

*I dag er det Mogens' fødselsdag.* I met Mogens in 1991, at a conference in Poland, when he chaired me during my first-ever conference talk. I suppose one could think it was my ‘stage fright’ to interest him, but let us agree for the sake of history that it was the sheer brilliancy of my argument. In any event, at the end of the session he said:

“Would you like to visit us in Aarhus?”

“And where’s that?” I asked.

We have been colleagues and friends ever since.

Indeed, I went to Aarhus for a six-month visit the following Spring. The first of several stays, I should add, and I remain to date very fond of the place, as many life-changing events happened to me whilst there (like for instance that time I was caught at the border trying to smuggle 20kg of Parmesan cheese into the country; or that other time I tried to swim in the North Sea). It is there where I acquired a working knowledge of the English language, courtesy of my then flat-mate Madhavan Mukund.

That was the period when BRICS was just being conceived. Aarhus was then well-known to semanticists for technical reports such as Robin Milner’s on CCS —a forerunner of his best-selling book— and Gordon Plotkin’s SOS booklet. A strong department, DAIMI, whose faculty included at the time also Peter Mosses, Anne and Flemming Nielson, and Glynn Winskel, but certainly the level of activity at that time was not even close to the peaks it reached in the golden years of BRICS.

I remember of course the work we did during my stay, on the categorical relationship between models of concurrency which predated the inception of bisimulation via open maps. But above all, I remember the spirit that permeated the DAIMI —excellence and ‘*hyggelig*’ (an untranslatable Danish term for all that is courteous, well-mannered, cosy and friendly)— which stayed with me ever since that first visit. Thus, I remember fondly the summer trips to Mogens’s birthplace, Fjerritslev, with Nell, Louise and Johanne, and the fiercely contested games of Croquet with Linda and Abel, as well as in later years those crab meat feasts at Karen Kjær Møller’s cottage in Vedersø Klit, together with P.S Thiagarajan and Erik Meineche Schmidt and the respective families.

One lovely thing about Denmark is that people celebrate by singing together. At birthdays, anniversaries, public and private ceremonies, and at midsummer. —I can still remember the affinity I felt that midsummer day to that Brasilian student shivering in his high-winter coat while singing in a chorus with us all “*Du Danske sommer, vi elsker dig!*” (Oh Danish summer, we love you!) on the beach outside Glynn’s house in Egå.— So, ideally I am now singing together with all authors in this volume “*I dag er det Mogens’ fødselsdag - hurra, hurra, hurraaaa...*” and waving ‘*Dannebrog*’ to celebrate Mogens’s Festschrift!

For much more than I dare to put in writing, I feel a great debt of gratitude to Mogens. I will then take this opportunity to thank him publicly for allowing me to share so much of my career with him, and for being such a great friend to my family and me over almost twenty years. In a volume like this we celebrate career, professional achievements, impact and lasting legacy, and rightly so. Yet, I cannot help but stress that those qualities are only a small part of what makes Mogens Nielsen such a special and extraordinary person. I deem myself very lucky indeed to have crossed his path.