



verizon
terremark

GENEREEER
SERVER

ENTERPRISE CLOUD™
Precieze dynamische toewijzing van IT-middelen met de schaal, prestaties en beveiliging om bedrijfsbrede applicaties uit te voeren.

LEES MEER

FINANCIAL TIMES

Home	World	Companies	Markets	Global Economy	Lex	Comment	Management	Life & Arts			
Arts	Magazine	Food & Drink	House & Home	Lunch with the FT	Style	Books	Pursuits	Travel	Columns	How To Spend It	Tools

October 10, 2014 5:19 pm

Postcard from . . . Denmark

By Jeremy Taylor [Author alerts](#)

After spending two millennia in a bog, a mummified body is about to take centre stage in a bold new museum

In an old university building in the Danish city of Aarhus, I'm led down into what looks like a bomb shelter. A heavy door opens into a darkened storeroom, with rows of exhibits stacked on shelves. Finally, at the end of one aisle is a case the size of a coffee table, covered in protective material. The cloth is pulled away and, suddenly, I'm face-to-face with a mummified body.

What's remarkable is the detail. Despite his age, the man has more hair than me and his hands and fingers are perfect – so well preserved that scientists have even taken fingerprints.

This is "Grauballe Man", a body dug up in 1952 by men cutting peat in Jutland. Experts believe he lived in the third century BC before meeting a grisly end: his throat was slashed from ear to ear before his body was dumped in the bog, which then preserved it.

Now, after spending two millennia in the bog, and the past two years hidden away in storage, Grauballe Man is about to take centre stage, as the main attraction in a bold new museum. The Moesgaard Museum, which opens this weekend, is already the most talked-about building in the country – a 15,000 sq metre wedge-shaped concrete structure, rising out of a grassy hillside.

The \$75m project is the work of Henning Larsen, the controversial Danish architect best known for the Opera House in Copenhagen and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh. He won a nationwide competition to design the museum in 2005 but died in June last year, so never saw it completed.

The gently sloping roof has been grassed over to blend in with the surrounding environment, while the concrete and glass walls are only visible from the sides. The museum administrators hope that the roof will eventually have other uses, such as seating for up to 10,000 concertgoers.

"For now, we want people to come and sit on it like any other hill," says museum administrator, Henrik Hatt. "We don't mind if they bring a sleeping bag and rest under the stars, or just picnic. The views over the woods and Aarhus Bay in the distance are perfect."



Though many foreigners might struggle to place it on a map, Aarhus, Denmark's second-largest city, is becoming an increasingly compelling destination for a city break, and the new museum is far from the only attraction. For architecture fans, the other key draw is the ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, the city's art museum, which was completed in 2011 and features "Your rainbow panorama", a circular rooftop walkway enclosed in multicoloured glass panels that was designed by the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson.

My preview at Moesgaard takes place before the exhibits are installed but as Hatt walks me around, it is clear there will be plenty to see. The building, lined inside with slate, oak and ash, includes a 900 sq metre hall for touring collections, the first of which is expected to be soldiers from China's Terracotta Army. Other exhibits due to go on show include Viking items, which ironically are on loan from a museum in the British city of York.

Grauballe Man will take pride of place, resting in a two-tier mock-up of a peat bog. Visitors can peer down through a hole in the floor to see him at rest, then walk to a lower level and see his gruesome wounds close up.

"When cities are looking for somewhere to base a museum, they often choose old buildings, which then have to be adapted to suit the exhibits," says Hatt. "At Moesgaard it's the other way around – the entire museum has been purpose-built to fit around the exhibits."

The "bog body" exhibit is complemented by an eye-catching display of human history in the huge open space of the foyer. Strategically placed down two flights of steps are replicas of man at various stages of evolution, starting with an ape called Lucy at the top, developing into modern man at the bottom.

It has been around 2,300 years coming, but the resting place of Grauballe Man has certainly been worth the wait.

Details

Jeremy Taylor was a guest of Visit Denmark (visitdenmark.co.uk) and Moesgaard Museum (moesmus.dk). Ryanair (ryanair.com) flies from London Stansted to Aarhus from £40 return

Printed from: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b7aec248-2fbf-11e4-83e4-00144feabdc0.html>

Print a single copy of this article for personal use. Contact us if you wish to print more to distribute to others.

© THE FINANCIAL TIMES LTD 2014 FT and Financial Times are trademarks of The Financial Times Ltd.