

The wooden construction has, to a great extent, been renewed and some indoor improvements have also been made. The costs of the project ended up at close to 2 million Euro. The many problems occurring during the process were solved in a superb cooperation between the parish council, the deanery and the municipality.

The restoration, taking 2 years and ending in 14 million Danish kroner, was made possible by a tremendous spirit of self-sacrifice from associations, trade, industry and citizens.

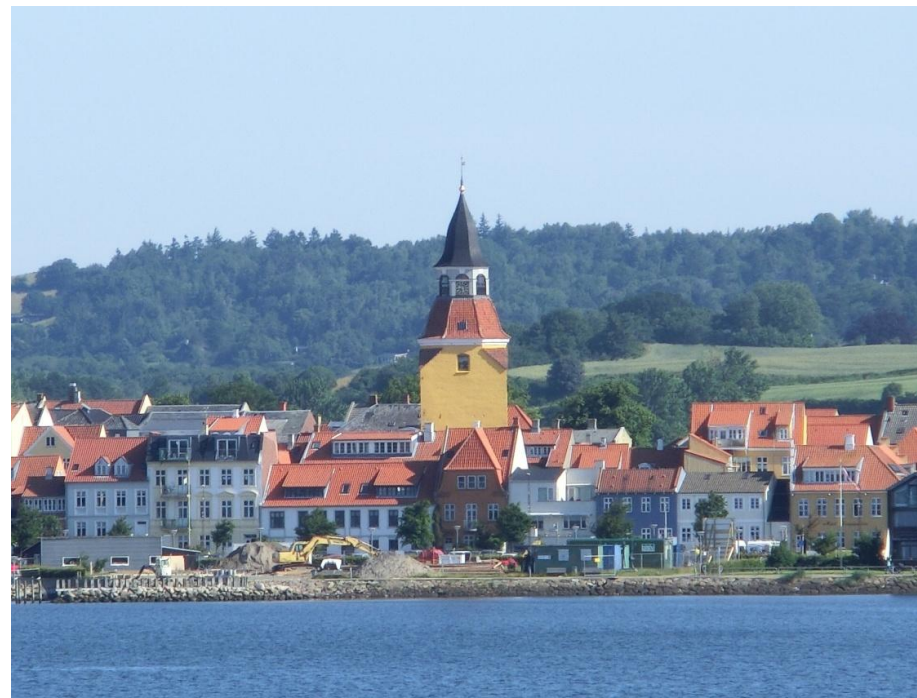
In the belfry there are two bells cast 1520 and 1646 - and a carillon with 38 bells. The carillon – a gift to the city - was installed in the belfry in 1960. It has recently been repaired and modernized with computer control.

The belfry in Faaborg is historically and culturally part of the town's "soul" and not only the inhabitants of town and municipality but the whole country have an interest in not letting this quite unique structure from the Middle Ages become dilapidated. It is quite simply a question of securing the historic and cultural inheritance for posterity.

Nowadays the opening hours are attended by volunteers organized by the support association "Friends of the Belfry", who's main objective is to assist in funding the future maintenance of the belfry.

If you want more information about "The Belfry" and "Friends of the Belfry" please look at:

www.klokketaarnet.dk



The Belfry in Faaborg

In one of the oldest boroughs on Funen you find a very distinctive building with a character and an exciting history of its own, namely the belfry in Faaborg. It is a belfry standing on its own without being connected to a church, a singularly unique feature in Denmark.

Faaborg sprang up as a town in the beginning of the 1100's when the inhabitants of the time settled at a strategically well chosen spot. At a tongue of land surrounded by water on three sides they were well protected against the enemies of those days.

The settlement grew into a town of a certain size, and Christianity, the new religion that replaced the old Nordic mythology, gradually pervaded our culture after the Viking period.

The first time we hear about Faaborg in the annals of Danish historiography is during the reign of King Valdemar Sejr.

In the year 1229 one of his sons was to be married to a Portuguese princess. She was given the town as a wedding gift. A grand gift, as it were, but a strange way for a town to enter the history of Denmark.

And hence this became the fixing point from where you could count the age of the town. Town jubilees are dated from this year, so in 2029 Faaborg can look forward to celebrating its 800-years jubilee.

In this period the Sct. Nikolaj church was constructed, but without a belfry. It was probably the first church of the town. It was named after the protector and defender of seafarers. The church was built in late Romanesque style and was situated just east of the town square in the middle of the town. For the next centuries it lived its life together with the town, which quietly developed, but at the end of the 1400's something quite decisive happened in the history of our town:

A catholic monastic order came to Faaborg. The Brothers of the Holy Order established themselves rather late in history here in Denmark with monasteries in among other places Aalborg, Randers and Copenhagen. The Order now got the Popes permission to build monastery and church in Faaborg in 1478 and the building site was chosen in the northern part of the town close to "Sundet".

What the inhabitants had in mind is hard to say. Surely there has not been undivided joy about this new monastery project, because the town also decided to do something about their old Nikolaj church and therefore they built a belfry. For about 50 years was been full employment in Faaborg to the satisfaction of tradesmen and industrial life in Faaborg in those days.

Two huge building projects were in progress, but before the building of the church was brought to an end something new happened again. The Lutheran reformation hit our country and Faaborg was no exception, an enormous change for church and society as a whole.

With the Reformation came a quite new way of thought and belief and this was no easy process. All catholic goods befell the king,

who thus now owned the brand new Church of the Holy Spirit with the attached monastery. It was almost too much with two churches in little Faaborg so in the year 1539 the king and the town made an exchange of real estate with the churches so that the Church of the Holy Spirit now became the parish church.

The old St. Nikolaj Church, which was doomed to be a granary, was given back to the town again in 1550 in connection with the building of a new town hall, but was eventually demolished. Luckily the added belfry was saved. There were three good reasons for this: 1. It was quite new. 2. The Church of the Holy Spirit called, and still calls, to services and other church related functions with the bells in the belfry. 3. The belfry had become an indispensable direction finder for the naval traffic on the waters south of the town.

The belfry thus lived its life under the new circumstances, and up through the 1600 and 1700's a lot of things happened in the history of the town which made it difficult to maintain the belfry properly. There were several wars against the Swedish resulting in great damages and deprivation.

There were several fires which left most of the town desolate, and by and by the spire of the belfry had become so rotten that it had to be renewed in 1778. Thus we got the stately rococo spire we see today, the spire, which is now going through a much needed restoration.

During the 1800 s the belfry was in danger several times, because the municipality first thought of using it as a jail and later also as an engine house for the fire engines. This idea meant that the southern wall had to be penetrated for the engines to pass in and out. Luckily these plans were never fulfilled. It turned out to be the diocesan authorities in Odense, headed by the bishop, who put an end to this. During the years towards our time the belfry has again turned out to be in very bad shape due to wear, tear and bad repair, so in the spring of 2011 a thorough restoration started after the parish council had raised about 5 million Danish kroner.

In the walls approx. 26.500 mediaeval large bricks have been replaced, every tile has been re-laid and the spire has had new shingle facing.