

# RUglobal<sup>®</sup>

Information and debate from Roskilde University

Number 01 · 14. sept. - 5. oct. 2009



## Trainee at the Roskilde Festival headquarters

For the past six months, Anne Eldridge has been working as the right hand of Esben Danielsen, the Roskilde Festival's spokesman, in relation to her work placement. To participate in a work placement was a spontaneous idea, but she has learned a lot from it.

# Are you ready to get cracking – and work together?



Welcome to all new students

Although I have had the opportunity to welcome most of you face to face, I would also like to do it in this issue of RUGlobal. I know that a lot has happened since your first day at RU. Much of it has evolved around establishing a good social environment and introducing you to the general RU organisation, and I hope that by now you feel comfortable and at home. During my visits to the new first-year houses, I have noticed that the atmosphere has shifted from tense and slightly formally curious to busy and relaxed. In one house, I was asked why I had not visited sooner. All I can say is that it takes time to visit 1,500 new students. But I am pleased to see that thanks, in particular, to the dedicated and fun-filled efforts of our tutors in planning your early days here, it only takes a short while before a formal welcome greeting is completely unnecessary.

So, I would now like to welcome you to an exciting journey into the world of science. If anyone has a nagging feeling that the social environment will be an obstacle for your academic progress, please let me assure you that on the contrary, it's the most important foundation for a critical and ambitious approach to your university studies. RU's educational structure demands a lot from the individual students. Right from day one, you will be given the chance to take responsibility for your own studies. RU's project work gives you the opportunity to immediately get out beyond your depth, which is exactly the point. It's much easier to do something ambitious without having a complete overview when you are comfortable and trust your fellow students. RU's educational structure is based on collaboration – as students you rely on each other, and for this reason, you can impose demands

on each other without having to worry about creating a bad working environment.

RU's educational structure is very research-based. Early on, you will encounter lecturers and tutors who will advise you based on their own research experience. You will be faced with a real experimental situation: You will be given an insight into the research frontier while being allowed to test the applicability of conventional theories and methods to the problems you already have in your baggage or the ones you will conjure up together inspired by the research material you become familiar with during the introduction period. Of course, we don't expect you to be world-class researchers from day one. But the challenge of problem-oriented project work will hopefully help you develop skills that you will benefit from in both your academic and professional life. RU graduates are quite popular in the corporate world because, as it turns out, they have confidence when having to deal with unfamiliar problems, they know how to work as part of a team and they have a good reputation, because they take a position on what they are working with.

It's not all a bed of roses, however. We were very sorry to see group examinations abolished. They were the perfect way to evaluate project work because they required co-operation and work sharing. We have to come to terms with the individual evaluations; however, we highly recommend doing your project work together in any case. The results are simply better and the benefits for you as individuals are bigger.

We are also sorry that we don't have more

lecturers. The spending allocations for lectures have been reduced every year at all universities. We are fighting hard for them to be increased. In the meantime, all you can do is make good use of your tutors. They, on the other hand, will grow through your demands. In particular if your demands are founded in your own commitment and efforts. RU's house structure and the students' own project work structure contribute to the tutors being used in the right way. And you will learn how to organise a collective working process efficiently.

So when you dive into the academic ocean, which is deep enough to swallow up all your time and energy, don't forget that there is more to life. We have a number of political and cultural groups which are more than happy to welcome new members. They help make campus life exciting. And maybe I should also point out the fact that RU's campus is home to close to a thousand international student from 50 to 60 different countries.

Any way you look at it, your university studies are your way into society's elite. It has nothing to do with being elitist. It simply means that through your education, you are preparing to handle tasks and jobs which have an impact on society and specific people. Your studies will provide you with the insight and knowledge necessary to take on these tasks, whether you become civil servants, lecturers or free-floating intellectuals. Knowledge means resources and with it comes the responsibility of committing to the world around you.

Yours sincerely  
Henning Salling Olesen  
Acting rector

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### Publishing information

RUCnyt/RUglobal is Roskilde University's official magazine for information and debate about the organization of the university. RUglobal is open to all employees and students at Roskilde University to debate the educational and research organizations at the university, including questioning of common interest for research and education.

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#### Print and edition:

RU printing office, 2300 copies

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**Opening hours:** RUCnyt/RUglobal does not have any regular office hours. To get in contact with the editorial staff please e-mail us or contact the information office, which is located in building 04.1.

**Articles:** need to be handed in by e-mail. Please enclose suggestions for illustrations.

Discs and other material are normally not returned. The editorial staff is allowed to shorten articles and to reject articles which are not of common interest. Articles of more than 8000 characters (about 2 pages) can normally not be expected to be published un-shortened. There is no minimum length for an article to be published. Anonymous articles are not accepted.

#### Upcoming deadlines:

Nr.	Articles	Notices	Publication date
02	21/09	25/09	05/10
- at 12 noon on the assigned date			

**Front page:** ams Photo: Nanna Kreutmann/Rockphoto - Roskilde Festival





## New students welcome with the annual Marbjerg field show

The annual Marbjerg field show welcomed new students by offering lots of humorous acts and irony. This year's show included repetitions from last year, but also new acts gave students a laugh.

By *Ida Meldgaard Christensen, RUCnyt*

8:34 a.m. at Copenhagen central station: The platform is full of hopeful new students. On the train, some people dressed as Tigger and a teddy-bear are running and shouting which causes people to stare in astonishment without really knowing whether to say something to their fellow passengers. When the train arrives at Trekroner station, the students are guided to their proper groups by following the large flags and listening to the constant instructions from their tutors. They do not know each other yet, but the coming events will probably give them something to talk about.

### **Wandering across the field**

On the way to RU, a man attempts, in vain, but very determined, to glue his biscuits together, which the new students constantly crush by accident anyway. It causes some chaos and confusion amongst the new students suddenly having to leap to the side to avoid the biscuits dispersed across the entire path. Further up the path alongside the library a great romantic is waiting, welcoming the students with a song straight from the heart, which is in deep contrast to the reception they get when they are hit by lashes from a group of tutors masked as the Danish Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Helge Sander. He shouts at

the new students while giving them lashes in an attempt to get them faster through their studies. People are smiling at it, but they still hurry past while lowering their heads. When the students press on, owing to his harsh words, they hit the unemployed line where yet another couple of Helge Sander-lookalikes try to drag them in. Hopefully, the new students are top-motivated, because here they shout that one in three students of the humanities must get in the line. Fortunately, most students attempt to avoid it with a smile.

### **First meeting with RU**

Passing under the square root sign, the new students enter RU's premises for the first time with the RU choir's song in their ears. When going past RU's library, the new students are led past a fence, and if they do not follow the instructions to go around the fence, it will have consequences, like when one of the fake new students despite strong resistance and lots of screaming is thrown in the lake. This makes the other new students move to a safe distance from the lake with a frightened look on their faces. They make a turn and suddenly a man jumps up from behind a hedge and shouts for food. As he starts shouting, a blue smurf dwarf runs out behind the hedge, and the cook begins a wild chase. Compared to being thrown into the water, the new students are more relaxed about this incident, which gives them a good

laugh instead.

### **Utter confusion**

On their way to the canteen, two German tourists get lost. They desperately try to get somebody to help them find their way by frantically pointing at some big maps they have brought with them. The group of new students is not to any help in this situation, because - as they will soon discover - finding your way through the RU jungle can be a bit of a challenge to begin with.

They therefore continue along the path to the premises of Journalism. On the way, the students meet a nurse, who despite being tied by a rope is attempting to reach a beer bottle while a girl at the other end of the rope is shouting at her. In spite of her persistent efforts, she never succeeds in getting hold of the bottle. At the end of the path, a man wrapped in bacon from head to toe is grilling on a barbecue. This sight makes most new students raise their eyebrows and gasp in astonishment. The man almost looks like a mummy, not a single piece of bare skin is visible underneath the large amount of bacon. Next to the canteen is a band, and the students should probably be pleased that RU does not offer music classes, since the notes are not quite in tune. They then reach the house where the new students belong. With this first impression of RU, the many new serious students can now be welcomed to RU.



lows of the work placement.

“The best thing has been to work closely together with Esben. He is a very competent and hard-working man. He demonstrates that many things are possible, if only you want it enough.”

One of the lows of the work placement, she says, is the problem understanding how it all works.

“You want to do your best, but it can be quite hard. The ‘machinery’ driving the festival is so large that it is difficult to identify where your help is needed and how to do things. Taking initiatives has been very difficult, and I am usually very good at that. But that is just the way things are when you join a company to work as a trainee for six months, I guess”.

Anne will not be burdened with a lot of work during the festival – “she has been working more than enough in preparation for the festival”, Esben Daniel explained when I talked to him before the festival started. There is, however, one project she needs to do, namely carry out interviews with ten festival participants, all to be different types, in order to show the diversity of the festival goers and that it is not only the ‘classical’ type

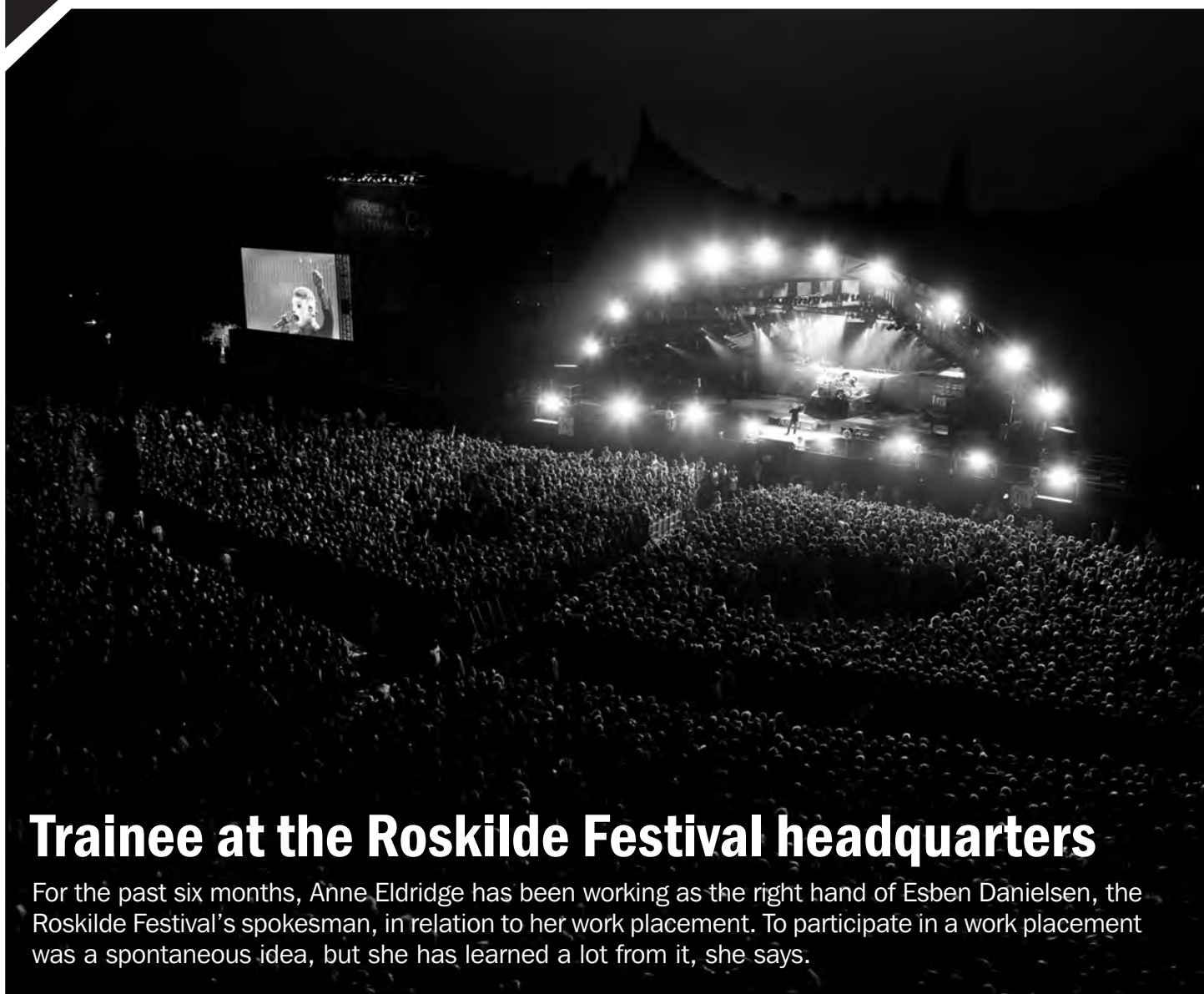
wearing hippie clothes and dreadlocks who attends the festival.

### **Ambitions, music and life behind the scenes**

Anne hesitates pensively before explaining what she expects to gain professionally from the work placement.

“It is difficult to specify what I have learnt, but I am sure I will return to Performance Design a strengthened individual. I have definitely learned a lot about contacts and collaboration and the importance of defining your ambitions. Setting up large projects requires hard work”, she says.

Music is a very important element in Anne’s life, and for this reason it is hard to believe it when she says that this is in fact her virgin visit at the festival. Nevertheless, that is a fact, and she is therefore looking very much forward to hearing the music kick into gear in a couple of days. That is, however, not the only thing she is looking forward to. She is also very anxious to see how it all works behind the scenes, she says. Each year, she and many other voluntary workers contribute to the creation of those ‘scenes’, thereby making it possible to hold the largest music festival in Northern Europe.



## Trainee at the Roskilde Festival headquarters

For the past six months, Anne Eldridge has been working as the right hand of Esben Danielsen, the Roskilde Festival's spokesman, in relation to her work placement. To participate in a work placement was a spontaneous idea, but she has learned a lot from it, she says.

*By Peter Andersen. Photo: Nanna Kreutmann/Rockphoto - Roskilde Festival*

Crossing the motorway bridge behind Orange Stage and continuing down the asphalted road brings me to the Business College where the Roskilde Festival's steering group has its headquarters.

The sun is burning from a bright light blue sky, so entering the lovely cool headquarter premises is a great pleasure. After having sneaked about in the hallways of the building, I finally manage to find Anne sitting by a computer in the hall.

Anne explains that it was pure coincidence that she ended up working as a voluntary trainee at the Roskilde Festival. It came about primarily because she suddenly needed some type of occupation to fill in a gap of six months before enrolling at University of Copenhagen to study Musicology.

"I sent an e-mail to Esben Danielsen asking whether there was any work for me to do, but there were no vacancies. As an alternative, he suggested that I worked for him," she explains.

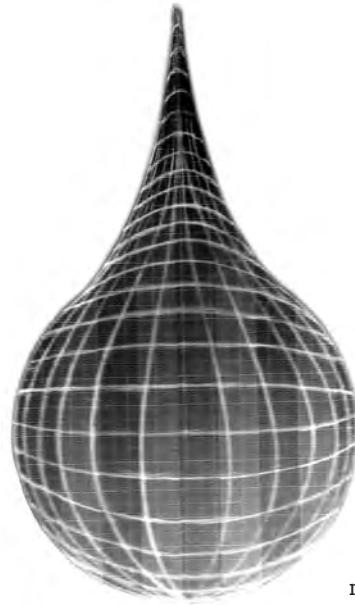
Anne became acquainted with Esben Danielsen through the Per-

formance Design course where he was a lecturer, and therefore found it natural to apply for a work placement at the Festival which Esben Danielsen is the spokesman for.

"I found that I could apply many of the things I learned at Performance Design, e.g. from the practical projects we have worked on. In his teaching, Esben gave some very concrete instructions: 'next time, you are to make a project plan, next time you are to prepare a budget', etc. This is also reflected in the work I perform as a voluntary trainee here", she says about her job which primarily has been to do research in various fields such as investigating the prices of other festivals, preparing draft newsletters, contacting different researchers in connection with the Copenhagen Climate Summit and carrying out a bit of fundraising.

### Best and worst

Anne's clothing style is very casual. She is wearing a loose-fitting trouser suit and a matching black cotton hair band tied tightly around her long brown hair. She seems very pensive when asked what she has gained from her work placement, and she takes a long time to respond. This is also the case when she is asked about the highs and



Logo for the international conference of environmental history, designed by Bjørn Laursen

## The first World Congress of Environmental History

The first World Congress of Environmental History was held in August this year and behind the planning and execution of the conference was a large team of employees from Roskilde University and Malmö Högskola.

By Runa Lund Sørensen, RUCnyt

Conferences of environmental history have previously been held in Europe and the US. But never before has a conference been held with the participation of researchers specialised in the field from all countries in the world as was the case at RU's and Malmö Högskola's conference.

All in all, 560 researchers from 45 different countries participated. Thus, representatives from all populated continents in the world were present, and with the entire research field amongst the participants, all continents were covered, even the Antarctic and the oceans were covered scientifically. Not only researchers specialising in environmental history participated in the conference. "About 50% of the participants were historians, but also biologists, geographers, physicists and representatives of other related sciences were present", says Bo Poulsen, environmental historian at RU and one of the primary agents responsible for the conference of environmental history. Hence, the scientific diversity of the participants was significant.

### The importance of environmental history

As a research field, environmental history has existed in the US for about 40 years, whereas in Europe it did not become seriously established in scientific circles until during the past 10-20 years ago. "Considering the environmental problems we are facing nowadays, this research field is of utmost importance", says Bo Poulsen. He compares the importance of environmental history research with that of a medical record: "If a woman with a very rare disease sees her GP to obtain a diagnosis, it is important that the GP has a medical record and knows her history to be able to give the right diagnosis. This also applies to many of the environmental issues. If the historic background and developments are unknown, it is very difficult to make the right decisions".

Environmental history research covers more than a million years, and one viewpoint all environmental historians agree on, says Bo Poulsen, is that everything people have done throughout the past hundred years is so radically different compared to what we did before that it has an impact on the environment. "Therefore, claiming that the current issues are part of the natural course of nature and that there

is nothing new under the sun is a statement we cannot support. We agree to say that there is something new under the sun".

### Great commitment determined the success

Considering the high participation rate and media attention, Bo Poulsen assumes that the conference can be considered a great success. "I have probably spent ten hours talking to the press", says Bo Poulsen. "Our numbers show that about 450,000 viewers and listeners in Denmark have heard about the conference during the course of the week either on Danish Radio's channel P1 or on TV2 NEWS."

Bo Poulsen has only received positive feedback and he only saw happy faces during the five-day conference, he says with a smile.

Bo Poulsen explains that the reason why everything went so well is that he had an excellent "home team" consisting of employees from the entire university who provided him with lots of assistance. "We have been assisted by 15 student assistants from RU, a number of competent secretaries plus researchers and other employees from different departments at RU". Bo Poulsen exemplifies this by stating that Tom Helmer Hansen from Campus-It provided a computer program he had developed, which helped design the academic programme and selection process, and he also gave technical assistance during the conference. Bo Poulsen also mentions that Bjørn Laursen, lecturer at the Performance Design course, has designed the water drop shaped logo of the international conference of environmental history.

In conclusion, Bo Poulsen explains that the success primarily is a result of the good and solid preparatory work performed by all parties.

The international conference of environmental history was held in Copenhagen and Malmö from 4 to 8 August 2009. Two days before the conference, a PhD workshop was held at RU with the participation of 25 PhD students from 13 countries. The next world conference is planned to take place in 2014.