

# RUNRIG AND TØNDER FESTIVAL

SINCE 1983, THE BAND HAVE ENJOYED A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TONDER FOLK FESTIVAL IN DENMARK. THIS YEAR, THE FESTIVAL CELEBRATED ITS 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY, SOMETHING THAT IT NOW HAS IN COMMON WITH RUNRIG. IAIN PAYS TRIBUTE, BOTH TO THE FESTIVAL AND ITS MENTOR, CARSTEN PANDURO.

Words: Iain. Photographs: Jens Th, Carsten, Runrig archive.

LYING ON THE SCORCHING SANDS OF St.Tropez in August amongst the beautiful people, this twenty year old genuinely felt he was living a charmed life. Being paid to be there only confirmed the fact that there was no need to be going anywhere for a long time.

Why then did we have to strike camp and drive twelve hundred miles to a festival that I'd never heard of, in a country that would inevitably be a lot colder than this?

After all, one festival is pretty much like the next, so the prospect of two days on the road didn't inspire me to want to leave the bronzed beauties of the Cote d' Azure for the distant Danes. Not quietly at any rate.

This was life New Celeste style. Go anywhere, and everywhere, no matter what and have a good time into the bargain. Two days later we arrived in Denmark, in Tønder. The arrangement was to go to a bar called Bodega 37 to

meet the promoter, seemingly a character of vintage Viking stock who would tell us all we needed to know. The hour was late, and hunger and tiredness had taken its toll, but I'd heard a thing or two about Danish beer, so it seemed silly not to go with the flow for a while.

On entering the pub, I was immediately struck at the size of these people. The genetic pool of the Scots started to look much more like a puddle against these big friendly giants. Standing in the middle of it all was a gentleman by the name of Carsten Panduro. He was the aforementioned

promoter, and after gratefully accepting his offer of a cold one, gave me one of his now legendary bear hugs that welcomed me to his festival, his town, and a lifetime of friendship.

Tønder is a lovely wee town in the south of Jutland not far from the German border. It is one of the oldest towns in the country and boasts some beautiful old buildings and gorgeous houses. The tree lined river running through it offers a great feeling of sanctuary, if you feel you have to drag yourself away from the generous wad of restaurants and pubs.

As you would expect from such an ancient town, the museum can put you touch with a colourful and protracted history that earns Tønder a special place in the hearts of many Danes.

It didn't take long to discover there was something remarkably different about the Tønder Festival. It felt different. The people who ran it conveyed a genuine sense of wanting you there and went the extra mile to make you feel at home.

The audiences were really appreciative of the artists that appeared, and everywhere you went you felt this enthusiasm and will to make this festival a success. We had four days in Tønder and they are etched in my memory as a brilliant time. I drank my fair share of beers and annoyed my fair share of girls; and ended my experience there sharing one of Hamish Imlach's famous curries with a hundred other Clyde built stomachs. Superb!!

A couple of years had elapsed since I left New Celeste, and by now the green fields of France and Europe had been exchanged for the Scottish Glens and a transit van with a member of Runrig at the wheel. Nothing wrong with that you might say, and you'd be right. But after having travelled throughout a lot of Europe, I could easily see the potential for the band beyond these shores.

By this time, we had recorded *Recovery* and taken on Marlene as our manager, and things were beginning to look up. The band had made the quantum leap of committing full time to music, leaving all possibilities open. It was then I started to make use of some of the contacts from my time in New Celeste and naturally, one of my first ports of call was to Carsten. He expressed a keen interest in what we were doing and was duly sent copies of *Highland Connection* and *Recovery*. Next step was when Carsten, on his annual trip to The Edinburgh Folk Festival in April 1983, came to a Runrig concert in a venue outside the official festival programme. Not only did he like the band and the music, but he immediately found 'a partner in crime' in our Manager Marlene Ross. In the years to come they got on like a house on fire, building both a great working relationship and a warm personal friendship. In many ways that sums up the man. Someone who knows exactly what he wants and what is right for the festival without compromise.

Back in Denmark, Carsten spread the word among the main promoters, and in July Runrig had their first Danish gig on the Folk Stage at Roskilde Festival. A month later the band made its debut at Tønder, and there the foundation for a long and



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**TØNDER FESTIVAL**  
27 AUGUST 2004  
The audience, and Bruce on stage.

