



CHILDREN OF SKRAMMEL

- DANISH PEDAGOGY THAT INSPIRES THE WORLD

TRANSLATED FROM "BØRN AF SKRAMMEL"









”THE PLAYGROUND OFFERS CHILDREN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THROUGH CREATION. THEY CAN TURN THEIR DREAMS AND IMAGINATION INTO REALITY.

*C. Th. Sørensen
Founder of Skrammellegepladsen,
the first junk playground*



” Skrammel contributed to making me into the person I am today. It helped to form my personality and was an important part of my life.

*Stefan Socevic, 17
Child of Skrammel, 2005-2009*

” When you need to be alone, it is okay just to be left alone. I don’t think it’s always good that the adults try to comfort you when you are upset. Sometimes you just need to be left in peace to think things over.

*Ida Bendix, 9
Child of Skrammel since 2009*





” I was quite introverted as a child, which could be difficult in school and other places, but at Skrammel it was okay to be different, it was okay to be yourself. That helped me a lot growing up. Skrammel gave me the courage and strength to realise that it was okay to be an introvert.

*Jakob Hensel, 39
Child of Skrammel, 1981-1987*

'SKRAMMOLOGY' IS THE NAME OF THE PREDOMINANT PEDAGOGICAL THEORY AT SKRAMMEL WHICH CAN BE SUMMED UP AS 'UNHINDERED PLAY WITH HAMMER AND NAILS'



” I was a very creative child and was crazy about making and doing things. Singing songs and playing theatre. It was pure happiness for me to have Skrammel. There was nowhere else to go at that time.

*Billie Mai-Britt Johansen, 59
Child of Skrammel in the 1960s*



” Skrammel meant everything to me. When I was at school, I looked forward to getting back to Skrammel. During the school day I kept looking at the clock while agreeing with the others, what we would get up to when we got there.

*Anders Roed-Jeppesen, 17
Child of Skrammel, 2001-2009*



” We had the freedom to be children. There was no limit, to what we could get up to.

*My Abrahamsson, 16
Child of Skrammel, 2002-2010*





” It was fantastic to be here because we were allowed to be children. We grew up in an environment with adults around us that didn’t really like children. Skrammel was a sanctuary, an oasis, an opportunity to play and be with other children and adults that weren’t as messed up as the other adults we were used to.

*Billie Mai-Britt Johansen, 59
Child of Skrammel in the 1960s*



UP UNTIL 1962, THERE WAS ONLY ONE ADULT EMPLOYED AT SKRAMMEL. BY 2013 THERE WERE THREE FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES, FOUR PART-TIME EMPLOYEES AS WELL AS A WORKER TO OPEN UP IN THE MORNING, A JANITOR, AN ASSISTANT AND A HANDFUL OF TEMPORARY WORKERS.



AFTER APPEARING IN THE MEDIA IN THE 1940'S AND 1950'S, A COLLECTION OF SMALL CARTS FROM A DAIRY IN COPENHAGEN, A STRANDED SAILING BOAT AND THE BODYWORK FROM USED PHONE BOOTHS WERE DONATED TO SKRAMMEL AND USED AS HOUSES BY THE CHILDREN.

” It was because of our playground supervisor Nete I studied to become a playground supervisor as well. She was quite unique, she didn’t stand over us all the time, but at the same time she was always there for us. There were many vulnerable families out here, many children that needed to be looked after. She made sure she was there for them. She saved so many children who could have taken another route in life.

*Kirsten Refskou Poulsen, 74
Child of Skrammel, 1943-1954*

” We got a sweet when we fell down or got hit by something. We wanted to be given sweets, so we did everything we could to get one. Especially if we were bored. Once we even rolled ourselves in nettles. I think we got a sweet after that, but usually the adults knew when we were putting it on.

*Frederik Irving, 16
Child of Skrammel, 2002-2010*



THE ORIGINAL SKRAMMEL PLAYGROUND WAS CLOSED
DURING THE WINTER UNTIL 1960



” If you were really naughty, you could jump over the fence in the winter when Skrammel was closed and sit down in your play den. I have to admit that I was one of those naughty children. I was found out and got trouble.

*Kay Nilsson, 77
Child of Skrammel, 1943-1953*

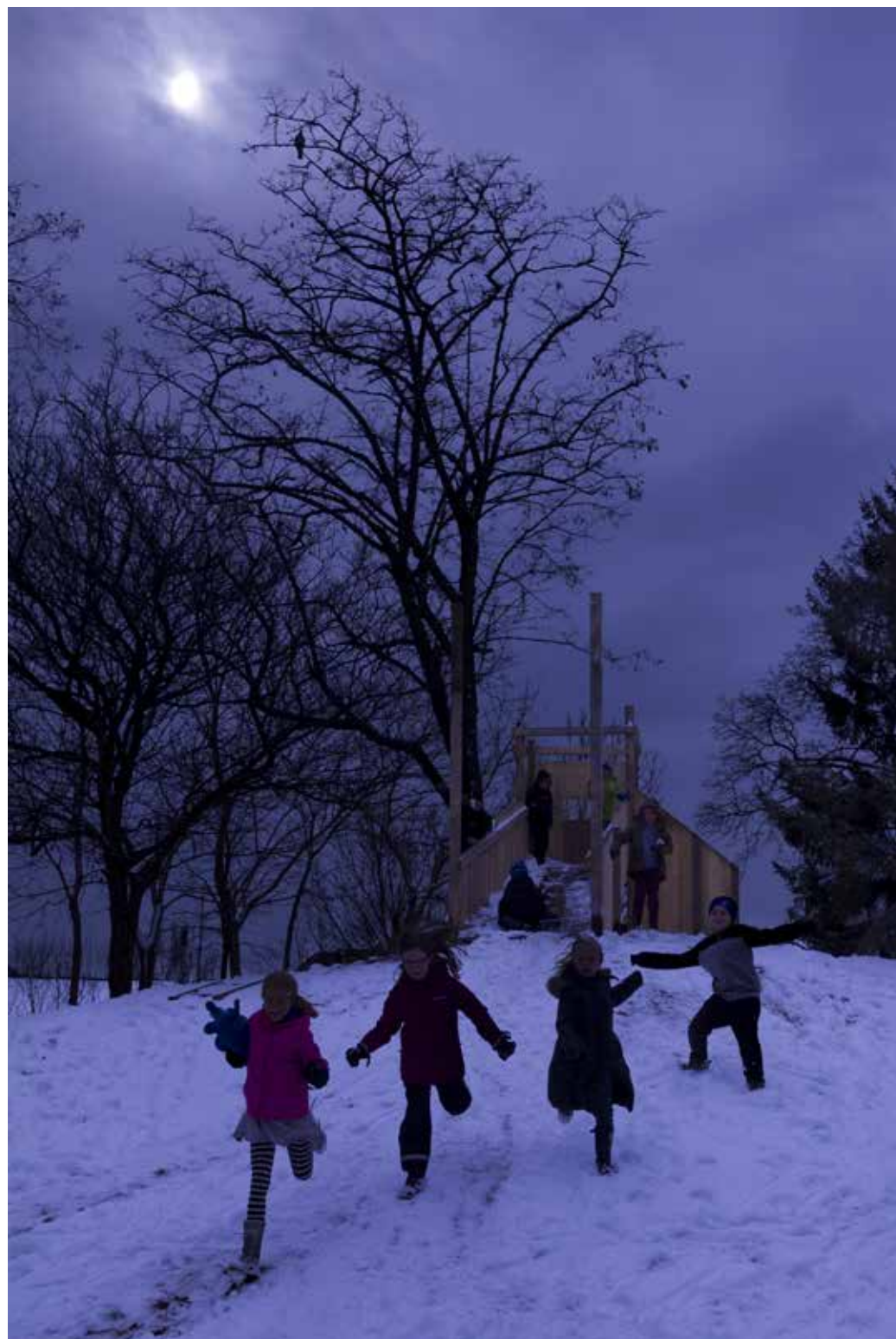
” There was a lot of freedom at Skrammel. When children had good ideas, the adults listened. “Yes, that’s a good idea. How will you do that?” The children were primus motor, they just had to be helped over a few hurdles sometimes.

*Nils Tindbæk
Employee 1975-1976*

” At Skrammel, if we had an idea about a tour somewhere. If we wanted to go to the cinema, for example, or we wanted to drive go-kart. We just had to ask. We were often allowed to do it. But we had to arrange it ourselves.

*My Abrahamsson, 16
Child of Skrammel, 2002-2010*

THE ORIGINAL SKRAMMEL PLAYGROUND WAS
FEATURED IN A FILM AND PHOTO EXHIBITION AT
THE UN CONFERENCE ON PLAYGROUNDS IN 1958





” I remember my school teachers as being evil and against children, but when we came from school to Skrammel, we always got something to eat. Tea and maybe some sandwiches. It was fantastic to be given something warm and feel welcome. Then we could otherwise play as we wanted to. It was amazing.

*Billie Mai-Britt Johansen, 59
Child of Skrammel in the 1960s*





” Every year in April, when we open the houses, the place just buzzes with life. The children walk busily around with wheelbarrows. They dig and sow and there are seeds and seed potatoes everywhere. We didn’t have the same plants when I was a child, but the atmosphere is still just as special. I’ve never witnessed it anywhere else. The day just flies past and all of a sudden it’s closing time even though we think we have just arrived. This is one of the really strong memories I have from my childhood, but the same is true today.

Alice Glud, 63
Child of Skrammel, 1955-1965
Employee since 1996







” At that time, there were only two adults to keep an eye on all of us, so we had a lot of freedom. It wasn’t that nice going to school so I really enjoyed coming to Skrammel in the afternoon.

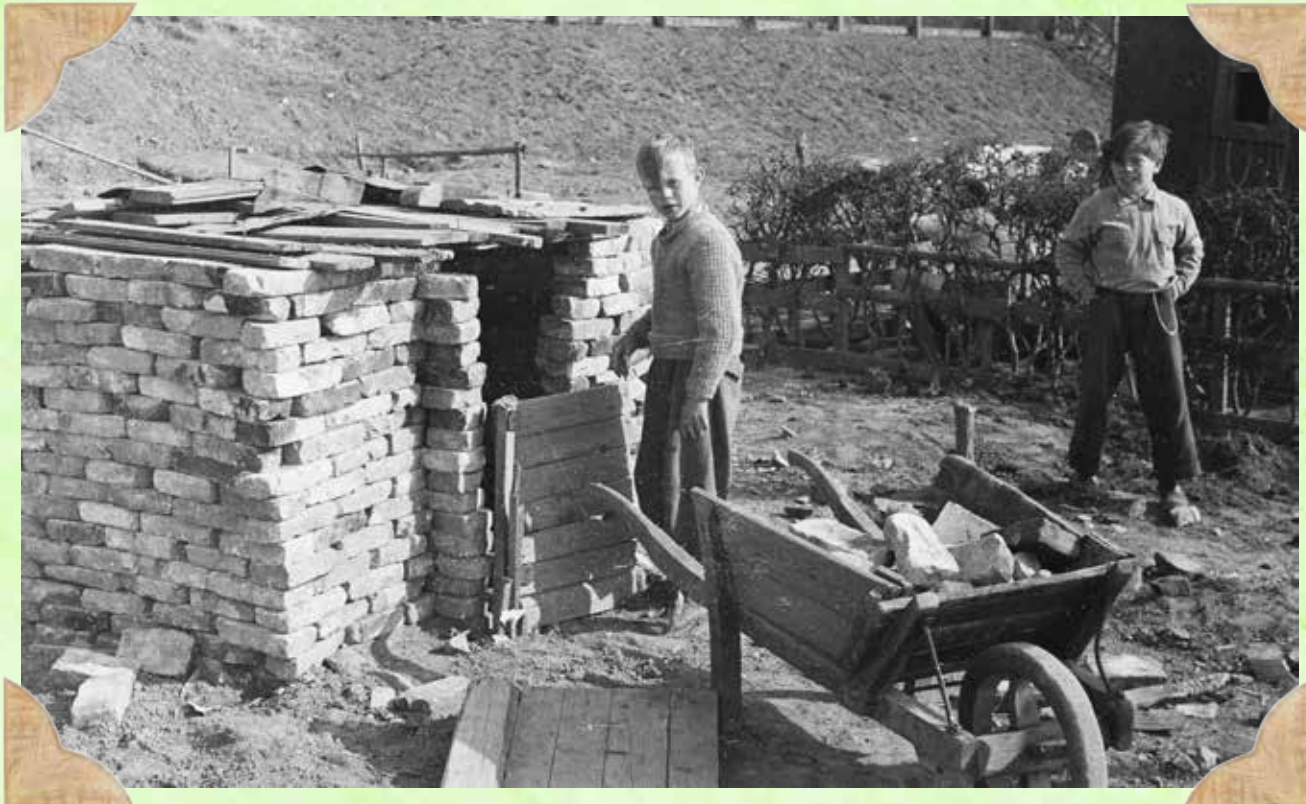
*Pia Holm, 56
Child of Skrammel, 1965-1971*



THE FOUNDER OF THE ORIGINAL SKRAMMEL PLAYGROUND, C. TH. SØRENSEN, GREW UP IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND DREAMT OF CREATING A PLACE WHERE TOWN CHILDREN COULD PLAY WITH OLD BUILDING MATERIAL AND JUNK WITHOUT ADULTS INTERFERING UNNECESSARILY. BY LEAVING THE CHILDREN ALONE, THEY COULD DEVELOP THEIR IMAGINATION AND CREATIVE URGE.

” In 1943 there was only a field of grass where we played rounders and Danish longball. Then old building material began to come and we split it apart. We even straightened out the old nails. Everything had to be reused. And then we build small play houses. After a while we started getting tools, shovels and spades. So we dug hidey-holes in the ground. If we were really smart we took some old bricks, cleaned them and built brick houses on top of the hidey-hole. The brick houses were big enough for a child to crawl inside and sit in. They were maybe 1.5 meters high. The bricks were just laid on top of each other without cement and with a sheet of wood as a roof. If we found an old roofing plank, we lay that on. So we could sit outside of the rain if it was raining outside. We made a fireplace in the “basement” so it was warm in the basement of the house and on the 1st floor. Conditions were good.

Kay Nilsson, 77
Child of Skrammel, 1943- 1953









” I lived outside of the catchment area, so I couldn’t be a child of Skrammel myself, but I knew some children of Skrammel and that meant I was allowed to come and visit (...) It was a whole new world for me.

Nils Tindbæk
Employee 1975-1976

IN 1947 AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE ORIGINAL SKRAMMEL PLAYGROUND WAS WRITTEN IN THE PERIODICAL “PICTURE POST” BY THE BRITISH GARDENER LADY ALLEN OF HURTWOOD. THIS ARTICLE LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE FIRST JUNK PLAYGROUNDS IN THE UK.

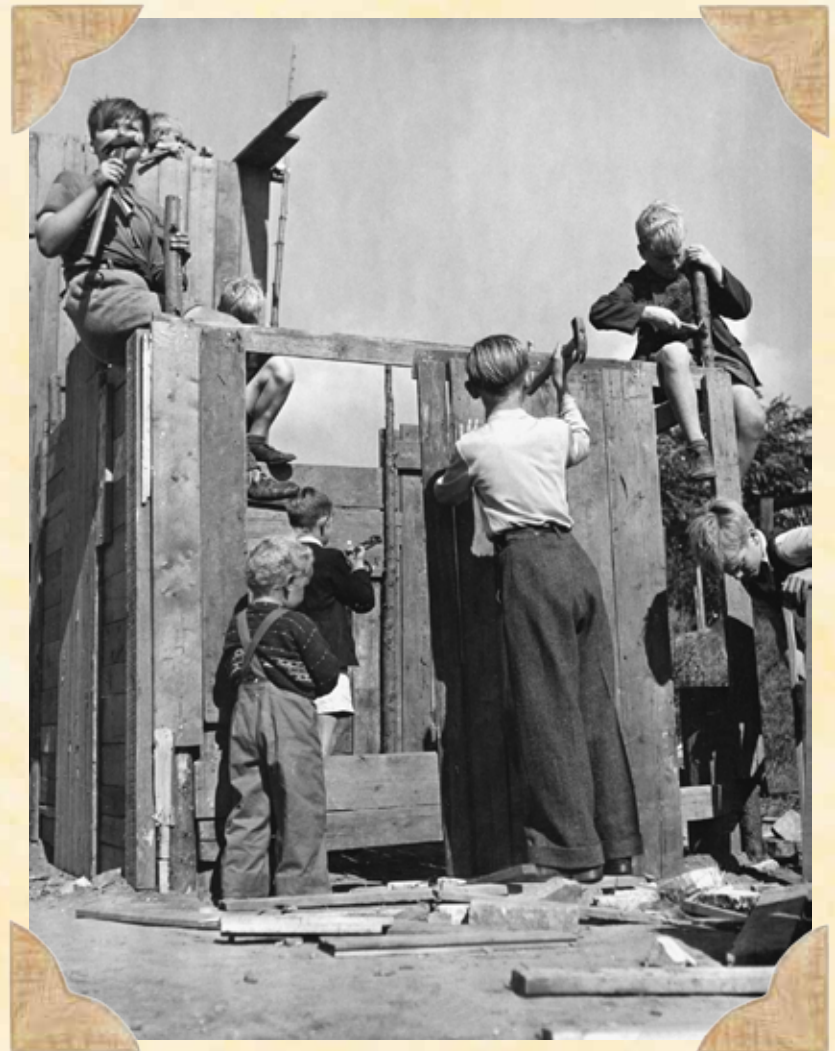






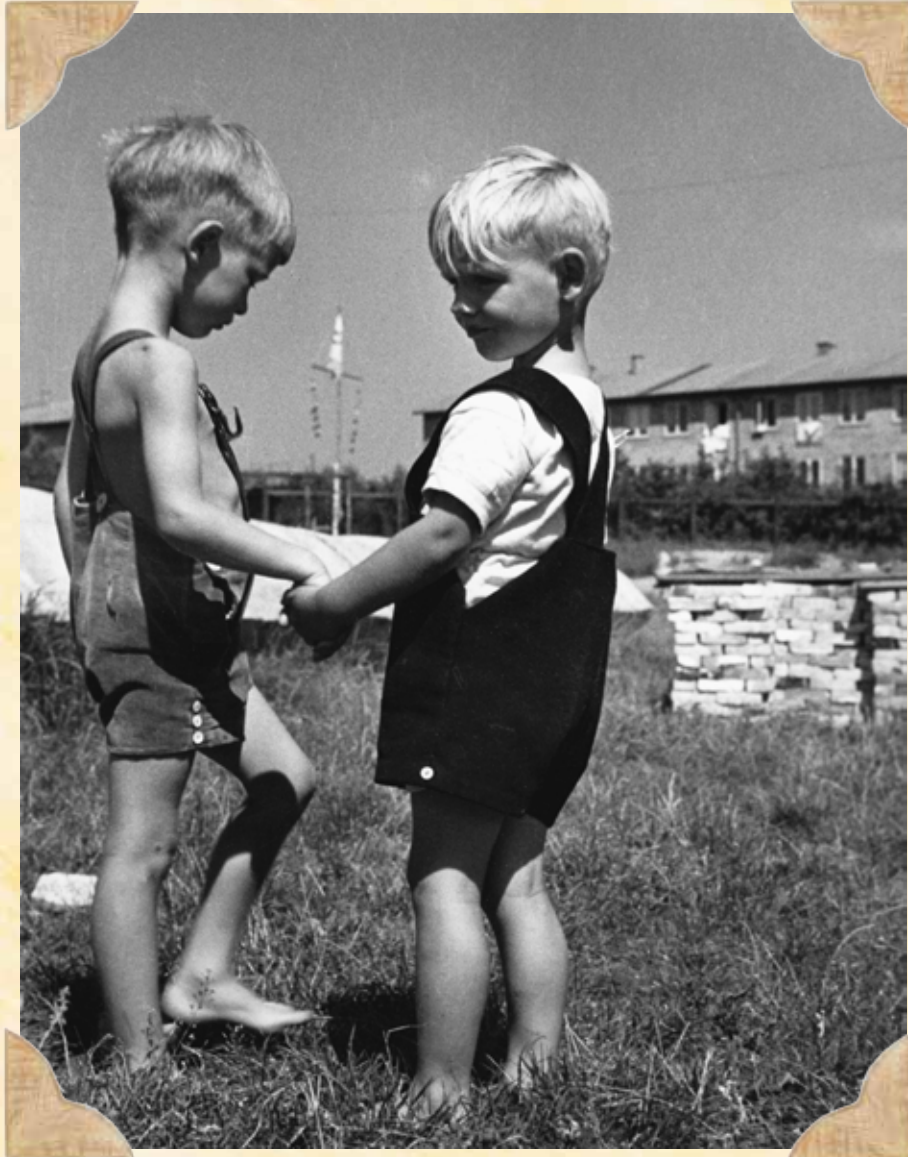
” We, as children, were allowed to design one of the houses that would stand forever. So we thought we would build a pyramid, and that’s exactly what we did. We got to try a lot of different things. We had to lay the roofing felt ourselves and all kinds of things. Thomas, one of the adults, showed us how to do it, how the beams should lie and that kind of thing. Even now, many years later, the house is still standing. That’s really cool.

*Frederik Irving, 16
Child of Skrammel, 2002-2010*



” When I was 14, I got an apprenticeship with a plumber because I liked making something with my hands. Of course it was at Skrammel I had learnt to do that.

*Kay Nilsson, 77
Child of Skrammel, 1943-1953*



WHEN MONEY WAS SCARCE IN THE 1940S, THE OLDER CHILDREN SUGGESTED THAT THE PLAYGROUND SHOULD COLLECT PAPER. SCRAP PAPER WAS A GOOD LITTLE EARNER. SKRAMMEL COLLECTED 659,581 KG OF SCRAP PAPER IN THE FORM OF OLD NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES BETWEEN 1948 - 1967. THIS EARNED SKRAMMEL 59,905 DKK., THE EQUIVALENT OF ROUGHLY €76,000 IN 2018 PRICES.



” I helped build a new house every year. Every year more creative than the last. One year I had a vegetable garden with Mathias and Nicolaj. It won a prize for being the messiest garden of the year. Our prize was a small caramel. We grew carrots, tomatoes, peas, cabbage, lettuce, potatoes, strawberries and beans. Our parents were always very happy when we took our produce home. It was fine in the beginning, but the weeds took over during the summer holiday.

Anders Roed-Jeppesen, 17
Child of Skrammel, 2001-2009

” We grew all kinds of things in the vegetable patches. All kinds of vegetables, strawberries and loads of flowers. Even rhubarb! Rhubarb was always a hit in the summer. We would pluck a stem of rhubarb and then get sugar to dip it in. It was really bitter and didn't actually taste that good. But the fact that we had grown it ourselves and that we could actually eat it, shadowed the bitter taste.

My Abrahamsson, 16
Child of Skrammel, 2002-2010



” I carried all of my books down to Grenhuset (see below) and made a library. By doing that, all of the other children were able to borrow them. I sat in the library and wrote out the borrowing slips.

*Kirsten Refskou Poulsen, 74
Child of Skrammel, 1943-1954*



THE CHILDREN'S OWN SKRAMMEL COUNCIL HAS A BUDGET OF 8000 DKK (ROUGHLY €1000) PER YEAR. OVER THE YEARS, THE CHILDREN HAVE CHOSEN TO USE THIS MONEY ON THINGS LIKE A NEW BASKETBALL COURT, A NET AROUND THE FOOTBALL FIELD, A SKATEBOARD RAMP AND A NEW FLOOR IN THE BOY'S TOILET.

70 YEARS OF SKRAMMEL

SKRAMMEL IS LISTED IN THE DANISH CHILDRENS CULTURAL HERITAGE LIST IN THE DANISH CULTURAL CANON - 2006

A CHANGE IN THE LAW MEANS THAT PARENTS TAKE OVER THE BOARD POSITIONS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY THE HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS, 1997

JANNIE ARRIVES AND STAYS - 1994

SKRAMMEL BECOMES AN AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB FOR SMALL CHILDREN (6-10 YEARS OLD) - 1991

SKRAMMEL GROWS AND MAKES SPACE FOR 60 AFTER-SCHOOL CHILDREN - 1982

SKRAMMEL BECOMES AN AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB FOR 20 CHILDREN BETWEEN 5-15 YEARS OLD - 1980

GUESTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD VISIT THE PEDAGOGICAL UNICUM SKRAMMEL IS - 1974

A SMALL MEMBERSHIP FEE REPLACES THE SCRAP PAPER COLLECTION AND MID-SUMMER PARTIES - 1967

SKRAMMEL STARTS TO GET A CONTRIBUTION FROM THE COPENHAGEN CITY COUNCIL - 1965

SKRAMMEL BECOMES A SELF-GOVERNING INSTITUTION WITH A BOARD MADE UP OF THE LOCAL HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS - 1959

PARENTS CREATE AN ASSOCIATION TO TAKE CARE OF THE FINANCES OF SKRAMMEL - 1954

WITH INDIVIDUAL GRANTS FROM THE LOCAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION AND OTHERS, IT IS POSSIBLE TO EMPLOY ONE SINGLE MEMBER OF STAFF THE FIRST YEAR

SKRAMMEL OPENS AS A FREE SPACE FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE CITY - 1943

LEADERS OF SKRAMMEL

1994- : JANNIE MADSEN

1982-1994: JØRGEN CARLSEN

1947-1982: AGNETE VESTEREG (NETE)

1943-1947: JOHN BERTELSEN (JONAS)

” I remember when Mrs. Roosevelt and the American Ambassador visited. I think it was a Saturday, because my dad translated for them. I thought it was really exciting that he was the translator for such important people.

*Kirsten Refskou Poulsen, 74
Child of Skrammel, 1943-1954*

” We were world famous. Nursery teachers from all over the world came to visit Skrammel in the summer. In the middle of the 1970's busses full of people arrived with people from Australia, Japan, USA and Germany. At that time we were the only playground of this type and we were described in various pedagogical journals.

*Nils Tindbæk
Employee 1975-1976*



MANY YEARS AFTER SKRAMMEL OPENED AND TODAY, PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE VISITING SKRAMMEL TO EXPERIENCE AND TO BE INSPIRED OF THIS UNIQUE UNIVERSE FOR CHILDREN





