

## 4. Description of Sub-regions

### 4. The Wadden Sea Region: Description and Characterization of Sub-regions

#### 4.1 Introduction

The Lancewad project has dealt with the cultural heritage along the Wadden Sea as a whole. However, there were big differences in the characteristics within the Wadden Sea Region; in some regions the Wadden Sea specific traits are abundant and can be seen all over the landscape whereas in other areas you have to look carefully to recognize the Wadden Sea specific elements.

In order to describe not only the similarities but also the differences of the Wadden Sea Region and to carry out typical characteristics of certain areas, the whole Wadden Sea Region has been divided, besides the division into the regions Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and The Netherlands, into a number of sub-regions. Details of the historic landscape development and cultural identity could only be given on the smaller scale of local regions.

In this chapter the sub-regions are described one after another, starting at the northernmost point of the Wadden Sea Region and proceeding south to den Helder. The descriptions take their starting point in the modern landscape and look backward in time in order to describe how more recent changes overlay older structures. The emphasis is on those objects and structures that can still be recognized in the landscape.

The descriptions leads up to a short evaluation with the aim of pinpointing the essence of the individual sub-region. This assessment has been done on the basis of the four categories archaeology, historical buildings and monuments, historical geography and perception of landscapes. The defined criteria for the importance of these categories in the sub-regions were conservation status, context between the elements, density and representativeness.

#### 4.2 The Danish Wadden Sea Region

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##### 4.2.1 Introduction

The Danish region involved in the Lancewad Project includes the coastal parishes and the parishes with marshlands which do not adjoin the coast. Where these parishes stretch a long way inland, only the village areas containing marshlands have been included. Thus the region covers both the marshlands and the adjoining geest areas. The region is divided into three sub-regions: 1. Vardeådal, Sneummarsken and Ribemarsken, 2. Rejsbymarsken, Ballummarsken and Tøndermarsken, and 3. The Danish Wadden Sea islands.

Compared to the rest of the Wadden Sea region, the Danish section is a relatively recent landscape, where embankments were made late. Within a relatively short expanse, virtually the whole spectrum of marshland development is represented.

- The newly created marshland on Skallingen.
- The unembanked marshlands by the mouth of the Varde Å river and at Novrup south of Esbjerg
- The marshlands with no building at Sneum and Ribe, which were embanked recently.
- The marshland north of Ballum which were built on early and embanked late.
- The marshland at Tønder, which was both built on and embanked early.



### 4.2.2 Vardeådal, Sneummarsken and Ribemarsken

By far most of the Wadden Sea coast in this sub-region has historically belonged to the Kingdom of Denmark. As a rule of thumb, the Kongeå river demarcated the Kingdom of Denmark from the Duchy of Schleswig, while the City of Ribe and its hinterlands south of the river formed a royal enclave.

#### Landscape

The lighthouse at Blåvandshuk marks the northern boundary of the Wadden Sea. From here, the reef Horns Rev extends for more than 40 kilometers to the west under the sea. It has caused innumerable shipwrecks, which accounts for the Dutch name for the reef Duyvels Horn ("The Devil's Horn"). The area around Blåvandshuk is characterized by the numerous dunes, which in most of the area are barren, whereas the eastern section towards the bay Ho Bugt supports characteristic conifer plantations, which were established from the latter half of the 1800s on. The dunes, which rise high above the sea, form a stark contrast to the marshland areas, which in general are very narrow in this region, and where some stretches are still unprotected by dykes. The dykes in the sub-region date, in the main, from the period 1914–1929, which means that the older inhabitants of the area can still remember a significant change in the landscape.

The marshlands in the County of Ribe - Vardeådal, Sneummarsken and Ribe marsken - constitute the northern section of the Wadden Sea coast and show a transition from the most recent paludification at the east of Skallingen in the north, to the older, undeveloped marshland by Ribe in the south. On the protected tongue of land called Skallingen exist areas of untouched marshland used almost exclusively for pasture and for recreational purposes. Further north, there is the marshland around the Varde Å river. This is the only place in the Wadden Sea where a larger watercourse debouches directly into the sea without any regulation from sluices or dykes, and so provides an impression of how the other watercourses used to debouch unimpeded into the sea.

To the south, Esbjerg Bakkeø (old moraine) stretches right out to the Wadden Sea. This is largely characterized by the cultivation of heath land, which started in the mid-1800s. The old moraine, with its numerous fields and plantations thus represents a relatively recent cultural

landscape. The only place where a significant section of heath land from before this nineteenth century cultivation is still preserved is north of Sjølborg.

Unlike the river Varde Å, the rivers Sneum Å, Kongeå and Ribe Å, south of Esbjerg Bakkeø, were all altered during the 1900s. This was partly through straightening the watercourses themselves, for better drainage, and partly through the introduction of sea dykes with sluices. Only on Ribe Å was a lock built to allow passage to the city by boat. This area represents a young, undeveloped and recently embanked marshland.

The southern end of the Ribe dyke clearly demarcates the previous border between Denmark and Germany, 1864–1920. An agreement was not reached on building a common dyke, and so the flanking section of dyke at Vester Vedsted was created as a termination of the Danish embankment. Only after the Reunion in 1920 was the King Christian X Dyke built to link Vester Vedsted with the bar Astrup Banke.

#### Settlement

Characteristically, the settlements in the sub-region are situated on the edge of the geest. The narrow marshlands meant that the population could settle here and use both the rich grazing of the marshlands and the acreage on the geest. There are very few places where there are settlements in the marshlands from before the embankment, and even these are on natural geest outcrops and not on artificial mounds, none of which exist in the region. In its most typical arrangement the settlement forms a long row of farms right on the edge of the geest. They often still have a well-preserved system of fields in the marshlands, divided by ditches. In the past these fields were mainly used for hay production and grazing, but today grain-growing is common in the embanked areas. The location of settlements still makes it very easy to see the difference between the previous pastures in the marshland and the cultivated geest.

The combination of cattle farming on the marshlands and cereal production on the geest can be traced right back to the centuries before Christ. Even then, people chose to live on the geest alongside the marshlands, and so many of the still extant villages can trace their history back to the Iron Age. However, up to the eleventh century, villages were often relocated, and so the villages are not necessarily in exactly the same place as originally, but are within the same area of resources. Most villages took their

existing positions during the Middle Ages, and previous settlements are often to be found on the nearest upland. One example of such a village is Novrup, east of Esbjerg, situated near one of the few remaining unembanked marshland areas. On the outskirts of the village the remains of settlements have been unearthed from both the Iron Age and Viking Age. There have also been rich Iron Age finds in the area around the village of Billum at the mouth of the Varde Å in Ho Bugt, as well as at Tjæreborg south of Esbjerg and at Vester Vedsted outside Ribe. Here especially Dankirke has proved rich in finds, stretching from 200 B.C. to 750 A.D., indicating trading contacts with Frisian and Anglo-Saxon areas.

On the inner part of the old moraine land settlements have historically been hamlets or individual farms. It is quite clear that the occurrence of marshlands made it possible to establish larger villages, while the lack of pasture only allowed smaller settlements. However, it does seem that the old moraine land was densely inhabited in prehistoric times. Traces of numerous prehistoric settlements and not least the burial mounds testify to this. In the Marbæk Plantation there are two protected Iron Age dwellings where remains of the houses and paving still can be seen. In the plantation there is also a large protected field system, called celtic fields, from the same time. In a small heathland area north of Hjerting there is a group of no fewer than 15 protected burial mounds, out of a total of 18 which have been discovered. The group is unique in that they are in very good condition and very close together. In Esbjerg a range of historic dwellings has been excavated, which show the whole development of settlements from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages.

As in many other parts of the country the land reform movement at the end of the eighteenth century has left its mark. One example is the sale of the agricultural estate of Krogsgård in 1792, where the demesne was divided up into smallholdings on Krogsgård Mark. This is an early example of division into smallholding, and the structure is still well-preserved. The current division by ditches into individual pastures of the marshland itself can frequently be traced right back to the enclosures around 1800. This is true, for example, for Vilslev, which was enclosed as early as 1762.

There are, and were, few private manors in the area around Ribe. The power of the secular and especially the ecclesiastical institutions of the city made it very hard for the nobility to settle in

the area. Thus the manor of Lustrupholm, close to the city, belonged to the Bishop of Ribe in the Middle Ages. A similar situation existed around Varde, with the power of the royal castle.

In other parts of the region there was almost one manor per parish. Most, however, were small and over the years the main buildings disappeared, meaning that very little is left today. This is true of, for example, the manors of Sneumgård, Krogsgård and Visselbjerg, where it cannot immediately be seen that around 1700 these were the core of medium sized estates. On the other hand, at Hesselmed you can still see what the main building of a small West Jutland manor looked like in the 1700s. Also the village of Høgsbro, southernmost in the region - although there is not a great deal to see - gives the impression that the manor house Høgsbrogård, located a little to the north of the village, used to have a special status. This was once a stately home, mentioned as early as the 1400s, but later became an ordinary copyhold farm.

#### Style of building

While the older agrarian buildings in the rest of Denmark are timber-framed, the dominant style in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea region is brick-built. This was the result both of a shortage of wood and the influence from the south. The brick-built farms reached the Ribe area in the middle of the 1700s. In fact there are virtually no agrarian buildings in the region still surviving from before this time. In addition, the huge changes in agricultural methods from 1700 until the present day mean that very few of the old, brick-built houses from the 1700s have been preserved, although there are exceptions, such as the many fine farms in the village of St. Darum.

Fig. 4.2:  
Farm in the village of Ho in the northern part of the Wadden Sea region. The farm dates from around 1800 and consists of farmhouse, stable and barn. In connection there is a „pensioner's house" from 1870.  
Photo: S. Søndergaard



Traditionally West Jutland farmhouses had four wings, one of which was the living quarters, and the others were used for keeping animals and storage. A distinctive feature of these four-winged farms on the west coast, as opposed to the rest of Denmark, is that the courtyard was a *mandgård*, used only by people and not by animals. Thus the dungheap was outside the farm, not in the courtyard. It was also typical that the farms were "inside out", with the main facade facing south, as in the western parts of northern Schleswig. This means that entry into the buildings was from the outward side of the farm, rather than from within the courtyard as with farms in the rest of Denmark. In the Ribe area, the influence of Frisian and Schleswig farm architecture (called *Jütisches Haus* in Schleswig) is also evident. In this style, the animal stalls and living quarters are in the same wing, separated by a transverse hall.

The farms were typically built of red brick, with thatched roofs ridged with turf, while the gables were hipped. It was also typical to have a hatch over the doors for loading hay and grain, called an *arkengaf*. In this region these were semicircular.

When agriculture boomed after 1840, new buildings tended to be designed in late classical style, while in the decades around 1900, new materials were used, such as machine-cut stone, cement and concrete, zinc, lead, slate and roofing felt. It was in part in reaction to this that a movement called *Bedre Byggeskik* ("Better Architecture") started. The

idea was to improve the aesthetics of agrarian buildings by recreating an ideal "Danish" style. Examples of this style can be seen several places in the sub-region.

Most of the churches in the sub-region were originally built in Romanesque style in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and many have been subsequently extended. Many are built from tuff from the Rhine area, and typically they are whitewashed and roofed with lead. In South-west Jutland alone in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries more than fifty tuff churches were built. An outstanding example is Hviding church. The oldest section dates back to the 1100s and is Rhine tuff on a stone foundation. The church, which is situated high amongst the small villages in the west of the parish, is in many ways an excellent example of the tuff churches in the Ribe area. It was built as a church for the aristocracy and originally had two west towers, which collapsed in the 1500s. In the same area

buildings from the Viking Age and the Middle Ages have been found, and there is a suggestion that this was an alternative trading place to Ribe with an embarkment place.

### Cities

The two old urban settlements in the region are Ribe and Varde, both located on eponymous rivers. Then there is the more recent and dominant town of Esbjerg, which was formed at the end of the 1800s. The location of all three must be seen in close relation to the opportunity to navigate the North Sea via the deeps which run through the Wadden Sea, notably Grådyb, Knudedyb, Juvredyb and Listerdyb.

*Ribe* is the oldest city, not just in the region, but also in the whole of Denmark. It started as a market place on the northern side of the river Ribe Å at the beginning of the 700s, but later was moved to the southern side, where the cathedral and castle mound were built in the 1100s. Throughout the Middle Ages, Ribe was the predominant port for the region, and until the quay was built in the late Middle Ages it primarily consisted of a row of anchorages behind the islands of Fanø, Mandø and Rømø. Exports from Ribe included horses, bullocks, fish, salt, grain, butter and salted meat. Among the goods imported via Ribe were cloth and luxury goods from Flanders, Frisian salt and the tuff from the Rhine region used to build the churches. Ribe was also an ecclesiastical center and the seat for the powerful bishop. There were also several monasteries. The impressive twelfth-century cathedral and the well-preserved abbey of St. Catharina dating back to the middle of the 1200s are evidence of the ecclesiastical importance of the town. Royal power was strongly represented by the castle of Riberhus. This was built in the high Middle Ages, but was abandoned around 1660 and later demolished. Today only the castle mound with a few traces of the castle remains.

Up to the 1600s Ribe was one of the most important cities in the country with thriving maritime and commercial traffic. Then the city experienced a sharp decline which did not get any better at the delineation of the border in 1864, under which the city lost a great deal of its southern hinterlands. This economic stagnation, as well as the fortunate absence of fires after the great fire of 1580, is the reason why Ribe still has a very well-preserved town center with a wealth of old timber-framed houses, several dating back to the 1500s. Some buildings are even

older. To mention some: St. Catharina Abbey and cloisters from c. 1400; the Grammar School, where the original core is Puggård which dates from the 1500s; the old Town Hall from the 1520s, Tårnborg from the 1540s, two timber-framed houses which originally belonged to Quedens Gård from the 1580s, Weis' Stue and the modest buildings for ordinary citizens from around 1600. The old Cathedral School from the 1720s is one of the few notable buildings from the lean years of the eighteenth century. Although the architecture is dominated by Renaissance style houses from around 1600, Classicism began to make an impression from around the end of the 1700s, in part through new constructions, but also in the extension of older houses, with facades of brick. The best examples are: The front building of Quedens Gård from 1789, the Prefect's House from around 1800, the current Bishop's Palace from 1801, the old customs house and Pastor Bang's Foundation from the 1830s. A private home from 1864, now housing Ribe Art Gallery, is the best example of historicism in the city.

The main road in Ribe runs along a dam which was built across Ribe Å in the mid-1200s to collect water for the no longer extant mill Kongens Mølle and as a thoroughfare. Other mills were built in the 1500s, of which Midtmøllen and Ydermøllen are still centrally located in the city.

Age, history, the almost unaltered network of medieval streets - which still reveal the original structure of gabled houses - the mill ponds and well-preserved buildings make Ribe absolutely unique and an essential part of the history of the Wadden Sea region.

Varde originally started as settlement by the ford over the river Varde Å in the 12th century. In the Middle Ages there was a bustling maritime trade here, especially for the export of cattle, fish and agricultural produce. The town was also a royal administrative center, and for this reason a castle was built west of the town. Around 1300 it was moved to the rampart, which still exist, south of the town. The oldest known municipal charter is, however, from 1442. At that time Varde was not a particularly large town, rather like a large village. The numerous thatched roofs may well have been a factor in the fires that raged through the town, such as those of 1779 and 1821. As a result of these fires there are few buildings dating from before 1821. There are some, however, notably the medieval church of St. Jacobi, the Kampmann House from the 1780s and the Silasen House from the 1790s.



Fig. 4.3: This house in Grønnegade in the city of Ribe dates back from around 1530. It is a good example of the timber-framed houses from the 1500s. The façade was brick-built in 1848, which is also a typical feature in the development of the timber-framed townhouses. Photo: S. Søndergaard

Other historic buildings include the School of St. Jacobi from the 1850s, the Customs House from the 1860s, the Town Hall from the 1870s, and Jugendhuset from the 1880s.

A problem that Varde shared with Ribe was that large ships could not sail right up to the quays, and so there was a row of embarkment places where the goods would be put aboard smaller vessels which could navigate all the way to the town docks. While there were no buildings of any consequence at the embarkment places in Ribe, such as Hviding Nakke, Rømø and List, the biggest embarkment place at Varde - Hjerting - developed into a town of its own as it in the 1700s became the biggest port in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea. Today, Hjerting has become suburb of Esbjerg. It still contains several well-preserved houses and the pattern of streets and the town structure reflect the importance of the shipping traffic. However, there is no real harbor construction here, as the cargoes were loaded and unloaded at low tide when the vessels lay on the flats. In addition, Janderup should be mentioned. This was a smaller embarkment place on the river Varde Å, and today displays a fine entity of buildings, a church and the river.

Esbjerg grew as a result of the construction of a state harbor between 1869 and 1878, with a railway link to the rest of Denmark. Today the town is an important center for fishing, shipping and the offshore industry. The harbor was princi-

Fig. 4.4:  
The city of Esbjerg grew as a result of the construction of a state harbour between 1869 and 1878. Today the city is an important centre for fishing, shipping and the offshore industry. In the centre of the picture lies the triangular basin of the harbour from 1874 and in the background rises the water tower from 1897.

Photo: Fiskeri- og Søfartsmuseet



pally intended for trading with Great Britain, as Denmark had lost its ports in the Duchy of Schleswig after the 1864 war with Prussia. Subsequently the harbor at Esbjerg prospered because of the growth in Danish livestock production, principally because of the establishment of dairy co-operatives and the increase in international trade.

Soon, the fishermen from the nearby coastal area moved in and created the basis for a fishing port. Extensive seine fishery for plaice developed, and attracted several service companies, workshops and engineering companies to support the fishing fleet. As the establishment of the harbor created greater growth than anticipated, in 1870 a town plan was drawn up which included a checkerboard pattern of streets which remains outstanding in newer Danish town planning. The town contains a number of notable buildings of a style characteristic of the time around 1900. Many of them are protected. Examples are the Water Tower, the Customs House and the Old Court House, from the 1890s, the station from 1904, the Mission House from 1906, the Post Office from 1908 and several residential buildings from around 1900.

#### Other activities

The coastal area is principally agrarian, except for the town of Esbjerg, where the suburbs and allotments stretch right up to the recreational area of Marbæk, with its plantations and heathlands. The coastal stretches are at several places characterized by bunkers built during Second World War. The bunkers were part of the German

coastal defense for which Esbjerg was one of the pivotal nodes in Denmark.

In the past the salt marshes in particular were used to graze bullocks, which were then either taken south or shipped from Ribe to end up in Dutch markets. This trade brought a great deal of wealth to the region. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, there was a general economic decline in the region which hit the largest city, Ribe, particularly hard. Once been the center of cattle trading, it suffered during the recessions which started in the mid-1600s.

Before this time, fishery had also been of great importance to the region. The heydays were from the 1200s to around 1600, when it fell off drastically. Sønderside at the old coastline between Ho and Oksby, was one of the biggest fishing villages in South-west Jutland, along with Nordby and Sønderho on Fanø. In the season it had up to 1000 inhabitants. In 1581, 60 boats from Sønderside were involved in fishery, and the place acted as an embarkment place for Varde. The great storm flood of 1634 destroyed the village, and even today its exact location is not known. The place name of Havnegrøften, which means "harbor trench", testifies to the existence of Sønderside, and it is presumed that this marks the old coastline.

### 4.2.3 Rejsbymarsken, Ballummarsken and Tøndermarsken

Historically this region was part of the Duchy of Schleswig, with the exception of the royal enclaves which have always been Danish. The Duchy used to belong to the Danish King, but after the war in 1864, the King had to cede the area to the victorious Prussians. The new border followed the river Kongeå, but at the eastern and western extremities adjustment was made for the royal enclaves, which meant that the area around Ribe came under the Kingdom of Denmark. With very few exceptions, this is the current boundary between the Counties of Ribe and Sønderjylland. Thus the region was under Prussian administration from 1864 until the delimitation of the border in 1920, when it voted in a referendum to become Danish. It is important to keep the shifting border in mind when looking at the history of the region.

#### Landscape

In contrast to the region to the north, the marshlands here are wider and settlement took place on man made mounds in the marsh. Several watercourses transect the three marshlands of the sub-region, Rejsbymarsken, Ballummarsken and Tøndermarsken. At the northernmost point Rejsby Å meanders towards the dyke, while Brøns Å further to the south has been mainly straightened. This is also true of the two largest watercourses in the sub-region, Brede Å and Vidå. Unlike Brøns Å and Brede Å, Vidå was originally not straightened for drainage purposes, but to make it easier to sail to Tønder. One demonstration of this is that the lock at Højer was built in 1861 to allow passage. All the other watercourses mentioned flow into the Wadden Sea through ordinary sluices, all of which were constructed in the period 1915–25. As part of the drainage of Tøndermarsken in the 1920s, a dyke was built along the river Vidå which, at the same time, was straightened in many places.

The most remarkable area is the marshland of Tøndermarsk, which is now partially protected. Here some of the oldest dykes on Danish soil can be found. The landscape is characteristically flat, with channels that served both as boundaries, which previously had to be crossed with poles, and for transport, carrying the flat-bottomed marsh boats. The polders at Tønder, Møgeltønder and Højer were all embanked with the construction of the Højer-Rudbøl-Lægan-Grelsbøl (now in Germany) dyke in 1556. The effect of this was

that the old harbour town of Tønder was cut off from the sea, although sailing was still possible on the river Vidå.

In subsequent centuries new embankments were built regularly, moving the coast and the course of Vidå further and further west. Gammel Frederikskog was embanked in 1692, Rudbøl Kog in 1715, Ny Frederikskog in 1861 and finally Margrethe Kog in 1981. Although all the polders are part of the same development, each reflects the various periods of exploitation of the embanked land. Behind the first embankment from 1556, the field structure is typical of the medieval irregular division of the land. This is largely due to the old ditches which determined the division of the fields. The polders of 1662, 1715 and 1861, in contrast, typically show very regular divisions of pastures after embankment. Division into pastures made it easier to share the land between the parties involved. The polders were embanked through a charter, which was a contract for embankment tendered by the king. The group who won the tender could invest money in building dykes and in return be granted a piece of land in the new polder which they could rent out. This meant that the owners and the users of the marshlands were separated and that the areas were kept for pasture. The pattern of ownership can still be seen today from the gates, which often carry the name of the owner of the land.

The most recent polder, from 1981, shows a still different form of exploitation of the land. The main purpose of the polder changed from being a way of bringing more land into use to being a way of protecting the inward lying land, and also for nature conservation. The usage of these areas through grazing of larger parcels of land as well as the creation of a reservoir for inland water - which also benefits several species of bird - results in a landscape quite different to that of the polders behind. In addition in the southern part of the polder a saltwater lake has been created to preserve marine conditions.

The whole area of Tøndermarsken is characterized by the drainage work that took place between 1925 and 1928. The landscape was altered considerably by the creation of an embankment along the Vidå river and the introduction of pumping stations, while at the same time the old windmills previously used for drainage disappeared. Most recently, a unique conservation project on the outermost polders of Tøndermarsken attempts to manage the devel-





Fig. 4.5:  
One of the many preserved  
burial mounds near Hjer-  
psted north of the town of  
Højer.  
Photo: Carl Christiansen

opment in such a way that many of the older characteristics, such as grazing, are preserved.

Equally characteristic of the sub-region is the extensive bogland east of the old moraine land of Hjerpsted. The inhabitants of Ballum, Koldby, Hjerpsted and Sønder Sejerslev dug peat here, as this was an important fuel in a landscape without woodland. A large section of the bog, Skast Mose, was drained beyond recognition in the 1960s, whilst Kogsbøl Mose, to the south, has kept many of its properties as a place for peat excavation.

In the early decades of the twentieth century the northern coasts of the region were also embanked, except the stretch from Emmerlev in the south to Koldby in the north, where the geest extends right out to the coast. The polder Møgeltønder Kog has two of the three known wheels in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea region. A wheel is a deep waterhole behind a dyke created when the dyke is breached in a storm flood.

#### Settlement

Just as in the more northerly region of the Wadden Sea, this sub-region is characterized by many settlements on the edge of the geest. The region shows a pattern of a transition from the entirely undeveloped and late embanked Rejsbymarsk, through the early built on and - with the exception of a low summer dyke - late embanked Ballummarsk to the Tøndermarsk, which was built on and embanked early. Hjerpsted Bakkeø (old moraine) lies between the two latter marshlands. Here there is evidence of habitation from

the Stone Age to the early Middle Ages. The southern part of the old moraine is particularly densely covered with burial mounds, bearing witness to prehistoric habitation. A number of villages from the Old Iron Age have been excavated at Hjemsted, on the edge of Ballummarsken. The finds are on display in a museum on-site.

During the Middle Ages the inhabitants moved from the geest to the marshlands. On Ballummarsken, in the first instance, building took place on small moraine outcrops such as Mjolden, Lunde and Forballum. The later construction shows a change to using man-made mounds, which artificially elevated natural hummocks. Furthest out in Ballummarsken, the village of Misthusum also shows evidence of early habitation. Misthusum is the most northerly settlement on man-made mounds in the entire Wadden Sea region. Here in the Middle Ages eight mounds were created, each with its own farm, as well as a summer dyke to protect against the less severe storm floods of that season. However, these were nowhere near strong enough to withstand the big winter storm floods, and the village was inundated several times. In the eighteenth century, people started to move onto the geest, and in 1814 the last family left Misthusum. All that remains now are the ruins of the summer dyke and the eight mounds, on most of which are the remains of the freshwater reservoir essential to survival.

The Tøndermarsk is the northern part of a large connected marshland extending deep into Germany. This part of the Danish section is mostly reminiscent of the German and Dutch parts. The marshland was so big that as early as the Middle Ages people lived on dwelling mounds on it. This is especially true in the part called Ved Åen, where ten farms are located on mounds above the levees set up along the old course of Vidå through the Møgeltønder polder. The farm at Vester Anflod, the westernmost in this group, perhaps bears witness to the old village of Andaflyth, which was destroyed in a storm flood in the Middle Ages. In comparison to the rest of the Wadden Sea region, though, the mounds are both small and recent, for the most part only large enough to support a single farm. In the Danish part it is quite exceptional to have these 40 or so mounds within a relatively limited area. Many of the mounds are no longer inhabited, but remain as proof of mankind's eagerness to exploit the fertile soil.

To increase the "Germanness" in the principally Danish-minded area, the Prussian government began to buy up larger farms in 1896. The farms were often expanded through purchases. These state-owned farms were leased on very favourable terms to German farmers, who, in return, were expected to take political and cultural initiatives to increase the Germanness of the region. Most of these state-owned farms are to the east, and there are only a few in the Wadden Sea region. One such is Røj at Møgeltønder, which was bought by the Prussian state in 1903, and where the recent main buildings date from 1916. Later the farm was bought by the oldest and biggest estate in the sub-region, Schackenberg.

As well as the royal castle in Tønder, there used to be several private manors in the region. This is particularly true for the area around Højer and Tønder. In the parish of Emmerlev there were no fewer than three manors, which were all situated on the eastern side of the old moraine land at Hjerpsted down to Sejersbækken. The most notable manors in the sub-region, though, were Trøjborg and Schackenberg. The history of Trøjborg can be traced back to the 1300s, but all that remains today are the picturesque ruins of the Renaissance building, which was demolished in the 1850s. The farm buildings from the 1700s and the rampart have been preserved, and give a good impression of the construction of the manor in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By contrast, the main building at Schackenberg is very well preserved, but it lost its farm buildings as early as the 1700s. The castle was known as "Møgeltønderhus" back in the thirteenth century, when it belonged to the bishopric of Ribe. In the fifteenth century, the estate was annexed as a Danish enclave in the Duchy of Schleswig and, with the rest of the episcopal estate it went to the crown during the Reformation. The royal general Hans Schack was given the estate in 1661 by the Danish king as a reward for long and loyal service. In the 1660s he commissioned the current main building. The previous outer wall is still a part of the south wing. The current appearance of the main building, with its hipped roof and the rococo ornamentation on the side wings is the result of work in the 1700s. Schackenberg is currently considered one of the most authentic examples of a manor from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the street Slotsgaden, which leads from the castle down towards Møgeltønder is quite unique with an extraordinary number of

typical and well-preserved houses from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These were built by the owners of Schackenberg both to strengthen commerce and crafts in the town and as living quarters for the estate workers.

#### Style of building

Brick-built farm houses became usual in the region around 1700, and no entire timber-framed farm building from before that time still stands. In the region, as further to the north, there are four-winged farms which are "inside out". However, The Frisian style, where the stalls and the living quarters are in the same wing but divided by a crossways hall, is found here much more than it is further to the north. The layout of this type of farm is very variable. There are four-winged farms built around a small courtyard, which, as in South-West Jutland, were for peo-



ple only, but the many farms have two parallel wings connected by shorter wings. Although the agrarian buildings in the sub-region were influenced by contacts with Frisia the characteristic types of farm such as Haubarg or Saxon house (Fachhallenhaus) are not traditionally found in the area.

The farms are built of dark red brick and have hipped thatched roofs. Above the main entrance is the characteristic gable with a hatch - the arkengaf - which in this area and further south takes the form of a gabled attic. Often the non insulated houses are tiled inside.

In some of the houses on Tøndermarsken dating from the 1700s, behind the outer brick wall, roof-bearing posts have been preserved. This could be interpreted as a desire to keep the old-

Fig. 4.6:  
The protected farm Hjemstedgård dates back to around 1800, but was rebuilt 1850. The farm is a good example of the Danish West Schleswig building style.  
Photo: John Frederiksen

er type of construction in areas threatened by storm floods, which would remain standing and offer a means of rescue should the water volume push down the walls.

In the latter half of the 1800s, agrarian architecture, also in this sub-region, was distinguished by the use of new materials and the reaction to this at the start of the 1900s through the movements *Baupflege* and *Bedre Byggeskik*. As the people of *Bedre Byggeskik* sought the traditions of "the Danish house" they looked towards the West Schleswig style and found that the style of building in *Møgeltønder* was an exemplary model.

The churches in the region are almost exclusively Romanesque from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This includes *Brøns* church, one the largest Romanesque village churches in Denmark and also the best preserved tuff church in the County of *Sønderjylland*. *Emmerlev* church is also large, and on the edge of the geest, but is in a solitary location next to an inn between the larger villages of the parish, *Sejerslev*, with the old manor of *Kærgård*, and *Emmerlev*. The tall spire on the tower has served as a landmark for sailors.

The churches of the region are generally bigger than those immediately to the east and are typical expressions of the wealth which the parishes along the marshlands enjoyed in the Middle Ages.

#### Cities

The region has only one city *Tønder*, which has many old, well-preserved buildings and streets. The town is first mentioned around 1130, and is situated on the edge of the geest by the largest marshlands in Denmark. It presumably started as an anchorage and embarkment place at the bottom of *Vidå*, which was accessible even to larger ships. At that time the village of *Møgeltønder* ("Great *Tønder*") was the real *Tønder*. *Tønder* was awarded a charter in 1243, but the castle of *Tønderhus* had already been built some years before. The extensive work on embankments and land reclamation in the middle of the 1500s cut off access to the sea, and so *Tønder* lost its importance as a port. Nonetheless it continued to be an important trading centre, especially for grain and cattle, which brought wealth to the city. Later, trading in lace became very important for the economy of the city, meaning that *Tønder* continued to be a significant trading centre right up to the beginning of the 1800s.

The previous town layout, with its narrow gables and the resulting structure and buildings still dominates the town. There are still timber-framed buildings in the town, but many of the facades are clad or in bare brick. Bay windows and portals set in two gated doors are typical. While there are few remains of the old castle, *Tønder* has preserved several of the stone houses from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The oldest, apart from the church, is the large grey gabled house on the market square from the mid-1500s. The partially rebuilt mill *Slotsmølle* is from the 1590s, the grammar school from around 1610, the Town Hall from the 1640s, the large apothecary from the 1660s, *Drøhshes House* from the start of the 1670s, the hospital from the 1720s, the Prefect's House from the 1760s and *Digegrevens House* from 1777. In addition there are a number of less distinctive, but nonetheless well-preserved buildings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which all contribute to the special character of the town.

When *Tønder's* access to the sea became difficult, due to the construction of the dykes, *Højer* became the cargo harbor for *Tønder*. In 1736 *Højer* was granted a royal charter for commerce and craftwork thus becoming a so-called *flække* (market town), a type of town particular to the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. There were larger villages which had been given certain rights to conduct business and craft trades. In *Højer*, however, most people lived from seafaring, agriculture, oyster fishing and cattle trading. From the end of the 1700s the town was afflicted with stagnation due to a drop in the market for bullocks as well as the war with England from 1807-14 and the subsequent crisis. Several attempts were made to revive trade, with little success. Still today many well preserved and protected buildings testify to the town's status as a market town. These include the high medieval church, the vicarage from the 1700s, the merchant's house and *Kier's House* from the 1760s and the mill from the 1850s.

#### Other activities

Much of the economic activity in this region has been the same as that in the northern marshland areas, that is agriculture, cattle trading, fishing and seafaring. Today, agriculture, especially rearing cattle and sheep, dominates the landscape. The extensive stone stable at *Solvig* manor, which dates from 1585, is an expression of the huge importance of the cattle trade in the past. In all probability it was used to house the

numerous bullocks over the winter, before the spring when the livestock would be sold to a trader.

Access to the sea, and thus seafaring, became much more difficult with the embankments. When the first dyke was constructed, a sluice was built at Lægan, but this was soon moved to Rudbøl when the polder Guds Kog was embanked in 1566. Seafaring was still important for Tønder, and in 1611 a canal was dug through to the town to allow passage for smaller vessels. Larger ships put to and were unloaded off Emmerlev. The sluice was moved again, to Nørremølle with the 1715 embankment and finally in 1861 to Højer, which had long operated as a harbour. The Vidå sluice in the 1981 projecting dyke does not allow passage and thus signals the very end of seafaring for the Tønder region.

A peculiar industry in the region was the production of lace. The lace industry started slowly in the 1500s, and reached its peak at the end of the eighteenth century. The big farmers and the merchants of Tønder employed several thousand women and children in the rural areas around Tønder who produced laces in their own homes.

#### 4.2.4 The Danish Wadden Sea islands

The Danish Wadden Sea islands are the most northerly in the chain along the Wadden Sea. From the north, they are Langli, Fanø, Mandø and Rømø. Jordsand, which used to be the most southerly in the Danish Wadden Sea and was the only hallig in the region, vanished into the sea at the end of the 1990s. The most northerly island, Langli, has been uninhabited since the start of the twentieth century, when it was abandoned after several storm floods ravaged the scarce fertile land. The Danish State bought the island in 1982, and has established a field station there.

At low tide it is possible to walk or drive over the seabed to Mandø and Langli, and it is possible to drive to Rømø across a dam. There are ferry links from Esbjerg to Nordby on Fanø.

Thus there are three inhabited islands in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea, and habitation can be traced back to the thirteenth century. Frisian influence is especially visible in the style of building, but the Frisian language is not spoken on any of the Danish islands.

The churches on the three islands are generally more recent than in the other sub-regions. On Fanø, Nordby church dates from 1786 and Sønderho church from 1782. Mandø church was

built or renovated in 1727, and the porch dates from 1792. However, Rømø church was originally a late medieval brick-built church, which was considerably extended in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

On all the islands, the women took care of the farms when the men went to sea. The islands have always had better links to the mainland to the east and the world to the north, south and west than to each other, and the development of each island has to be seen in the context of its links.

The islands have five of the 75 rescue stations set up in Denmark after the formation of the Danish Rescue Service in 1852. The stations, identified by their green doors with two Danish flags, were manned by volunteers. Four of them are protected.

#### Fanø

Fanø is today primarily a tourist economy. Seaside and hotel tourism started to develop at the end of the nineteenth century on the northern section of the west coast of Fanø. There are still some well-preserved summer cottages from this time. In the period 1957-1961 there was a considerable expansion of the holiday home areas. The west and north coast of Fanø also has a lot of bunkers built during the Second World War.

The attractive skipper towns of Nordby and Sønderho show signs of the development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the island was the home for an unusually large fleet of ships which undertook long voyages. With the flourishing of seafaring, the towns developed a special, densely populated maritime character with a typical architectural style, narrow lanes and slipways, as well as institutions linked to

Fig. 4.7 : Timber-framed house from Nordby on the island of Fanø. It dates from the eighteenth century and represents the time before brick-building became dominant. Photo: S. Søndergaard



shipping. Sønderho is the better preserved, whereas Nordby is the livelier because of the ferry link. Both towns are typical skipper towns, of which there are only a few in Denmark. These towns were not given municipal charters, but nonetheless have an unmistakable town feel. Traditionally, Sønderho looked to Ribe, while Nordby looked to Varde and Hjerting; a situation which shows that contact over the sea was often more important than that over land.

The houses on Fanø were single blocks, with the animal stalls at one end and the living quarters at the other, divided by a transverse hall with a hatch over the door. The roof was thatched, but unlike on the mainland, the gables were entirely boarded. Frisian and Dutch influence can be seen not just in the colors of the woodwork and the painted lintels over the doors and windows, but also the interiors, for which wall tiles were imported in huge quantities during the first period of the growth of shipping from Fanø at the end of the eighteenth century.

The war with England (1807-14) put an end to the good times for seafaring at first, but from the 1840s it recovered and by the end of the nineteenth century the fleet at Fanø was one of the biggest in Denmark. Then the shipping collapsed in the face of competition from steamers. By 1905 the fleet was down to half its previous size, and the last of Fanø's large ships was sold in 1919. Once Fanø's role as a sailing community was played out, only a small amount of local traffic remained. One of the vessels used was the traditional Wadden Sea ewer, which was used to transport goods in the region from the new large harbor at Esbjerg. Although the seafaring era is history, there is still sailing instruction on Fanø and many sailors live on the island.

Before the rise in shipping in the eighteenth century, the main livelihood on Fanø was from agriculture and fishery. Sønderho and Nordby were two of the biggest fishing hamlets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the rural settlements were to the south of the current site of Nordby. While no traces remain of the fishery, the structure of the agriculture can still be seen in the landscape around Nordby. Examples are the pastures north of Nordby and the roads to them, the old fields on the outskirts of Nordby, and the fields, salt meadows and heath south of Nordby where the original villages were situated. The only duck decoys in the Danish section of the Wadden Sea can be seen on the east of Fanø. Four have been preserved and two restored. These traps were constructed

in the 1860s and were used to catch ducks, until they were banned in 1931.

#### Mandø

Mandø is the only island in the Danish Wadden Sea protected by a dyke, which extends around the whole island except for the dunes on the west coast. The buildings are concentrated in a small town, which is protected against the sea to the west by dunes. In the town there are a small white-washed church which was built or renovated in 1727, a windmill constructed in 1830 and altered in 1860 to supersede a post-mill, the inn in the previous community center and the rescue station built in 1912 after a shipwreck in 1911 in which several people perished. There is also a museum set up as a nineteenth-century captain's home.

The only way to reach the island is over the seabed at low tide. The point of arrival is Gammel Mandø ("Old Mandø"), which was the site of the town and the church until the inhabitants were driven out by the storm floods. When the island is first mentioned, in the thirteenth century, the town was in the northern part of the present island, but around the mid-1500s it was moved to its current location in the lee of the dunes. The nearby land was cultivated, and was protected by a summer dyke made of seaweed around 1830, called the Toftegård Dyke. The first proper sea dyke was built in 1887 and protected a larger acreage against flooding. This dyke incorporates a støpe - a passage through the dyke which can be closed up with planks and sandbags in the event of a storm flood. The dyke has been breached several times by storm floods, for example in 1911 and 1923, which created a wheel at the eastern section. Because of the vulnerability of the dyke, and to protect the land beyond the old dyke, from 1935 to 1937 the current dyke, the ring dyke, was constructed. It was this dyke that united the two parts of Mandø and made them one island.

#### Rømø

Rømø has no particular towns. Instead there is a long row of small villages along the east coast. Here they lie in the lee of the dunes which stretch from north to south. The island has a complicated history of ownership, at times having been divided between Germany (the northern part) and Denmark (the southern part), at times entirely German, and today entirely Danish.

Tourism is very important for Rømø today, and this was boosted by the construction of the

causeway out to the island in 1948. As early as 1899 the Reverend Mr. Jacobsen from Skærbæk did a lot to attract tourists by building a trackway between the bathing spots at Lakolk and Kongsmark, on which the carriages were pulled by horses. From Kongsmark ferry connections were established to the mainland. There was an attempt to encourage "mass-tourism" and several of the summer cottages built with this in view still stand at Lakolk. In 1964 a fishing harbor was built at Havneby to generate commercial opportunities on Rømø. Today it is the center for the most extensive shrimp fishing in Denmark, and is a transit harbor for German and Dutch shrimp vessels. It is also important as a ferry berth for the route to List on the island of Sild.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Rømø was a depressed agricultural society with a resulting depopulation, but before that time the sea had been very important. Until the end of the sixteenth century, Rømø combined fishery and agriculture. Subsequently, trading in partnership with merchants from Ribe developed as a new commercial sector, and from around 1630 seafaring, combined with oyster fishing in the winter, dominated the commercial scene.

The Swedish occupation of Rømø in 1644 marked the end of the zenith in Rømø's own shipping commerce, and the inhabitants supported themselves through a combination of agriculture and small scale fishing, oyster fishing, sea trade and voyages to Greenland. A large number of the male population worked with whaling from Hamburg and the Dutch ports, and many became captains aboard whalers. At the peak, in 1770, there were 30 whaler captains from Rømø. This period is reflected on the island by fences made of the jawbones of whales and the monuments to the captains in the cemetery. This prosperity also resulted in a number of "Captain's Houses", one of which is now owned by the National Museum. In fact this one is not typical of the captains' houses, but it exhibits a lot of Frisian qualities, including the ornamented stones in the brick lintels and the abundance of wall tiles in the kitchen and living rooms.



Fig. 4.8: Captain's monument in the cemetery on the island of Rømø. It reflects the period where many inhabitants of the island participated in whaling from Hamburg and the Dutch ports. Some became captains and monuments were erected of their deeds. Photo: John Frederiksen

#### 4.2.5 Characterization of sub-regions Vardeådal, Sneumarsken and Ribe- marsken

Traces of the settlement of prehistoric time have been found on the geest bordering the marsh areas. The landscape today is characterized by the many preserved burial mounds, such as those north of Hjerting. In the city of Ribe archaeological excavations have revealed traces of market activities as early as the beginning of the 8th century.

The most important building of the sub-region is the cathedral in Ribe from the 12th century, and its value is heightened by the context with the rest of the very well preserved town by Ribe Å and the marsh areas. Most of the parish churches dates back to the 12th and 13th centuries. Typically they are whitewashed and roofed with lead - often containing tuff stone.

The marshlands of this sub-region show a transition from the most recent paludification at the east of Skallingen in the north, to the older, undeveloped, marshland by Ribe in the south. The Varde Å river to the north debouches directly into the sea without regulation from sluices or dykes. South of this the old moraine land stretches right out to the Wadden Sea. Charac-

teristic for the sub-region is that nowhere is the marshland so wide that it has been necessary to settle in the marsh. Consequently the old settlement is found on the geest. Here many villages can trace their history back to the Iron Age. The major sea dykes are all from the 20th century and some of the marsh areas have never been embanked.

Many villages still lie along the edge of the geest. The town of Ribe is beautifully situated on the rim of the Ribe marsh. Traces of the old borders between the kingdom and the duchess of Schleswig can still be found in the landscape

#### Rejsbymarsken, Ballummarsken and Tøndermarsken

In this region too, all the finds from prehistoric times are on geest. The visible remains are the burial mounds, and especially the southern part of the old moraine is densely covered with them.

The old town of Tønder and the large village of Møgeltønder have many beautiful old houses. Both here and in the countryside good examples of the influence from the Frisian areas can be found. The castle of Schackenborg has a very well preserved main building mainly from the 18th century. The churches of the sub-region are mainly from the 12th and 13th centuries.

Settlement on the edge of the geest is typical, but as the marsh areas in this sub-region are wider than in the northern sub-region settlement also took place on man-made mounds in the marsh. Though dwelling mounds are typical of the Wadden Sea Region as a whole, there are relatively few in Denmark and very characteristic of this particular sub-region. Also the polders are unique in a Danish context. In the Tønder Marsh the oldest dykes on Danish soil can be found around the polders Tønder, Møgeltønder and Højer, constructed in 1556. The most recent polder is from 1981.

The typical landscape here is the wide marsh areas. The landscape in the Marsh is flat, with channels that were used for boundaries, drainage and transportation. Visually there are still great differences between the irregular ditches of the old polders from 1556 and the regular patterns of the younger ones.

#### The Danish Wadden Sea islands

On the Danish Wadden Sea Islands there are very few finds from prehistoric times and the early history of the islands is not very well known. The settlement of the three inhabited islands can be traced back to the 13th century.

Only the church on Rømø dates back to the Middle ages. On Fanø and Mandø the churches are all from the 18th century and they are thus recent in comparison to the churches on the mainland. Especially Fanø and Rømø have a lot of well preserved farms and skippers' houses from the 18th and 19th centuries showing beautiful examples of Frisian building style. The islands bear witness of seafaring of past centuries, of which the skipper towns of Fanø are very good examples. On Rømø whale bones can be found used as fences as a reminder of the heydays of whaling and at the cemetery there are monuments to the captains.

The two biggest islands have a small rim of marshland to the east while a large part of the rest is dunes. Two of the Danish Wadden Sea islands can best be reached by walking over the seabed at low tide.

On the west coast of Fanø and Rømø there are wide sandy beaches which attracted the tourist industry at the end of the 19th century.

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