't bother us, but made it less attractive to many Danes. By the time it got too dark to see any more, we were convinced that we didn't need to look any further, so walked back to Susse ready to discuss the details.

That was when things got just very slightly complicated, nothing to trouble us, but we had to do things the Danish way, and that is quite different from the English.

Firstly, as we were foreign buyers, we had to be able to pay 'in cash' - there would be no possibility of the equivalent of a mortgage. No problem, as we would be selling our Finchley property clear of any loans. Secondly, the usual three months to complete the deal with an actual deposit would have to be shortened to only one, as the seller was anxious not to be let down and then have to chase us through the

English courts in case of a problem. We had to telephone to Jeremy to see how he was doing with negotiations, and ask him to get a quick lawyer for us. Anyone who knows the English system of house purchase would appreciate that that could *really* be a problem! Finally, completion would be in three months, and we would have to get a Danish lawyer to handle the details. Susse immediately arranged for us to deal with a lawyer the following morning, so off we went to Fangel Kro for food and a good, but excited, nights rest.

The next day was busy, as we had to meet the seller and sign the initial contract, then off to 'our' Danish lawyer to have explained to us the legal system that we would be involved in, and get him started on all the details. They turned out to be beautifully simple, with pre-prepared forms from Susse, including the legal search on the property simply downloaded from the property register - amazing! - and no need for surveyors reports and all the English rigmarole. Even the legal cost was fixed, and *very* low! Again, being foreign buyers there was a little bit more paperwork, but nothing extra on the costs. The lawyer was very careful to make sure that we understood everything before taking on the work, and when we left his office, we already had copies of the papers, and clear instructions as to what we would have to do back in England.

Then on to a helpful Town Hall official. Extra helpful, as it was the day after election day, and the place was really on holiday, but he had come in especially to advise us on the business move. Finally, we had contacted a Danish accountant at KPMG via their London branch (Myrtle had had a lot of dealings with them), who was prepared to do the paperwork with the tax authorities for us. Although his bill turned out to be the second biggest expense of the move (the biggest was the physical one for the journey by sea and road), the help they gave us turned out in the end to be extremely valuable in getting us properly established, and into the system. As one example (after we moved), without a personal identity number, we could not have a bank account. Without a bank account, we could not be registered into the tax system, otherwise how could we be made to pay our taxes? Thus we found a Danish Catch-22! The accountant pointed out to the tax office that it hurt both ways, and anyway, they could always seize our house which was far more valuable than any likely tax bill, so we got a temporary number allocated - then we could get the bank account - then we could be official - then we could go to the Folk Register and get the identity that all Danes have from birth!

However, that was all to come - now we simply had to clear up a few loose ends, and invite Kaja, Finn and the children to come and have a look at the house that by then we were convinced would eventually be ours! I rang them from the Kro and arranged to meet the next day at their house which, although near to Bøsøre Camping, we had never been to. That was our first experience of Kaja's directions! It was also our first experience of driving in snow here; the first time it had snowed in Denmark for 6 years! We already knew that the postal address was Frørup, and the road was Tårupbyvej. So naturally, we assumed that once arrived in Frørup, we only had to find the road to the next village - in the same way that Finchley Road is NOT in Finchley. No such luck! No sign of such a road in Frørup, so we drove through to the next crossroads, where the snow on the road signs was an added complication. So as to find someone to help with directions, we pulled off into the schoolyard a short

distance back, and were starting to get directions when Kaja drove in. She was getting worried that we hadn't turned up, so was out driving to look for us.

After chat and coffee at their house, we watched the children playing in the snow in the field opposite, and then when Finn got home from work, we all drove to Skt Klemens for a tour of inspection. Susse had trusted us with the key for as long as we stayed, so the house was displayed as if it was ours already. We then all went to the Kro for an evening meal which was greatly enjoyed by us all. When we heard on the hotel's television that there was a traffic warning 'do not use your car unless necessary', Kathrine wanted to know if they could stay in the hotel with us, but Finn decided against that. I think that even he got a shock when we went out with them to the car, wading through snow almost two feet deep!

We stayed for another day as the DFDS ferry goes only every other day, and then back on the road to home. The weather was still snowy and so cold that we had to buy some extra strong window spray and de-icer just to stop it refreezing after every wipe. Once home, we could check on how things were going with our sale and legal arrangements and it seemed that it was really quite smooth, for England. Whoops! wrong again! You can see that we really did move in the end, and to the Skt Klemens house. The legal problems in England turned out to be enormous and *very* costly, so we were glad to leave them all behind in March 1994 (only a month late, although we did not finally get the money sorted until the end of the year) and move at last. I will forget all that now and relegate it to the end of Book 1, and come in the next chapter, to happier times with the actual move.

**[Link to Chapter 3](#)**

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