

## GETTING A HEAD START ON COPENHAGEN



by Maureen Holdham

**D**uring the past ten months my husband, Jim, and I have seen more parts of Copenhagen, we believe, than most visitors, or in fact, most Danes. We recently trained for, and ran, the "Wonderful Copenhagen Marathon". Our training took us through three seasons and many hundreds of kilometres of running, not to mention several pairs of running shoes.

Early on, we joined a running club called "Sparta" – a fun and interesting way to meet local people of like interest. This was the idea of my running partner and friend, Britt Marie, a Swedish neighbour. Through her I was able to understand the club brochures, warm-up exercises and future plans. We were immediately made to feel at home and were even welcomed by the "pros", Frank Horn being one of them – a gentleman in his sixties, who looks more like forty and is well known in the world's running circles.

We started our training by running with this group on 15 km runs. It was a great boost to have others along on some of the wet cold grey days of winter. As our schedule progressed, we set out on our own for the longer runs. Without the club's help, we had to find our own water, and carry oranges and raisins.

Along the way, we discovered new and interesting parks and routes. Our favourite Saturday jaunt was along the coast of the Oresund, a very beautiful run. We were able to see across the narrow strait to Sweden, which is, according to Britt Marie, Denmark's finest view. As spring approached, the Sound was first filled with sailing ships, then with wind surfers, and finally, with the scantily-clad Danes, some with "all over" tans. Never a dull moment, the views were especially enjoyed by Jim.

As our Saturday runs became longer, we discovered more picturesque villages with old mills, thatched roofs and quaint gardens. Bikers hit the roads wearing brightly coloured gear – Denmark is the world's best country for biking; flat, safe and oh-so-lovely. We passed golf courses, green and lush, as well as flower-filled woods and tiny harbours. People were friendly, many waved and honked their car horns.