

## **The Travel Groups trip to Stockholm and Copenhagen**

Ten travel group members flew to Stockholm for this six-nighter, joining 40 other travellers who we rarely saw otherwise than on the organised tours. Both here and later in Copenhagen the hotels were well placed within walking distance of the principal sites. We were accompanied throughout by the Tour Manager, the engaging Mohamed.

The first day had a walking tour of the Royal Palace and the 13<sup>th</sup> century old city full of wonderfully interesting side streets and cobbled roads. We later took a enjoyable ferry ride to the island of Djurugarden, one of Stockholmers' favourite recreation areas, for a guided tour of the Vassa Museum – the most visited museum in Scandinavia. This housed the truly stunning but poorly designed warship which sank soon after launch in 1628. The ship had been salvaged in 1961 after being submerged for over 300 years.

We were given a 72hr pass for the ferry and buses and some of us returned to Djurugarden to visit the very interesting Viking museum. This free time to do as we wished once we had got our bearings was a great bonus. After this we visited the Abba Museum and had an hilarious and hugely entertaining time. Thank You for the Music. On our last day in the capital we returned to the old town again where we found a marathon going on with thousands of runners.

The high-speed train trip from Malmo to Copenhagen was an unusual experience. The Öresund Bridge is a combined railway and motorway bridge across the Øresund strait between Sweden and Denmark. The bridge runs nearly 8km from Sweden to an artificial island in the middle of the strait. The crossing is completed by a 4km Tunnel to Copenhagen itself.

In the Danish capital we had a walking tour which took us to the Nyhavn Harbour where we again had free time. We also had time to do our own exploring – palaces, castles and grand buildings, and the surprisingly small Little Mermaid - while some took a delightful canal boat trip. This featured tight manoeuvres and some very low bridges and went through some old and newly developed parts of the city. It became apparent that it was unwise to stand up to take photos as the captain firmly told us to SIT DOWN.

Our last evening meal with our small group was a family-run restaurant with a unique way of serving a meal. It was done inside a large parmesan cheese. The chef carved out an amount of cheese from the edge which was left in the middle. Cooked Pasta was added, then mushrooms and an oil that was set alight before being added to the mixture. Very theatrical and very tasty.

Our group had a lot of fun and laughter over meals and on visits we all went off and had time to do our own thing. We had to be careful of bikes. The riders had right of way and did not stop for anyone. Other vehicles too had to stop for them and if we strayed into the many bicycle lanes we soon moved.

Anne Brereton