

Frank and Dagny

Dorothy 26.08.2014 Edited by M.A. Jones



Frank and Dagny never met, she died in 1917. Dagny had been “godmother” to two British pows. Her husband, Vilhelm, carried on sending parcels to them after her untimely death. After the armistice Vilhelm, welcomed Frank, who was working as Deputy Assistant Director of Transport for the Danish Scheme, into their home for the duration. Vilhelm Vett, co-owner and director of “Magasin du Nord” the Copenhagen version of Selfridges, was a wonderful host *“We are the best of friends and I have a latch key and the run of his best Havanas, liquors and a multitude of other objects of liquid art. Every night, almost, he dines me out with great gusto, or we dine at his friends’ palaces and they dance till all hours, most beautifully”*.

The First World War experiences of Frank Vans Agnew MC have recently been published in “Veteran Volunteer –memoir of the trenches, tanks & captivity 1914-1919”. Frank had been wounded in the arm and taken prisoner by the Germans in November 1917 and ended the war in Fürstenberg prisoner of war camp. Frank kept a diary and along with the postcards and letters sent to his sister one can follow his day to day experiences as they happened. A week after the armistice, on Tuesday 19th November 1918, a notice was put up in the camp that the pows *“were to go by rail to Stettin, then boat to Copenhagen and then home on Danish steamships”*. This he thought *“sounds true and will save the long and icy cold train journey via Holland and Belgium”*. However days passed, nothing happened and patience was running thin. On Friday 6th December the explanation given was *“lack of transport by sea, but they should be home by Xmas”*. The plan was still for the pows to travel via Copenhagen. Frank was all out of food, having a breakfast that day of dry bread, dripping and cheese and tea without milk. He doubted whether more relief parcels would arrive.

On hearing that 12 officers were needed to go to Copenhagen to help with the repatriation operation Frank volunteered and was accepted. Copenhagen wasn't a vague unknown Scandinavian city, perhaps the capital of Sweden. Allied prisoners of war in Germany were aware that the British Red Cross had an office in Copenhagen. Some had had their first contact with home as missing/pow through this office. Many of the men had received their first Red Cross parcels and subsequently bread from "The Copenhagen Bureau". Also Danish Red Cross officials visited the camps to report on conditions; the Danish YMCA sent secretaries to the camps to do humanitarian work; Danish Bellibria sent books to camp libraries, and the international YMCA had a warehouse in Copenhagen from where parcels could be sent to pows. Many Danes had, like Dagny, "adopted" a pow. Frank noted down details of all the parcels he received, and we can see that his bread from Copenhagen was on average a fortnight in transit and generally arrived in OK condition. He also received one YMCA parcel from Copenhagen; otherwise his parcels were from his sister Ida in London.

The volunteers for repatriation duty in Copenhagen were to leave on the 9th December and were told that they may be needed for up to four weeks. The latest news for the other pows in the camp was that they would also be travelling on the 9th but for them it was to be to Copenhagen and on home. Frank wrote in his diary about volunteering that he didn't *"regret going to Copenhagen personally, as need some work badly, and glad to help the men"*, and as he wrote to his sister a couple of days later *"it was only fair to let the married men and youngsters go home for Xmas"*. As it turned out the other pows had some days yet to wait. Frank and the other volunteers left for Denmark, with no idea what they were letting themselves in for! But what a time they had! It was hard work but in colleague Lieut. J.D.A. Collier's words they *"... enjoyed the hospitality of Denmark for two months"* it was *"...of such an interesting and unique character"* it was in fact a *"little adventure"*. For all but a handful of the homeward-bound former pows, who succumbed to the Spanish flu, there was to be in Denmark an almost fairytale like ending to their first world war ordeal.



James Douglas Archer Collier, AIF

Of the volunteers from Fürstenberg we can identify Frank himself, a 50 year old British born "American" who served with the Tank Corps; Major Walker a friend with whom he shared a mess as pow; Lt. Col. A.J.H. Sloggett

7th Bn. Rifle Brigade; Captain H.E. Milburn 9th Bn. Leicestershire; Lt. Col. Wickermann and two Australians 2/Lt. J.E.A. Stuart and Lieut. Collier from Tasmania. The 12 officers boarded the 9.20 train on 9th December at Fürstenberg, a station on the main Berlin-Copenhagen line. An extra officer was with them: Lt. Col. Lord Farnham. On the train they joined General Ravenshaw, also a former pow from Clausthal camp, who had started his journey in Berlin. These two important individuals were on a fast track home.

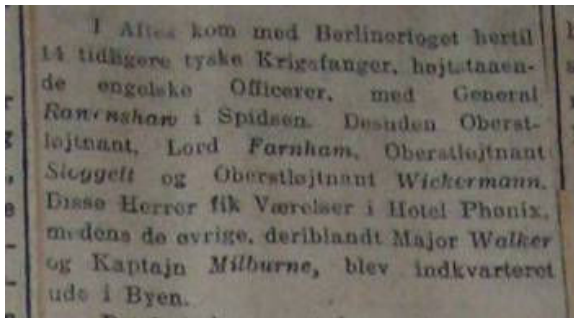
The train-ferry sailed from Warnemünde to Gedser. At Warnemünde another much larger group of British former pows on their way to Denmark joined them. These were 201 officers and 73 Other Ranks (OR) from the pow camp at Stralsund. Onboard the ferry the pows were met by “civilization” in the form of kindness and hospitality. Sitting at dining tables decorated with British and Danish flags they enjoyed a lunch made of fresh ingredients accompanied by wine. After the tins of captivity they ate too much, and drank too much, but it didn’t matter they were out. The ferry arrived at Gedser at 3 in the afternoon. They were met and greeted by the Danish authorities and Count Ahlefeldt-Laurvigsen from Danish Red Cross. All the former pows settled onto the train and were each given sandwiches and a beer. Their journey included another short trip on a ferry where the pows were served with tea or coffee and cake. Arriving at Masnedø they were met by a crowd who wished them well and handed out cigars to the men as they once again settled on the train. At every station at which the train stopped Danes stood waiting to cheer and the ex-pows were showered with fruit, cakes and cigarettes (and toys!).



At Næstved station the large group from Stralsund left the Berlin-Copenhagen train, their carriages were attached to another engine which took them directly to the rest camp at Hald, near Viborg in Jutland. In a write up in the local newspaper their 20 minute stop-over in Naestved was described in detail. The whole town had turned up to wish the former pows well. They in turn had been rewarded, as they had hoped, by the soldiers singing “It’s a long way to Tipperary” just as the train pulled away from the platform. It was noted that the

General had pulled the curtain on his compartment window obviously not wanting to participate in the fraternization. The Copenhagen bound train was quickly on its way and the ex-pows had the company of some Danish passengers to keep them occupied. Collier tells that after obtaining leave to smoke in his comfortable first class compartment he offered a smoke to a Danish lady. *"She said she smoked rarely, and ended by consuming the entire contents of my case before we had reached Copenhagen"*.

Frank's diary ends on Sunday 8th December so it is from Archie Collier we hear of their arrival in Copenhagen where it appears they weren't expected. A station official phoned around hotels for them but only found accommodation for 4 of the 14, these being General Ravenshaw and the 3 Lt. Colonels Wickermann, Sloggett and Lord Farnham. They all left the station by horse drawn cabs *"and drove through fine, well laid-out boulevards and broad squares to the hotel Phønix, where we indulged in a champagne and lobster supper. The orchestra was in fine fettle, and played our National Anthem at least half a dozen times during the meal. We appreciated the spirit which prompted it, even though it palled after the first couple of times. The restaurant was full of late diners and supper parties, and we had more than one youngster brought over to our table by proud parents to be introduced to "the brave British officers". That was trying, but as such introductions were often effected by mothers and elder sisters, we bore our part manfully, and were well content, for the Danish girls, be it known, are in point of beauty second only to the Tasmanian. Apparently news of our arrival filtered through to official circles, and a small party of Danish naval officers waited upon us at the hotel, and invited those of us who could not secure beds to be guests of the Navy on one of the training ships. A party of us prepared to leave under the guidance of these officers, and another Australian and myself made a dash for our luggage and grabbed a pair of pyjamas each, stuffed them into our pockets, and rushed down the hotel steps after the others, only to find that they had completely vanished. There we were, strangers in a strange land, pyjama tassel hanging out of our pockets, and our hands full of tooth brushes, razors, etc., the memory of a good supper behind us, and a very poor chance of a bed before. However, our uniforms attracted the attention of a belated wayfarer, who turned out to be the British Charge d'Affaires – the fates were good to us that night – and he directed us to the naval ferry steps, and we were ferried over to our quarters on the training-ship – an old wooden wall, which might have been in commission at the battle of the Baltic, although we did not press the inquiry. The ships' officers treated us royally, but, unhappily, a case, or cases, of scarlet fever were reported on board. We spent it – five of us - upon the couches and the floor of the sitting room of a suite belonging to an English lady staying at the hotel, and the next day we were delighted at the repatriation offices which we had temporarily taken near the King's Palace in Amaliegade, with invitations from wealthy Danish families to spend our time in Denmark with them."*



Named officers in Danish newspaper

Unfortunately Collier doesn't mention with whom he came to lodge. Frank however wrote several letters to his sister and it appears he fully appreciated and enjoyed his good luck in being placed under the wing of Vilhelm Vett. Frank explained to Ida *"I am in a very comfortable billet. "Palatial" is more the term. Mr. Vett my host, is the Wm. Whitely, Harrods, Selfridges, of Copenhagen, all rolled into one. He is a widower of about forty-five, with no children, and he and I live alone in his beautiful and delightful house."* Earlier in the year "Wessel and Vett" had celebrated the original founders' partnership of 50 years by inviting the staff plus guests, over 3000 in all, to a ceremony in the great hall at Magasin du Nord. Vett's villa at Bergensgade 11 was in a newly fashionable quarter of town and was within a 20 minutes walking distance of both the repatriation HQ in Amaliegade and Frihavn where the ships docked. Today this exclusive plot is part of a complex of neighbouring villas used by the Russian embassy.



Magasin du Nord with staff 1918

As co-director and part owner of a large fashionable department store Vilhelm Vett had occasion to travel often, one would assume to keep up with innovations in other European cities. On a trip to London in 1913 he married Dagny Schyberg on 13th June in St. Marylebone. One can imagine that that their honeymoon included visits to stores such as Selfridges and Harrods and perhaps business meetings with a supplier or two. Dagny was 28 years old, 5 years younger than Vilhelm. Both Dagny and her younger sister by two years, Yelva, had been ballet dancers at the Royal Danish Theatre. Dagny, also an actress, was recently divorced with a 7 year old son. Her first husband was a well known Danish actor. She had been leading lady in 3 silent movies in 1912-13 and was beautiful, glamorous and one would imagine both charming and socially adept. However, it would seem that as Vilhelm's wife Dagny's acting days were over.



Vilhelm Vett



Dagny Lange/Schyberg/Vett

Dagny's father John Arthur Lange was a middleclass merchant who imported goods and had a lot of contacts abroad. At the end of December 1916 Hr. Lange received a letter from Charles Dickson presumably from a company he had dealings with. *"I have a brother who has been a prisoner-of-war at Cottbus in Germany for over 2 years now, and I am writing this to know if there is any chance of your being able to send him a parcel of food now and then. There seems to be a difficulty now in sending food, and I thought you might arrange with one of your big stores there to send him a parcel. I think that Messrs. Wessel & Vett run a provision department, and I naturally thought that this would be a good idea. Will you kindly go into the matter and perhaps you will send us a price list to select from."*

The Dicksons were tie manufacturers with premises in Oat Lane, central London. They had been extremely fortunate to escape the demolition of their property in September 1915 when a zeppelin had dropped bombs in the vicinity, causing £500,000 worth of damage and killing 22 people. The Dickson family were obviously concerned about Norman's situation and willing to use any connections to get supplies to him. A fortnight later, after checking up on rules and regulations concerning the sending of food parcels from Denmark to pows

in Germany a reply was sent to the family. It appears that Dagny had taken on the job. She not only organized parcels for Leading Seaman Norman Dickson but took on Seaman Hugh Hardy, the POW son of a friend of the Dicksons. On April 12th 1917 Hr. Lange received a letter from Charles Dickson thanking for parcels sent *“and that he has acknowledged them, but if at any time Mrs. Vett should not receive immediate acknowledgement, you will be able to explain that the regulations do not permit of his sending too many letters, and naturally his mother is his first thought always. I am writing Mrs. Vett this evening, expressing our grateful thanks, at the same time I would like to thank you again for putting the matter in such gracious and able hands.”*

Tragedy struck, but not another zeppelin attack or for the POWs. Dagny, only 31, died following an operation for appendicitis. There were letters of condolence from both the Dickson and Hardy families. From Mrs. Hardy to Dagny's father *“I am extremely sorry to hear of the death of your daughter Mrs Dagny Vett, at so early an age after an operation and offer you my sincere sympathy in your sad loss. I know by her great kindness to my prisoner son, how she must be missed by all who knew her, and her kind work for these helpless boys, meant a great deal, and will never be forgotten by us. I think it is wonderfully kind of you to try to continue the sending of these parcels which your daughter started and they meant life to these young boys”*. It was Dagny's husband Vilhelm who carried on, not from his own department store but using the YMCA's service. Many Danish godmothers both paid for and put together themselves the parcels they sent to their POWs. Alternatively it appears some went to J.F. Nielsen at “Det Hvide Hus” in Østerbro and sent parcels using the facilities offered by the international YMCA which kept up-to-date with the regulations and who organized both standard and individual parcels.

Vilhelm had a large family around him; his siblings had all married well and had families. His sister Julie Vett's husband Kay Reinhard was administrative director for DFDS, the shipping line, and they lived next door to him in a villa at Bergensgade 10. Olga Vett was married into the Danish aristocracy, to Gustav baron Wedell-Wedellsborg. Widowed Vilhelm certainly had enough to keep him busy with his business, a demanding social life and was an active sportsman; yachting being his passion. It probably isn't a complete coincidence that he took on two more friends of Hardy's to send parcels to, both from the Royal Naval Division. The middle-class families of these, in all four POWs, paid all expenses for the parcels Vilhelm arranged to be sent. For them it was a question of doing all in their power to ensure their sons received enough supplies especially as it was known that parcels from the UK could be delayed in transit, or never reached their destination.



Denmark had managed to keep out of the Great War. The Spanish flu crossed borders and took victims from all classes and age groups although it hit unusually hard amongst otherwise healthy young adults. Vilhelm's sister-in-law Yelva died on 20th October 1918. 31 years old she left her husband Carl Gregers Restorff Schack, 3 young sons and her father John Lange grieving. The hospitals in Copenhagen were full of patients fighting the disease and were stretched to their limits. Despite this the desire to help was so great that a sufficient number of Danish doctors and nurses volunteered to work on the Danish vessels involved in the Danish Scheme. It is estimated that 14,000 Danes died of Spanish flu.



Pows arriving at Copenhagen.

Unfortunately no detailed account has yet surfaced of the work of the ex pows who volunteered to help the Danish Scheme's repatriation effort, the "*little adventure*" as Lt Collier called it. However Frank Vans Agnew's 4 letters to his sister and Archie Collier's newspaper article, albeit somewhat confused with names, do paint a picture of these wonderful weeks. It must have been joyous for them to welcome the returning pows to Denmark knowing that they would be well fed and billeted in comfort and not least treated with the utmost hospitality by the Danes. As Collier wrote, after explaining Denmark's position and dealings with Germany during the war, "*Consequently, when her victors arrived, though only in the persons of unfortunate prisoners of war, they were hailed with acclaim and feted like princes. Nothing was too good for them. They could not even appear in the streets without being cheered, and the warmhearted northerners could not wait to meet our British officers and men in the ordinary way, but stopped them in the streets, at theatres or restaurants, and beg them to give them, the Danes, some opportunity of showing their admiration and gratitude; and they showed it right royally.*" Royal it was indeed when King Christian visited the men in a rest camp, Queen Alexandrine and Princess Tyra visited the patients on the hospital ships and the royal couple took a walk about Frihavn to experience the bustle of ships and trains arriving and leaving, the Queen taking photos.

Frank's host Vilhelm made him feel at home. Vilhelm had not remarried, and never did, living alone according to Frank with a "*most entrancing wire-haired terrier of a monumental pedigree*". A later census showed that the house also accommodated a housekeeper and a maid. Frank was kept very busy during the day with his work, but his evenings were one long round of dining out, theatre going and socializing and dancing at private parties. It was of course also the Christmas season, the most festive time of year. Frank was made one of the

family and was invited to the traditional family celebrations held on the evening of Christmas Eve where it is likely the Christmas dinner was of goose and rice pudding. To his amazement there was even a gift for him under the Christmas tree, a gold wristwatch from Vilhelm. On the evening of Christmas Day Vilhelm took him to another traditional Christmas family party at his sister Olga's home. Baroness Wedell Wedellborg lived at Hellerupgård in Hellerup. She too had been involved in prisoner of war work with the Danish Red Cross.



Hellerupgård

These two family parties had been preceded by two other noteworthy "does". Vilhelm took Frank out to dinner at a friend's house, they then went on to a private party at another house where there was dancing. It was very grand *"Everyone was wearing orders and medals and crosses and sashes, even the ladies"*. Frank was introduced to Prince Valdemar, the King's uncle, and his two sons with whom he appears to have chatted quite freely. He seemed surprised at the anti-German opinions they expressed. He mustn't have been aware that the widowed Prince Valdemar had been married to French Princess Marie and that their daughter Margrethe had trained and worked in England as a Red Cross nurse. Prince Valdemar was also involved in the Danish Red Cross prisoner of war work. Prince Aage an officer in the Danish army had spent a year in Italy as an observer and had married Mathilda Calvi di Bergolo, while Prince Axel was an officer in the Danish navy. Archie Collier may not have been at this particular party but says, *"I can vouch for it that the repatriation staff worked hard, but we had a cosy time withal. The whole of Copenhagen society was clamouring to entertain us. The officers of the Danish Army tendered us a banquet in their club...."*. Among all the wonderful entertainments to which Frank and Archie were invited there was one which must have made a lasting impression. Both indeed mention the very grand party held for them at Gamle Carlsberg.



Photo courtesy Jamie Vans

The museum at Gamle Carlsberg housed at that time a collection of antique statues. It was also the honorary residence of Harald Høffding a retired professor of philosophy. Høffding was chairman of Bellibria, a private organization, under the wing of Danish Red Cross, which since 1915 had sent 5 million books to prisoner of war camps. It was still active collecting English books, newspapers and magazines for the men's use on the ships and in rest camps used in the Danish Scheme. Vagn Jacobsen, director/owner of Carlsberg was also involved in Bellibria and provided premises for this organization here too. Archie Collier was very impressed by the Jacobsen family who *"must have spent millions in beautifying Copenhagen and restoring historic buildings"*. In his article he goes into some detail e.g. of the restoration of Frederiksborg [sic] and Glyptoteket. Obviously interested in culture this young Australian must have had the time of his life when they were *"guests of Carl Jacobsen, spoken of as the Danish Carnegie, at his magnificent mansion on the outskirts of the city"*. Frank perhaps a bit more down to earth but no less appreciative wrote to his sister that he *"went to a dinner and dance given to all the officers on the repatriation business, in a colossal house full of statues which looked very cold on account of lack of clothing"*.



We are fortunate to be able to see a photo taken at the party held at Gamle Carlsberg. Unfortunately we can only identify, that is put a name to a face, very few of the repatriation staff and only one of the Danes. In the centre wearing a white bowtie is Lord Kilmarnock, chargé d'affaires at the British Legation. To his left is Lt. Col. Wade military attaché to the British Legation, with almost definitely Mrs. Wade standing second to the right of Kilmarnock. To Wade's left is Lt. Col. Hazard, an ex pow volunteer who was appointed Senior British Officer (SBO) commanding troops in Denmark. Frank is sitting on the floor fourth from the right partly hidden. Archie must be one of the young men sitting in the front row. Sitting on the floor directly in front of Lord Kilmarnock appears to be Major Cunliffe, whilst in the kilt is Captain Lamb of the London Scottish Regiment. Standing 3rd from the right in a "foreign" uniform is an unnamed French pilot. He had, with a group of pow friends, "escaped" from Eutin camp a fortnight after the armistice and the group had made their way to Denmark. He was now involved in repatriation work for the French pows. The host for the evening, Vagn Jacobsen, is standing to the right of the French pilot.



Vagn Jacobsen



Frank fourth officer from right, partly hidden



It would appear that all the repatriation staff, including Wade and his wife, but not Lord Kilmarnock, the women and a couple of men in tails are wearing “decorations”. This is not an official Danish Red Cross medal. The Danish Red Cross Commemorative Medal for Aid to Prisoners of War 1914-1919 wasn’t presented to recipients until the 20th September 1919. It would be reasonable to suppose that the “decorations” they are wearing are informal items given out on the night in recognition of the work people had done to help pows. However neither Frank nor Harry Livingstone Lamb appears to have kept this decoration so perhaps it was just a trinket given at the Christmas party in some fun and game situation. Lamb, obviously enjoying himself has also been decorated with a “pig” which again suggests how light-hearted this party was despite its grand setting. Perhaps the pig was a joke, a play on his name, or he may have won it

for finding the whole almond in the Christmas desert *ris à l’amande* which is rice pudding with chopped almonds served with cherry sauce. A pig made out of marzipan is the traditional prize.

Frank sent a few lines to his sister on 23rd December, his hands so cold he could hardly write. He had been busy in a blinding snowstorm all day and was finishing off. The note was taken on the ship about to leave for Leith, the “Willochra”. No ships arrived from the Baltic or left Copenhagen for the U.K. over the next few days. The weather brightened and was fine when the next transport, the “Frederick VIII” left Frihavn for Hull on 26th December. Frank handed his letter to Ida to one of the passengers and it must have been good for her to read of the “*wonderful time*” her brother was having in a “*great town*”. Frank planned to take all ten of Vilhelm’s nephews and nieces to the theatre some night soon. One can hardly doubt that New Year’s Eve was celebrated with style and gusto. The newspapers reported from all the city’s top restaurants and dancing establishments. As could be expected they were packed with celebrating Danes, and this year with British officers too. They had left the seaside hotels they were billeted in to say goodbye to an old year of war and captivity and welcome a new year of peace and home with champagne and music in a city which must have seemed magically untouched by the last 4 horrendous years. New Years Eve happened to be Vilhelm’s 39th birthday as well, and birthdays are celebrated with much festivity in Denmark, for adults too. It is such a shame that Frank literally cannot have had time to write in his diary. What an evening they must have had! However ships arrived and left on both New Years Eve and New Years Day so some of the repatriation staff would have had to be clear headed.

The next week the repatriation staff was busy too, but the end was in sight. Some of the volunteers left themselves. The last transport, the "Ajax", with 1000 British former pows left on 13th January for Leith. There was still work to be done rounding off this operation "The Danish Scheme" which had transported 40,000 British home. There were a number sick still not well enough to be transported and stragglers were still turning up. The French were using the same route and the stream of former pows including other nationalities continued; all in all 100,000 travelled home via Denmark between November 1918 and February 1919.



"Ajax" 13th January 1919

The British Legation held a party on the 17th January to thank the Danes for their help. A dinner for 70 was held at the Hotel d'Angleterre. Guests included Prince Aage and his wife, Prince Axel, the Danish foreign minister Scavenius with wife and a mix of Danish and British notables who had had a role in making the Danish Scheme the success it was. At 10 pm the guests were driven the short distance to the British Legation in Bredgade where a large crowd had gathered outside to see all these grand people in their finery. Another 150 guests joined them for a ball. The dancing was opened by Prince Axel dancing with Mrs. Wade and Lord Kilmarnock with Princess Aage and at midnight the doors were opened to a side room where an elegant champagne supper was served. Prominent guests such as Vagn Jacobsen were named in the papers and it was noted that beautifully dressed women, gentlemen in white tie and tails and Danish officers and foreign diplomats in dress uniforms mixed with British officers in their plain everyday kit. These must have been the remaining repatriation staff of which both Frank and Archie were still part. This party at the British Legation was seen by the Danes as a very welcome sign of things getting back to normal, as they were before August 1914.

With the repatriation of the British pows virtually complete, the volunteers' last couple of weeks in Copenhagen must have been far less hectic and allowed them time to see the sights in daylight. Archie Collier found time to visit, amongst much else, Glyptoteket "an inspiring marble building, chiefly remarkable for its truly magnificent statuary" reporting that "all the world's greatest masters adorn the walls of the art galleries. Copenhagen is, indeed, a city of delight for the lover of art." And of the people he says "the Danes are great lovers of beautiful things, and are a most cultured race, speaking generally three tongues, and conversing with ease on music and art in many forms." Archie wasn't just interested in the fine artwork and pretty girls, he also appears to have got a feel for the city "The city itself is just smaller as regards population than Melbourne, but actually the ground it covers is very much less, the reason being that the people, rich and poor, live in flats in tremendous buildings, a system which naturally covers far less ground than of the wide-spreading villa suburbs of our Australian cities. The modern parts of the city are splendidly laid out, but the streets cannot compare for cleanliness with London." And for Danish politics "I must console myself with the reflection that, although Denmark has a King, it is one of the most advanced Socialistic States in the world, while we, thank God, are not – yet. There, men with income above a certain sum – I forget the figure – are taxed up to 50 per cent., which is to say that the Government is a sleeping partner in all their concerns, taking half the profits, but accepting no risks. The Government are thus able to pay unemployment doles at the rate of 33 kroner (nearly £2) per week, and, as a result, the city cannot even get labour to keep its streets decently clean. Men say, "We can draw enough to live on without working, therefore why should we work?" And they don't, which is a lamentable state of affairs, and shows that there is something wrong somewhere, as there generally is when advanced Socialism takes control."



There were delays in pow transport due to difficulties in finding workmen to coal the ships.

Cartoon by Storm P.

Frank probably continued visiting the Royal Yacht Club with Vilhelm, one of the first places to which he had been introduced. Vilhelm according to Frank was *"a keen yachtsman and abhors steam, just like me"*. So certainly some male bonding was going on here and if Frank read the sports news some years later he would have found Vilhelm mentioned. Vilhelm won silver medals at both the 1924 and 1928 Olympics. After his first week in Copenhagen Frank wrote *"I have seen more superlatively beautiful ladies in one week than I had for many years and am, in a senile manner, really enjoying myself."* It looks as if Frank and all the other former prisoners of war who volunteered to stay in Denmark for repatriation duty felt they were having a *"little adventure"* or even a big one!

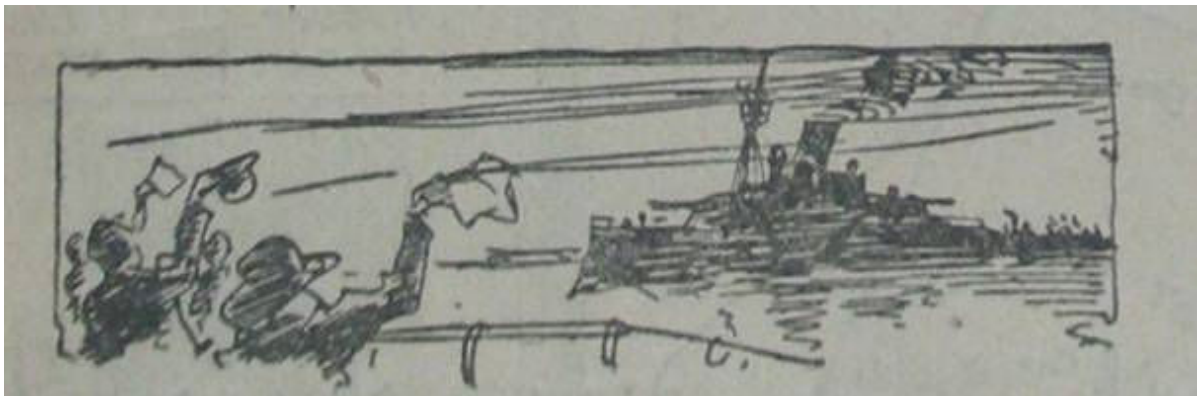
Frank left Copenhagen with other repatriation staff, 8 officers and 17 OR, probably including Archie too, on the "Primula" on 29th January 1919. It was bitterly cold but a crowd of 150 had gathered to wave goodbye. Perhaps some of the hosts who had housed the staff were there, two merchants William Heering and Emil Heris were named and seem likely candidates. One young lady, probably with tears in her eyes, was parting from her fiancée. Captain Harry Ezra Balfour had been on the same ferry from Warnemünde on the 9th December as Frank and Archie. Harry was in the group from Stralsund which had gone to a rest camp in Jutland. He had volunteered to stay on there. It must have been a whirlwind romance for Harry and 21 year old Gerda, daughter of an engineer. Harry had had a rigid religious upbringing and left home at 16 to go west. After making a living doing labouring jobs on the prairie he ended up teaching before the war broke out and he joined up. Taken prisoner he spent his 3 years behind barbed wire studying for a BA from Cambridge. True to his word Harry was indeed back in Denmark and married Gerda Wolff in Viborg cathedral in April. The couple then left and settled in Canada.



There was another group of former prisoners of war who were to be repatriated and travelled on the last repatriation voyage of the "Primula". They had been picked up at Warnemünde the previous day but had to stay on board ship since their time in Copenhagen was very limited. They were Chinese, most of who had been in the labour corps. The newspapers report their numbers as between 260 and 300 and one report states that there was one woman amongst them. Some of them, the educated students and merchants not the labourers who were passive, were very frustrated at not being allowed to leave the ship. They wanted to visit the German Consul to hear about money owed them and what would happen to the possessions they had left behind. The ship's officers made it clear that going into Copenhagen wasn't possible as they were preparing leave. Not taking any notice the Chinese took to the gangway and tried to force their way past 3 Danish

policemen who stood guard. The policemen suggested 2 spokesmen be chosen as a delegation who would be allowed to consult the German consul. The Chinese found this a totally unacceptable proposal, distrusting the Danes and obviously in a state over the possibly last chance they would have to salvage any property they had in Germany. They attacked the policemen who immediately called for assistance. Blows fell on both sides, the police however took control and the Chinese returned to the ship. Extra guards patrolled until "Primula" sailed a couple of hours later.

The "Primula" arrived at Leith on 31st. January 1919. 50 year old Frank Vans Agnew took a well deserved short holiday and then underwent two operations on his arm. He was repatriated to the USA in October. Archie Collier took a short holiday and was given leave to attend a course in journalism at a polytechnic in London. He had been working for the Hobart Mercury before the war. He sent an article home written in July "*Tasmanian prisoner in Germany – Record of his experiences – a graphic account.*" This was the first of 3, published in September, October and December, with the last describing his "*little adventure, in that small European country so clearly allied to the land of our own origin*" Denmark. Archie was repatriated to Tasmania in October 1919.



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Photos of Archie Collier and Red Cross records - <http://www.awm.gov.au/people/rolls/R1481689/>

Illustreret Tidende

English newspapers

KB DH014271.tif <http://www.kb.dk/images/billed/2010/okt/billeder/object153907/da/>

KB DP029356.jpg <http://www.kb.dk/PortraetRegT/PortraetShowImg.do?ID=43456&IMGID=31956>

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Lieut. C.L. Roberts memoirs **URI:** <http://library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-explore/27237>

Photo Yelva Lange/Restorff with Hans Mogens and Gregers 1916_
http://kraghogschack.blogspot.dk/2008_02_01_archive.html